



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting

Wednesday, August 21, 2024

Agenda Item

Item 7. C.- 2025 Legislative agenda and authorize solicitation for lobbying services

Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

Summary

It is time for the LMRWD to set its legislative agenda for the 2025 session. Lisa Frenette, legislative liaison for the LMRWD, has given the LMRWD notice that she is retiring.

Legal Counsel has advised that it is up to the Board of Managers how to proceed finding a new legislative liaison. A draft Request for Proposals is attached for the Board's Review. The Board should advise the Administrator of any revisions to the draft Request for Proposals and then determine how to proceed in finding a replacement. Typically, when professional services are solicited, requests for proposals are published in the State Register and 30 days is allowed for receipt of proposals. Since it is so close to the beginning of the next legislative session, it may be better to follow a different process, so that the LMRWD's new lobbyist can assist the Board in developing legislative priorities.

The last time the LMRWD looked for a lobbyist, in 2027, individuals were recommended to the LMRWD by its retiring lobbyist. The Board asked the Administrator to interview the individuals and make a recommendation to the Board, since the lobbyist works most closely with the Administrator. Three candidates were interviewed, and Lisa Frenette was recommended to the Board.

The Board can ask the Personnel Committee to interview potential lobbyists and bring a recommendation to the Board at the September meeting.

In addition, the Board should think about priorities for the 2025 legislative session.

Attachments

Draft Request for Qualifications for Government Relations Consultant

Recommended Action

Approve draft Request for Qualifications for Government Relations Consultant and authorize publication.

August 21, 2024

Request for Qualifications

Government Relations Consultant

The Lower Minnesota River Watershed District is a watershed district established and operating pursuant to Minnesota Statutes chapters 103B and 103D (“LMRWD”); whose purpose is to protect, preserve and use natural surface and groundwater storage and retention systems; minimize public capital expenditures needed to correct flooding and water quality problems; identify and plan for means to effectively protect and improve surface and groundwater quality; establish more uniform local policies and official controls for surface and groundwater management; Prevent soil erosion into surface water systems; promote groundwater recharge; protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat and water recreational facilities; and secure the other benefits associated with proper surface and groundwater management. The LMRWD serves as the local sponsor for the US Army Corps of Engineers maintenance of the Minnesota River 9-foot Navigation Channel.

LMRWD seeks a Government Relations Consultant to provide an ongoing process of advancing the interests of the LMRWD by assisting in the development and promotion of the LMRWD legislative agenda and by:

- Identifying the legislative consequences of choices;
- Discussing alternatives
- Educating the LMRWD Board and staff about the issues involved; and
- Informing the LMRWD Administrator of potential legislation that might affect LMRWD governance, programs or operations.

In this function the LMRWD Government Relations Consultant shall possess an understanding of current LMRWD programs and priorities; establish and maintain a professional relationship with key legislators and other elected or appointed officials and agency representatives; and seek to advance LMRWD priorities in formal and informal settings.

The LMRWD Government Relations Consultant shall possess considerable experience in; 1) legislative processes, 2) watershed/natural resource governance, and 3) agency and local government, as related to water and natural resource management. In addition, the LMRWD Government Relations Consultant will have a working knowledge of the statutes and rules under which watersheds operate.

Scope of Services

General Lobbyist Services on Retainer

- A. The LMRWD Government Relations Consultant shall provide lobbyist services, during regular legislative sessions and advocacy services on behalf of the client for the remaining months of the agreement.
- B. Retainage shall also provide for:
 1. Meet annually with LMRWD Board Members and staff to develop a legislative policy agenda that supports the LMRWD's strategic priorities.
 2. Provide legislative research and updates on legislative proposals that may affect the LMRWD and its operations.
 3. Conduct weekly verbal briefings with LMRWD staff during the legislative session.
 4. Provide monthly written reports to LMRWD staff during the legislative session on proposals that may affect LMRWD and its operations.
 5. Meet with LMRWD Board Members and staff to debrief and adjust the policy agenda, after each legislative session.
 6. Provide legislative representation for the LMRWD by coordinating with others interested in legislation, meeting with legislators, attending appropriate committee hearings, developing written lobbying materials and providing or arranging testimony before legislative committees as needed.

Understanding of State, Regional and Local Government and Watershed Management

The LMRWD Government Relations Consultant will:

- A. Demonstrate a current understanding of issues relative to LMRWD governance, projects, or programs.
- B. Maintain a current understanding of LMRWD programs and activities.
- C. Be aware of state and regional plans and priorities related to watershed and natural resource management.
- D. Possess a high professional regard among his/her peers.

District Policy Relating to Member Communities and Other Governmental Jurisdictions

It is the policy of the LMRWD that District Consultants may not simultaneously represent governmental jurisdictions fully or partially located within the LMRWD without prior written approval from the LMRWD Board of Managers.

District Policy Related to Non-Discrimination

In performing the Services, the LMRWD Government Relations Consultant will ensure that no person is excluded from full employment rights or participation in or the benefits of any program, service or activity on the ground of race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, public assistance status or national origin; and no person who is protected by applicable federal or state laws, rules or regulations against discrimination otherwise will be subjected to discrimination.

Submittal Requirements (please limit your response to 5 pages or less):

Proposals shall be submitted electronically to info@lowermnriverwd.org by 4:00 p.m. on, October 3, 2024. Proposals shall include the following:

- A. A summary of your firm's experience and expertise to meet the requirements outlined in the Scope of Services.
- B. The names and qualifications of consultants working for LMRWD.
- C. A list of other staff, their qualifications, and a description of the type of activities they will do on behalf of the LMRWD.
- D. A list of sub-consultants, their qualifications, and a description of the type of activities they will do on behalf of the LMRWD.
- E. The proposed fee and payment structure including those charged by sub-consultants.

The District reserves the right to accept or reject any or all responses, in part or in whole, and to waive any minor informalities, as deemed in the District's best interests. In determining the most advantageous proposal, the District reserves the right to consider matters such as, but not limited to, consistency with the District's watershed management plan goals, and the quality and completeness of the consultant's completed projects similar to the proposed project