

Agenda Date: March 21, 2013
Agenda Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time: N/A
Continued Item: No

Board Agenda Item

TO: Air Pollution Control District Board

FROM: Dave Van Mullem, Air Pollution Control Officer

CONTACT: Bob Van Beveren, Administrative Manager (961-8863)

SUBJECT: Temporary Employment Agency Funding Ratification

RECOMMENDATION:

Ratify an expense of \$68,110.24 paid to Select Staffing, a temporary employment agency, for service provided from May 14, 2012 through February 12, 2013.

BACKGROUND:

On March 26, 2012 the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (District) Human Resources (HR) Officer began an unexpected leave of absence. At that time, the District was in transition of several key employees; the long time Supervising Accountant had recently retired leaving a newly hired supervisor still learning the position; a recruitment was pending in order to replace the Business Manager who had taken an opportunity in Ventura County; and there was a new Accounting Technician responsible for District purchasing. In addition, negotiations with the three District bargaining units were underway, and the HR Officer had a crucial role in negotiations.

DISCUSSION:

In the absence of its HR Officer, the District shifted staff duties to cover HR needs but it soon became clear that the District needed a dedicated HR professional for an indeterminate period of time. At this point, staff began searching for an interim HR professional. The District conducted a thorough review of options by seeking support from Santa Barbara County HR; searching for and inquiring if local, retired County and/or District HR professionals would be interested in a temporary assignment; and lastly, investigating temporary employment agency employee rosters for HR specialists. Since there were no HR professionals, retired or currently working at the County, available to assist in the capacity needed, the District determined utilizing a temporary employment agency was our only recourse.

Select Staffing (Select), a temporary employment agency with offices in Santa Barbara, quoted favorable rates; which included health benefit options for their clients, as well as coverage of overhead taxes, unemployment benefits, and workers' compensation and liability. Through Select, an HR professional meeting the minimum prerequisites was found and began working on May 14, 2012.

On February 12, 2013, once it was brought to light a properly executed contract for the above mentioned services had not been signed between the District's procurement agent, Santa Barbara County Purchasing, and Select; the District Air Pollution Control Officer (APCO) terminated the interim HR professional services provided by Select. Staff initiated a call to Select to notice them of this decision. Select agreed to release the District from future obligations concerning the possible employment of the HR professional. Today, the interim HR professional is performing essential HR functions, but now as an "extra help" employee, per District Civil Service Rule 905.

Ratification of expenses incurred from May 14, 2012 through February 12, 2013 for the interim HR professional services provided by Select is necessary due to the lack of a properly executed contract signed between Santa Barbara County Purchasing and Select. The District initiated a review of its procurement actions and found that through a series of events beginning with the departure of seasoned management and accounting staff; newly hired and newly promoted staff lacked necessary training at the time, as they were still learning procedures and receiving training on the job. These individuals are now fully trained and have executed five other successful contracts over the current fiscal year.

Due to the events surrounding the contracting of Select Staffing, the District has taken the following steps:

- The District Administrative Manager and Supervising Accountant received purchaser training from the County's purchasing lead, and the County's purchasing department will continue to provide training on an as-needed basis for APCD staff and management.
- A checklist and accompanying process flow chart depicting the procedure was created to aid staff in adhering to purchasing procedures and rules.
- An updated fiscal purchasing procurement procedure is in progress and will continue to evolve as necessary. This procedure will be used inside the District's fiscal section.
- An annual review of the procedure and documentation was added to the fiscal group's yearly tasks. This will include checking in with the County's Purchasing Department.

The APCO is requesting your Board rectify this procedural contracting omission by ratifying past expenses, which were used to provide staff with essential access to an interim HR professional through the temporary employment agency, Select Staffing. Future expenses will not occur.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Select Staffing expenditures did not exceed planned salary for our employed, but on leave status, HR Officer as authorized by your Board in the District's fiscal year 2012-2013 budget. Considering all employee costs, Select Staffing hourly charges were less than the hourly rate of our employed HR Officer; furthermore, our Interim HR Officer works, as needed, on a part-time basis (approximately 30 hours per week). Therefore, the District realized a savings over the last 11 months of \$8,318.