



**COMMISSION MEMORANDUM**

TO:	Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission
FROM:	Rickelle Williams, Interim City Manager
DATE:	June 26, 2024
TITLE:	A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, ACCEPTING THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE CITY MANAGER, PURSUANT TO REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) 2024-010-ND FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES FOR ARTS AND CULTURE. (TOURISM AND CULTURE)

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Mayor and City Commission approve the resolution accepting the City Manager’s recommendation pursuant to RFQ 2024-010-ND, for Public Relations Services for Arts and Culture, and authorize the Administration to enter into negotiations with Culture Counsel II, Inc., as the top-ranked proposer. If the Administration is not successful in negotiating an agreement with Culture Counsel II, Inc., authorizing the Administration to enter into negotiations with Blue Medium, Inc., as the second-ranked proposer. If the Administration is not successful in negotiating an agreement with Blue Medium, Inc., authorizing the Administration to enter into negotiations with Department PR, as the third-ranked proposer. The resolution also authorizes the City Manager and City Clerk to execute an agreement upon the conclusion of successful negotiations by the Administration.

The solicitation is currently under the cone of silence.

**BACKGROUND/HISTORY**

Over the past several decades, the cultural landscape of Miami Beach has evolved into a world-class destination for performing and visual arts. Visionary leaders have long understood the transformative potential of the arts and cultural economy for Miami Beach. In 1984, the City launched an Art in Public Places program that allocates two (2%) percent of hard costs for City and public/private projects to purchase public art. In 1998, the City strengthened its commitment to the arts by establishing the Cultural Arts Council (CAC) to develop, coordinate, and promote the arts in Miami Beach. Since the program’s inception, the City of Miami Beach Mayor and Commission and the CAC have awarded approximately \$20 million in cultural arts grants, supporting thousands of performances, exhibits, and other cultural activities in the City.

At present, the City awards \$1,050,000 in annual grants to cultural anchor institutions and presenting organizations that create cycles of performances and events all year round. In addition, \$2 million is allocated to sponsor cultural, sports, and holiday events throughout the year. These successful programs are innovative, far-reaching, and energetic. The City’s cultural investment is complemented by privately sponsored events. The result is an arts agenda impressive in reach, frequency, and programmatic diversity.

A well-qualified consultant is needed to assist the Tourism and Culture Department with strategic communications and publicity services related to the City’s robust arts and culture programming, including, but not limited to, strategy, marketing, media outreach, social media, and public relations. In the past, the department has sought quotes annually for the services. However, the

department is interested in considering a longer-term arrangement to ensure that a more strategic approach can be developed and implemented.

Accordingly, the Administration developed RFQ 2024-010-ND for public relations services for arts and culture, seeking proposals for the desired services.

### **ANALYSIS**

On January 31, 2024, the Mayor and the City Commission authorized the issuance of RFQ No. 2024-010-ND for public relations services for arts and culture. On January 31, 2024, the RFQ was issued. A voluntary pre-proposal conference to provide information to proposers submitting a response was held on February 14, 2024. Three (3) addenda were issued, and 100 prospective bidders accessed the advertised solicitation. RFQ responses were due and received on April 5, 2024. The City received a total of ten (10) proposals from the following firms:

- Blue Medium, Inc.
- CCOM Group, Inc.
- Circle of One Marketing Inc.
- Culture Counsel II, Inc.
- Department PR
- E-PR Online
- Hylink Group
- Mozaic Media & Communications, Inc.
- Perfect Plan Public Relations, LLC
- The Weinbach Group, Inc.

On April 29, 2024, the City Manager appointed the Evaluation Committee via LTC # 158-2024. The Evaluation Committee convened on May 17, 2024, to consider proposals received. The Committee was comprised of Melissa Berthier, Director, Office of Marketing and Communications; Lissette Garcia Arrogante, Director, Tourism and Culture Department; Ian Rand, Assistant Director of Marketing and Communications, The Wolfsonian – FIU; and Grisette Roque Marcos, Executive Director, Miami Beach Visitors and Convention Authority.

The Committee was provided an overview of the project and information relative to the City's Cone of Silence Ordinance and the Government Sunshine Law. The Committee was also provided with general information on the scope of services and a copy of each proposal. The Committee was instructed to score and rank each proposal pursuant to the evaluation criteria established in the RFQ. The evaluation process resulted in the ranking of proposers as indicated in Attachment A.

