



Proposal to Advise on Intergovernmental Agreement, Prepared for:

## **Watertown Public Library**

December 2023

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

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Colorado | Illinois | North Carolina | Texas | Utah | Washington, D.C. | Wisconsin

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# Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information about Michael Best & Friedrich's capabilities to represent the Watertown Public Library (the Library) in negotiations of an intergovernmental agreement with the City of Watertown (the City). With a wealth of experience serving public sector entities, we're excited to leverage our knowledge to help you negotiate and secure an agreement with the City.

As a full-service law firm, we handle a wide range of legal matters across practice areas. Michael Best® offers the Library an ideal combination of experience, high-quality service, and competitive pricing, with advantages such as the following:

## LOCAL KNOWLEDGE, NATIONAL RESOURCES

Our proposed lead counsel for the Library's intergovernmental contract negotiation is based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is supported by the full capabilities of our firm, with nearly 300 attorneys in 17 offices throughout the United States. Our geographic reach positions us well to serve clients' needs at the local, state, and federal levels.

## DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Michael Best has significant experience in representing the diverse interests and full-service needs of public sector clients. The scope of our practice is wide-ranging, from public finance, government relations, real estate, and administrative law, to employee benefits, labor relations, and litigation. **Thomas Gartner**, our proposed lead counsel, has significant experience serving in government roles and working with public sector entities.

## EFFICIENCY & VALUE-BASED BILLING

We continuously strive to ensure that efficiency and best practices are built into our services. We offer sophisticated, strategic counsel, without a "Big Law" price tag. As discussed in the following proposal, we are pleased to offer the Library a 10% discount on Thom Gartner's hourly billing rate.

## COMMITMENT TO CLIENT SERVICE

Clients consistently give us high marks for being an invaluable asset. The reason? We devote ourselves to building relationships based on the bedrock of responsiveness, efficiency, trust, and a zeal for our clients' success. Our focus is on your entire organization, not just the legal matters we're involved in.

The following pages provide information about Michael Best's public sector experience, our proposed lead counsel, and discounted pricing. We look forward to discussing how we can partner with Watertown Public Library to meet your legal needs and support your organizational objectives.

# Proposal to Support Watertown Public Library

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## Public Sector Experience

Michael Best has significant experience in representing the diverse interests and full-service needs of public sector clients. At the local level, our clients include municipalities, local agencies, and quasi-governmental entities, as well as school districts, technical colleges, and public universities.

In the past five years, we've represented:



We have considerable experience—and success—representing local entities in Wisconsin and across the country. The scope of our practice is wide-ranging, from real estate, public finance, and administrative law to employee benefits, labor relations, and general counsel.

We have been retained by public sector clients on many complex projects, including major housing developments, intergovernmental agreements, specialized municipal litigation, environmental issues, elections, injunctions, privatization, employee terminations, and comparable worth. Our wide-ranging experience also includes land use regulation, government relations, tax law, and public records and open meeting laws.

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## Proposed Lead

### **Thomas O. Gartner**

Senior Counsel | Milwaukee, WI | [togartner@michaelbest.com](mailto:togartner@michaelbest.com) | T. 414.270.2716



Thom Gartner will serve as counsel to Watertown Public Library, assisting you with negotiating and drafting an intergovernmental agreement with the City of Watertown.

Thom brings deep legal knowledge and significant experience in government roles. Prior to joining Michael Best, Thom represented the City of Milwaukee as an Assistant City Attorney in the Office of the City Attorney. In this role, he also represented various boards and commissions, such as the

Redevelopment Authority, Housing Authority, Public Debt Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Harbor Commissioners, and Milwaukee Board of School Directors.

His practice focus includes:

- General municipal law
- Municipal finance
- Real estate
- Development
- Urban redevelopment
- Land use and zoning
- Tax increment financing

## EXPERIENCE

Thom's representative project experience includes:

