



CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, N.Y.
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

Memorandum

To: Patrick Holder, Commissioner of Buildings
From: Darren M. Morton, Ed.D., CPRP, CMFO
Date: July 15, 2024
Re: Proposed Labella Contract

Thank you for your email, dated Friday, July 12, 2024, regarding the abovementioned subject, and your detailed explanation for requesting approval to waive the requirement for a Request for Proposal. I fully understand the dilemma which the Building Department faces and the need for immediate action. My responsibility and objective as the Comptroller and Chief Financial Officer is to ensure financial efficiency, compliance and the best use of the taxpayers funds.

Notwithstanding the urgency of the need to conduct inspections of public assembly and multi-dwelling parcels, the City faces severe financial challenges with limited financial resources. Any deviation from the adopted procurement policy warrants specific inquiry, research, and dialogue. Therefore, my inquiry was deliberate to ascertain if the issuance of an extension to the existing Labella contract was prudent and the most appropriate path forward. Based on the information provided in your email, there is a clear dearth in capacity, including qualifications within the current Building Department staffing, to complete these inspection requirements in a timely manner. While I am inclined to support the temporary acquisition of services from Labella, I remain concerned about the permanent resolve to ensure the City has the capacity to perform these inspections, and other building code requirements, as required by law; in addition to the overall operation of the Building Department to improve services and maintain fiscal responsibility.

For the reasons delineated in your email, I am prepared cautiously support your recommendation with the understanding that the City/Building Department will:

- Extend the contract with Labella as an immediate and interim measure to expire in September 2024
- Issue a RFP to contract a third-party consultant to perform these inspections going forward and on a more permanent basis in the future, and to maintain a schedule to ensure the City is performing these inspections as dictated by law.
- Provide a cost benefit analysis to support the third-party consultant verses hiring additional staff.
- Set reasonable revenue targets for these and other building department services to balance the general fund budget.

If there are any further questions or concerns, I will contact you or present them at the Board of Estimates and Contracts meeting.