



CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 10/20/2015

ALL

Item Creation Date: 10/13/2015

ARA- Emancipet Contract Amendment

Agenda Item#: 13.

Background:

The Administration & Regulatory Affairs Department (ARA) and the City Purchasing Agent recommend that City Council approve an amendment to the February 26, 2015 agreement between the City of Houston and Emancipet, Inc. ("Emancipet") for citywide, low-cost spay/neuter services.

Emancipet is a non-profit organization that performs low-cost spay/neuter services in partnership with various Texas cities. Since 1999, Emancipet has worked to make spay/neuter services and preventive veterinary care affordable and accessible to pet owners across Texas. They have performed over 235,000 spay/neuter surgeries and established clinics in traditionally underserved communities in Texas.

In March 2015, City Council designated discretionary funds for Emancipet to open a clinic in Houston by June 1, 2015, with the ultimate goal of establishing several neighborhood-oriented, brick-and-mortar clinics throughout the City in the areas with the greatest need. In April, Emancipet opened their clinic at Neighborhood Centers' Ripley House facility (4410 Navigation Street) and began performing spay/neuter surgeries for BARC and other local shelters. On June 1, 2015, Emancipet opened their clinic to the public and has since performed 1,517 spay/neuter surgeries and 1,641 wellness visits (as of October 12, 2015). Additionally, Emancipet has provided over 600 spay/neuter surgeries free of charge since September to customers who would otherwise have been unable to afford these services.

Per the existing agreement, Emancipet's goal was targeted to an estimated 4,200 low-cost spay/neuter procedures in the first year of the agreement, as well as 7,000 basic animal wellness services to the community. The goals in the agreement were developed with Emancipet and based upon their experience in other cities across Texas. After operating in Houston for just over a year, Emancipet has come to realize that the traditional outreach model that has worked in other cities is more difficult in a city the size of Houston, where our lack of zoning, higher percentage of stray animals, and sometimes more transient population require tweaks to the Emancipet outreach strategy. During each of the first three months of Emancipet's clinic operations, the number of animals served was much lower than anticipated. The cost of traditional marketing and advertising in Houston has been much higher than in other markets served by Emancipet. Emancipet spent \$12,000 over their marketing budget to raise awareness of the clinic in the first few months due to these higher than anticipated costs of marketing and advertising. The numbers are now increasing steadily, due to Emancipet employing full time staff focused on outreach inside the neighborhood, and due to the number of clients served who are now spreading the word about the clinic. Emancipet anticipates these efforts will steadily build awareness and increase service numbers throughout the first year of operations.

The proposed amendment takes into account the greater challenges Emancipet faces in marketing in Houston and adjusts the service goals to more realistic levels based on these challenges. Under the amended agreement, Emancipet would perform an estimated 3,000 low-cost spay/neuter procedures each year. The proposed amendment also provides additional benefits to the City of Houston in the form of free advisory services to BARC and Houston area spay/neuter programs to support the development of the City's animal welfare activities. The free services would include guidance on the development and implementation of BARC's door-to-door outreach program, as well as outreach training for BARC and other local organizations. Emancipet will also continue to provide animal wellness services.

ARA recommends amending the City's agreement with Emancipet to include Emancipet's professional services. This recommendation is made pursuant to Chapter 252, Section 252.022 (a) (2), "a procurement necessary to preserve or protect the public health and safety of the municipality's residents," of the Texas Local Government Code for exempted procurements.

Pay or Play Program:

The proposed contract requires compliance with the City's Pay or Play Ordinance regarding health benefits for employees of City contractors. Emancipet, Inc. will provide health benefits to eligible employees in compliance with City policy.

Hire Houston First

This procurement is exempt from the City's Hire Houston First Ordinance. Bids/proposals were not solicited because this is an award subject to the health and safety exception of the Texas Local Government Code, referenced above.

Attachment: MWBE Zero-Percentage goal document approved by the Office of Business Opportunity.

Departmental Approval Authority:



Tina Paez, Director
Administration & Regulatory Affairs Department

Prior Council Action:

3/4/2015: 2015-193

Amount of Funding:

n/a

Contact Information:

Lara Cottingham Phone: 832- 393-8503

Vernita Jones Phone: 832 -393-0784

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Emancipet Form A (Fair Campaign Ordinance)

Emancipet Delinquent Tax Report

Emancipet Affidavit of Ownership

MWBE Waiver

Type

Backup Material

Backup Material

Other

Signed Cover sheet