

FINAL

THIRD TAXING DISTRICT
of the City of Norwalk
Commission Meeting
April 17, 2017

ATTENDANCE: Commissioners: David Brown, Chair; Charles Yost, Debora Goldstein,

STAFF: Jim Smith, General Manager

OTHERS: Kovak-Likly: Bruce Likely, Andrea Preston, Daina Basile
Greyskye: David Riss, Greg Walsh, Cindy Cavoto, Chris Plaisted,
Marc Baritz, Skye Riss

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. A quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one from the public was in attendance to comment.

MARKETING FIRM INTERVIEWS

Mr. Smith explained that TTD has gone through an RFP process for a new Marketing firm. From the responses received, two firms were selected to bring to the Commission for their review and possible selection for the new Marketing firm to be brought on board.

Kovak-Likly Communications

Mr. Bruce Likely thanked Mr. Smith and the Commission for having the opportunity to present to them. Kovak-Likly is an independent, industry-leading public relations firm offering world-class communications programs. They were founded in 1985, are located in Wilton, CT and employ a staff of fifteen, both full-time and part-time.

Mr. Likely, Principal, has been with the company for 17 years, with a background in Sales & Marketing. Other team members include Andrea Preston, Account Supervisor, Daina Basile, VP, Client Operations and Kelsey Robinette, Social Media (not present).

The Commission and Mr. Likely discussed TTD's upcoming needs. Their objective for TTD would be to reinforce TTD's positive image among key stakeholders, communicate proactively

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with TTD's diverse community and leverage Kovak-Likly's relationship with local media to drive awareness of TTD events and reinforce TTD's commitment to East Norwalk.

Further discussion took place around the experience of Kovak-Likly and what they could bring to TTD in the future, as well as what TTD's expectations would be of Kovak-Likly. Mr. Likly explained the process within their organization and how their experience is gained from all the clients they have served. He explained their pricing structure as a blended rate of \$200/hour, which means some employees (such as himself) are priced much higher and others are priced at a lower rate.

Some topics which were discussed included the newsletter, CT-DOT communications to the ratepayers, Roger Ludlow Tree Lighting, District Concerts, communications with the District's non-English speaking population and signage throughout the District.

Commissioner Goldstein asked Mr. Likly what his most interesting or unique pop they got for a client. Mr. Likly responded it would probably be the nomination for a deaf Miss America contestant. The other would be their work with Bruce Jenner.

Commissioner Brown asked if TTD was too small for Kovak-Likly. Mr. Likly responded, no, he believes they would be a good fit.

Greyskye Marketing Consultants

Greyskye Marketing Consultants is owned by David Riss, Founder/Sole Proprietor and was founded in 1988. Mr. Riss introduced his virtual team which includes an Advertising Director, Graphic Designer, PR/Corporate Relations Director, Social Media Director, Administrator/Project Manager.

Mr. Riss talked about his experience with his clientele and shared his success stories, which included some major fundraising events. Some of his most recent clients are in the medical, manufacturing, food, finance and technology fields. He has done work for electricity-related products as well. Mr. Riss said he was also familiar with the East Norwalk Business Association and has been able to help them increase their membership.

Commissioners Brown, Yost and Goldstein explained TTD and how it operates and provides district services to the community, i.e., newsletter, concerts, tree lighting. Discussion took place around these services. Two highlights included reaching ratepayers through print and social media tools, and communication challenges with the lower socio-economic and non-English speaking communities.

Mr. Smith asked about the ability maintain TTD's existing website. Mr. Riss said that he would handle about 80% of the work and was able to take-over the current website and keep it running and could also redevelop the website using current content. One major aspect would be for the website to support mobile friendly devices, which it currently cannot do.

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Mr. Smith asked how they would staff for TTD. Mr. Riss said he does most of the work and Ms. Riss assists. He is also a writer, designer, illustrator and a developer of marketing plans. Mr. Riss is very hands-on and the staffing will be dependent on the needs of TTD at any particular time.

Commissioner Brown asked about the price structure. Mr. Riss said Greyskye is \$225/hour and suggests a minimum average of 10 hours per month. There would be no contract. It would be whatever is needed.

Mr. Riss was asked if he thought Greyskye would be a good fit with TTD. He replied, yes, and that he sees many opportunities for good improvement.

Summary

Commissioner Goldstein liked Kovak-Likly. She felt Greyskye was geared more towards Advertising and Marketing and less towards the Public Relations side. Kovak-Likly's staff were long-term employees. She talked about being pushed versus being pulled. She thought that with Kovak-Likly, TTD would get pushed into their challenges versus Greyskye wanting TTD to push him. Commissioner Goldstein was very impressed with Mr. Likly's response about writing a press release and being able to write a press release that can get you coverage.

Commissioner Yost was in favor of Greyskye as he thought he had more creativity and an abundance source of ideas, and Mr. Riss is intimately involved with his clients. He thought the use of freelancers gave him more flexibility. He believes the freelance staff has a long track record with Mr. Riss. He felt Kovak-Likly had a more corporate feel versus Greyskye having a more hands-on approach.

Commissioner Brown felt that Kovak-Likly was very team oriented, but was a little concerned over the fact that they have 15 employees. One of his concerns with Greyskye was that he is a sole proprietorship, but would need to have a great rapport. He employs freelancers when/if needed, but thought his excitement, enthusiasm, ideas and passion were great.

Mr. Smith thought Greyskye was a great idea company, but showed concern over his sole proprietorship of the company. If something should happen to him, will TTD be left at risk? Mr. Smith did like the fact that Mr. Riss has worked with the East Norwalk Business Association. He sees Greyskye as non-traditional and Kovak-Likly as traditional.

**** COMMISSIONER BROWN MOVED TO EMPLOY GREYSKYE, DAVID RISS, AT THE RATE OF \$225/HOUR AND WITH NO CONTRACT.**

**** COMMISSIONER YOST SECONDED.**

**** TWO ACCEPTANCES.**

**** ONE OPPOSED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSES 2 TO 1.**

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ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER GOLDSTEIN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COMMISSIONER YOST SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Tenney
Executive Assistant
Third Taxing District