The Evaluation Committee deemed Culture Counsel II, Inc. (Culture Counsel) the best-qualified firm to provide public relations services for arts and culture. The Evaluation Committee noted that Culture Counsel II, Inc. has years of experience in the art world and an extensive network of journalists and editors that will generate a variety of pitching angles and evergreen narratives around arts and culture in the City. Culture Counsel will be able to diversify outreach across different channels of media, sharing the City's news with and placing stories in national and international broadsheets, art publications, and popular culture, lifestyle, philanthropy, architecture, and travel press. The Evaluation Committee also noted that Culture Counsel not only has long-term collaborations in Miami-Dade County but has communicated some of the most impactful cultural projects in the country, from museum openings to art fairs (NADA Miami Beach, The Armory Show, Dallas Art Fair), public art initiatives (Creative Tiem, Time Square Arts), and citywide biennials (Prospect New Orleans, Performa, Fotofocus).

Culture Counsel works with arts communities across the country, spurring momentum through media outreach, community engagement, programming, and partnerships. Though Culture Counsel works in many cultural sectors, from architecture and design to philanthropy and

entertainment, its work in the art world has defined the firm since 2015. Through its work with various types of cultural institutions (funders, grantmakers, non-profit presenting organizations, commercial spaces), it harnesses a network effect that amplifies audience engagement and spotlights entire communities. Its Miami-Dade County collaborations include NADA Miami Beach, the Perez Art Museum Miami, MOCA North Miami, Nina Johnson Gallery, Oolite Arts, the Joh S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the O, Miami Poetry Festival. All references provided positive feedback.

The Evaluation Committee also deemed Blue Medium, Inc., (Blue Medium) the second-ranked proposer, and Department PR, the third-ranked proposer, qualified in the event that negotiations with Culture Counsel II, Inc. are unsuccessful.

Blue Medium, founded in 2000, is a public relations company specializing in serving the visual arts, architecture, and design communities. From long-term, full-scale communications strategy and implementation to shorter-term project-based public relations, Blue Medium provides a range of services founded upon lasting relationships with the media we serve and a high standard of professional trust and reliability. Its clients include, but are not limited to, the Andy Warhol Museum, The Mystic Seaport Museum, and the Rhode Island School of Design. All references provided positive feedback. Finally, Blue Medium is the incumbent providing these services to the City, and the City has been satisfied with its work and offered positive feedback.

Department PR is a women-led multicultural communications firm based in New York City that is dedicated to the arts, design, and culture. Its approach is human-centric and collaborative, with a proven track record of setting goals and achieving them. It centers its communications campaigns on strategic thinking, deep relationships with art and cultural media worldwide, and creative thinking to create dynamic storytelling for its clients that is compelling and effective. It has worked on notable campaigns worldwide with notable recent projects in Florida, including the SCOPE Art Show, The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, and the ArtLife of West Palm Beach. All references provided positive feedback.

### **FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

The Tourism and Culture Department has budgeted \$60,000 for these services. Fees will be established through the negotiation process. Services pursuant to the award of this RFQ shall be subject to successful negotiations and the availability of funds approved through the City's budgeting process. It is not anticipated that grant funding will be utilized for this project.

### **Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate?** (FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

The Business Impact Estimate (BIE) was published on . See BIE at:  
<https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/city-clerk/meeting-notices/>

### **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

160-0380-000312-25-406-548-00-00- \$60,000

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the foregoing, it is recommended that the Mayor and City Commission approve the Resolution authorizing the Administration to enter into negotiations with Culture Counsel II, Inc., the top-ranked proposer; further, if the Administration is not successful in negotiating an agreement with Culture Counsel II, Inc., authorize the Administration to enter into negotiations with Blue Medium, Inc., as the second-ranked proposer; further, if the Administration is not

successful in negotiating an agreement with Blue Medium, Inc., authorize the Administration to enter into negotiations with Department PR, as the third-ranked proposer; and further authorize the City Manager and City Clerk to execute an agreement upon conclusion of successful negotiations by the Administration.

**Applicable Area**

Citywide

**Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-17?**

No

**Is this item related to a G.O. Bond Project?**

No

**Was this Agenda Item initially requested by a lobbyist which, as defined in Code Sec. 2-481, includes a principal engaged in lobbying?** No

If so, specify the name of lobbyist(s) and principal(s):

**Department**

Procurement

**Sponsor(s)**

**Co-sponsor(s)**