



Legislation Text

File #: 20-1100, Version: 1

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

ACTION REQUESTED:

Approve the award of RFP 20-290, Naper Settlement Distance Learning, to Night Kitchen Interactive for an amount not to exceed \$160,500 and for a one-year term

DEPARTMENT: Naper Settlement

SUBMITTED BY: Harriet M. Pistorio, COO

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW:

N/A

BACKGROUND:

The mission of the Naper Settlement (NS) is to provide immersive and innovative learning opportunities to all. Throughout the 13-acre, 31-building museum campus, visitors experience exploratory learning incorporating museum-educator led tours and programs.

In 2019, NS had over 132,000 visitors, of which 35,000 were schoolchildren and teachers from 390 schools across 80+ school districts in northern Illinois. In March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, on-site school programs, as well as the museum's public programs and special events, were halted in compliance with state mandates and CDC guidelines. Although the museum re-opened in July with self-guided mobile tours, exhibits, and small-group guided tours, all programs are continuing to operate at reduced visitor capacity and state health and safety restrictions have resulted in school field trips being curtailed.

As an important provider of informal learning, NS educational programs are designed to augment classroom learning and tie directly to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Learning Standards. Museum education trends and conversations with local teachers made it obvious that NS needed to pivot to reach audiences where they are right now, whether in the classroom or at home. The ISBE *Starting the 2020-21 School Year* recommends, "pursuing virtual activities and events in lieu of field trips" until field trips are safe to resume.

The museum's Learning Experiences team selected two current programs, *Living History* and *The Underground Railroad in Northern Illinois*, and a third, new program featuring historic narratives about how communities practice resiliency in challenging times, to be developed into distance learning programs.

In August 2020, NS issued RFP 20-290, Naper Settlement Distance Learning, to solicit proposals from experienced and qualified vendors to develop, design, test, and launch a digital platform for a distance learning program that incorporates both asynchronous (augmented reality [AR] and virtual

reality [VR]) and synchronous (real time) experiences for students in grades 4 through 12. By using both methods, students and teachers will be able to experience living history demonstrations and theatre, while talking and engaging live with museum educators. This project also allows the museum to alter its delivery of revenue-generating, mission-driven educational programs to remote learners in public and private schools, home schools, organized groups, and home/hybrid learning environments.

DISCUSSION:

Advertisement Date:	08/03/2020	Notices Sent:	33
Opening Date:	08/25/2020	Planholders:	11
		Proposals Received:	02

Proposals were received from the following vendors:

Night Kitchen Interactive
Howes Studio Inc.

Staff contacted planholders for feedback regarding why certain planholders chose not to respond. The two primary responses were either the RFP timeline did not fit into their schedule or the requirements were outside of their scope of services.

A selection team of staff from NS, Finance, and IT evaluated the proposals and scored them based upon the following criteria:

1. Capability, Capacity and Qualifications of the Firm (35%)
2. Suitability and Quality of the Software (20%)
3. Suitability and Quality of the Approach (20%)
4. Milestones and Deliverables (20%)
5. Outcomes to be Achieved (5%)

Night Kitchen Interactive was selected for an interview because the company demonstrated experience in developing digital platforms such as online exhibits and distance learning for history institutions around the country similar in museum size and content to NS.

Two highly regarded museum education content specialists from the vendor will use a pedagogical approach to curriculum planning and content engagement, and partner with museum staff to redeploy custom content to a remote learning platform. Night Kitchen Interactive will use AR and VR to create 3-D digital images of selected artifacts and they will script and film museum educators performing living history and history theater-based programs in NS buildings. The award-winning *Underground Railroad in Northern Illinois* will be filmed, and the students will then speak live with a museum educator about pre- and post-Civil War history. Night Kitchen is highly experienced in history content, including script development and pre- and post-course content materials. The remote environment will be an asset in the museum's learning experience toolkit and can be utilized in many ways.

Under the proposed agreement, the Settlement would pay \$150,500 over the final three months of

2020 with a \$10,000 maintenance expense in 2021.

Following the interview, staff was able to successfully negotiate with Night Kitchen Interactive to meet the timeline for the three distance learning field trips to be completed by December 31, 2020. Staff also negotiated a maintenance contract for a one-year from date of award to December 31, 2021 with four, one-year options to extend.

FISCAL IMPACT:

CIP: N/A

Development of an interactive learning feature will be expensed to the capital account listed below. The proposed project was not budgeted in 2020, but will be funded through underspend in salaries and benefits. The maintenance expenses are tentatively included in the 2021 Budget.

Account Number	Fund Description	Total Budget Amount
51423200-551504	Naper Settlement	\$0