- Representing the City of Milwaukee and the Redevelopment Authority in the structuring and negotiation of a Cooperation, Contribution and Development Agreement in connection with the financing and construction of a \$300 million downtown corporate headquarters. This representation included more than \$50 million in tax incremental financing.
- Representing the City of Milwaukee and the Redevelopment Authority in connection with the creation and implementation of more than 50 tax incremental districts.
- Serving as counsel to the Public Debt Commission of the City of Milwaukee and participating in the issuance of City General Obligation Bonds, Notes, and Revenue Bonds.
- Serving as issuer's counsel in more than 175 revenue bond financings, with a combined principal value in excess of \$2 billion. These financings included the first revenue bonds issued by a Housing or Redevelopment Authority in the State of Wisconsin.
- Representing the City of Milwaukee and the Redevelopment Authority in the acquisition, redevelopment, and financing of a \$60 million mixed-use commercial, educational, and residential project for use by a public university.
- Representing the City of Milwaukee and the Board of Harbor Commissioners in the long-term leasing and capital financing of a lakefront festival grounds to the operator of a major national music festival that included the issuance of more than \$30 million in bonds.
- Representing the Redevelopment Authority as lender for the acquisition, development, and financing of a \$55 million high-rise condominium and apartment development in downtown Milwaukee.
- Assisting in a comprehensive recodification of Milwaukee's Zoning code; representing the Board of Zoning Appeals, including defense of the Board's decisions in multiple appeals; and successfully arguing *Oliviera v. City of Milwaukee* in the Wisconsin Supreme court. This case upheld the rezoning of a parcel of land to permit construction of a major commercial project.



- Participating in the structuring of numerous mixed-finance transactions requiring the integration of local public financial assistance with New Markets Tax Credits, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, and various forms of state and federal grant and loan funding.

#### HONORS & RECOGNITIONS

- *The Best Lawyers in America*®, Project Finance Law and Real Estate Law, 2018-present
- *The Midwest's Best Lawyers*®, Project Finance Law and Real Estate Law, 2021
- Public Official of the Year-City of Milwaukee, *The Daily Reporter*, 2012
- Rated AV® Preeminent™

#### PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Member, State Bar of Wisconsin
- Member, American Bar Association

#### EDUCATION

- Illinois Institute of Technology, Juris Doctor (J.D.)
- Hope College, Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)

#### ADMISSIONS

- Wisconsin
- Illinois

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## Value-Based Pricing

Clients shouldn't have to pay a "Big Law" price tag for excellent lawyers. At Michael Best, we understand the need for sophisticated yet affordable legal counsel. That's why we work to build efficiency and best practices into our services.

For services related to the Library's intergovernmental agreement, Thomas Gartner will be your primary advisor. We are pleased to offer a 10% discount on his hourly billing rate, as shown below.

Name	Title	2024 Hourly Rate	Discounted Hourly Rate for the Library
Thomas Gartner	Senior Counsel	\$550	\$495

For certain types of work, we also offer other pricing structures, such as fixed fees or monthly retainers. If the Library needs additional legal counsel in future, we would be happy to discuss the options with you in more detail.

## About Michael Best

Michael Best® is dedicated to our clients' success. We're a full-service law firm with nearly 300 lawyers who work in collaborative, interdisciplinary teams to serve clients around the world.

Our mission is to act as a true partner—to help you strategize, rise above challenges, and seize opportunities. We work with companies in all kinds of industries, as well as trade associations, nonprofits, educational institutions, governments, family trusts, and high-net-worth individuals.

Since our firm's founding in 1848, we've continuously innovated to meet our clients' changing needs and stay ahead of the curve. One thing remains the same: For generations, clients have relied on Michael Best for exceptional legal service and business acumen.

