THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

Staff Report

Council Meeting Date: December 13, 2022

Subject: Police Transparency Engagement Advising Services Contract

Staff Resource(s): Elise Lewis, Financial Business Manager

Action Requested: Adoption of a resolution to allow the City Manager to execute on behalf of the City of Asheville a contract not to exceed $162,000 with Cole Pro Media, LLC, with the option to renew annually for two one-year extensions, upon budgetary approval by Council for each fiscal year for police transparency engagement advising services.

Background:

- In August of 2018, 21CP Solutions, LLC was engaged by Asheville City Council to review the arrest, the tactics, policies, and procedures involved in an excessive force incident.

- Recommendation 8.4 of the Policy and Procedure Review report issued by the company stated, "The City should consider retaining a firm to provide crisis response services to the APD and the City of Asheville in the future. Relying on skilled crisis management experts can reduce the scope and impact of a critical incident, by taking an active role in developing a cohesive, coordinated response across involved parties. These strategic responses can involve asserting control over media exposure, reducing liability, and preserving public safety in the immediate aftermath."

- The Asheville Police Department (APD) is requesting approval from Council to enter into a new contract with Cole Pro Media, LLC, the company identified for award as the result of an Request for Proposals process.

- Cole Pro Media will provide services to APD, which include counseling, advising, and guiding the Police Department in matters of transparency engagement issues, crisis communications, social media messaging, critical incidents or any other counsel requested by the Police Department and City Management.

- The total annual cost for this contract is $54,000.

- Two optional renewals will be included in the contract documents, bringing the intended three year contract total to $162,000.

- APD already includes this expense in the annual budget process so no additional funding is required.

Council Goal(s):

- A Connected and Engaged Community

Committee(s):

- Public Safety Committee - November 17, 2022 - 2-1 approval to move forward to City Council

Pro(s):

- Fulfills recommendation 8.4 of the Policy and Procedure Review report issued in August of 2018 by 21CP Solutions, LLC as engaged by Asheville City Council to review the arrest, the tactics, policies, and procedures involved in an excessive force incident.

- Community transparency through counseling, advising, and guidance of the Asheville Police Department by a third party, established, professional agency.

Con(s):

- Continued annual cost of contracting with a Transparency Engagement Advising Service.

Fiscal Impact:

- Funding for this contract is available in the Asheville Police Department operating budget.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to allow the City Manager to execute on behalf of the City of Asheville a contract not to exceed $162,000 with Cole Pro Media, LLC, with the option to renew annually for two one-year extensions, upon budgetary approval by Council for each fiscal year for police transparency engagement advising services.

Attachment(s)

- Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 22-____

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE A CONTRACT WITH COLE PRO MEDIA, LLC FOR TRANSPARENCY ENGAGEMENT ADVISING SERVICES

WHEREAS, In August of 2018, 21CP Solutions, LLC was engaged by Asheville City Council to review the arrest, the tactics, policies, and procedures involved in an excessive force incident; and

WHEREAS, Recommendation 8.4 of the Policy and Procedure Review report issued by the company stated, “The City should consider retaining a firm to provide crisis response services to the APD and the City of Asheville in the future. Relying on skilled crisis management experts can reduce the scope and impact of a critical incident, by taking an active role in developing a cohesive, coordinated response across involved parties. These strategic responses can involve asserting control over media exposure, reducing liability, and preserving public safety in the immediate aftermath.”; and

WHEREAS, the Asheville Police Department (APD) is requesting approval from Council to enter into a contract with Cole Pro Media, LLC, the company identified for award as the result of an RFP process; and

WHEREAS, Cole Pro Media will provide services to APD, which include counseling, advising, and guiding the Police Department in matters of transparency engagement issues, crisis communications, social media messaging, critical incidents or any other counsel requested by the Police Department; and

WHEREAS, The total annual cost for this contract is $54,000. Two optional renewals will be included in the contract documents, bringing the intended three year contract total to $162,000; and

WHEREAS, APD already includes this expense in the annual budget process so no additional funding is required;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

The City Manager is hereby authorized to execute on behalf of the City of Asheville a contract not to exceed $162,000 with Cole Pro Media, LLC, with the option to renew annually for two one-year extensions, upon budgetary approval by Council for each fiscal year.

Read, approved and adopted this the 13th day of December, 2022.

_____ _____

City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

_____

City Attorney