### PRACTICE AREAS

Corporate

Government Relations &  
Political Law

Intellectual Property

Labor & Employment Relations

Litigation

Privacy & Cybersecurity

Real Estate

Regulatory

Tax

Venture Best®

Wealth Planning



### NATIONWIDE OFFICES & ADMISSIONS

#### Colorado

- Broomfield
- Denver

#### Illinois

- Chicago

#### North Carolina

- Charlotte
- Durham
- Greenville
- Raleigh
- Wilmington
- Winston-Salem

#### Texas

- Austin

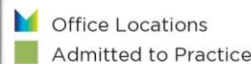
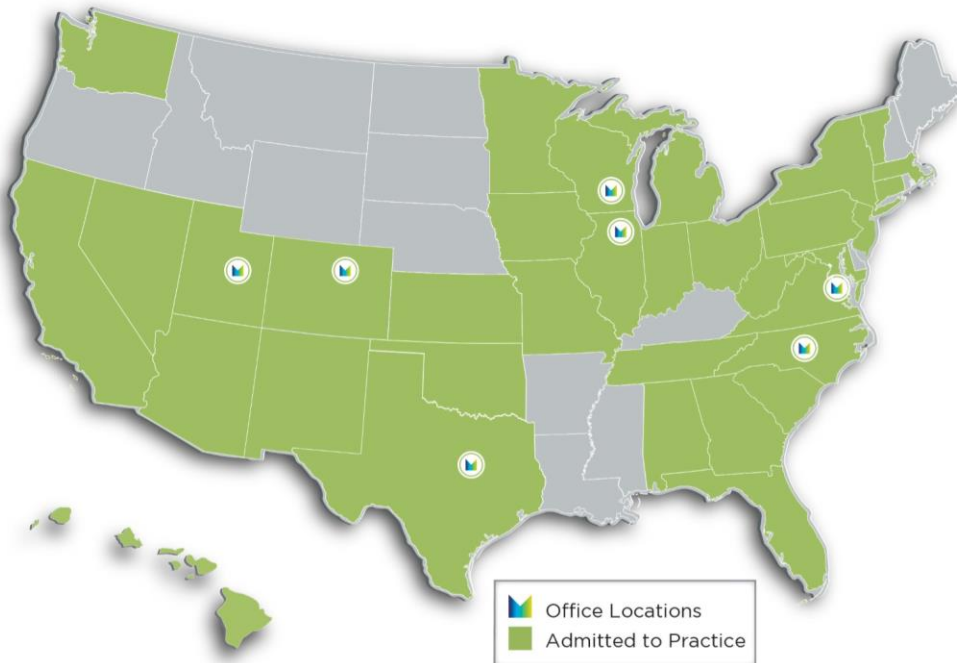
#### Utah

- Cottonwood Heights
- Salt Lake City

#### Wisconsin

- Madison
- Manitowoc
- Milwaukee
- Waukesha

Washington, D.C.



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## Firm Values

The Michael Best service ethos is expressed in our firm's core values and guiding principles:



### Client Value

We adhere to a defined set of client service standards across our firm. Our mission is to serve as a trusted partner and deliver an exceptional experience and value to our clients.



### Integrity

We value honesty and ethical behavior, and we conduct ourselves accordingly.



### Diversity

We work to foster a diverse, inclusive environment and promote diversity in the legal profession.



### Excellence

We are committed to excellence in the practice of law and in client service, to support the continued success of our clients and our firm.



### Innovation

We promote an environment of continuous learning and process improvement, to further our professional development and seek innovative ways to serve our clients.



### Collaboration

We encourage open, respectful dialogue. Michael Best's culture is collaborative, both within our firm and when working with clients.



### Community

We are dedicated to the long-term health of our people and our communities. We encourage work/life balance, and we give back to the communities where we live and work.



## Professional Recognition



**Chambers USA** recognized Michael Best in eight practice areas and named 27 partners as leading lawyers.



National Tier 1 rankings in U.S. News - Best Lawyers® **2024 Best Law Firms**, based on client feedback and peer reviews.



97 attorneys ranked in **The Best Lawyers in America 2024**, in 53 different legal areas nationwide, based on in-depth peer review.



**BTI Client Service A-Team 2022**  
Clients named Michael Best as a leader in client service, client communication, and investing in client relationships.



**BTI Most Recommended Law Firm 2021**  
Michael Best was recognized as one of the law firms most recommended by top legal decision-makers in more than 15 industries.



**BTI AFA Distinguished Law Firm 2020** Michael Best is recognized among the top law firms best at developing and implementing alternative fee arrangements.



Our Venture Best group is ranked in **PitchBook Global League Tables** as a prominent global player in venture capital, private equity, and M&A activity.



Eight Michael Best attorneys named among the **North Carolina Legal Elite 2023** in Business, Corporate, Real Estate, Labor & Employment, Tax & Estate Planning, and Intellectual Property Law.



Ten Michael Best attorneys named among the **2022 Utah Legal Elite** in Business & Corporate, Civil Litigation, Insurance Litigation, Mergers & Acquisitions, Labor & Employment, and Securities Law.



Seven attorneys are named **2023 IP Stars** by *Managing IP* magazine, and our firm is "highly recommended" for trademark and patent work.



Michael Best was named 2021 top Real Estate Law Firm by **Midwest Real Estate News: Best of the Best 2021** which ranks leading firms in the Midwest that practice commercial real estate law.



**Benchmark Litigation** named five Michael Best attorneys **2023 Benchmark Litigation Stars**. Those included on the list are selected based on client reviews, peer interviews, and recent casework.