



Braintree Town Council
Committee of Ways & Means
One JFK Memorial Drive
Braintree, Massachusetts 02184

MEMBERS
Joseph Reynolds, Chairman
Julia Flaherty, Vice-Chairwoman
Elizabeth Maglio, Member

MINUTES
Thursday, February 16, 2023

A meeting of the Committee of Ways & Means was held via Zoom, on Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 5:30p.m.

Councilor Reynolds was in the Chair.
Clerk of the Council, Susan M. Cimino conducted the roll call.

Present: Joseph Reynolds, Chairman
Julia Flaherty, Vice-Chairwoman
Elizabeth Maglio, Member

Also Present: Hannah York, CLA Principal
Shawn McGoldrick, CLA – Town Auditor

Approval of Minutes

- None

Old Business

- **22 066 Council President: Appointment - Town Auditor or take up any action relative thereto**

Chairman Reynolds asked if Hannah would like to make a statement to introduce herself.

Hannah York stated I work for CLA as the Principal. We specialize in State and Local Government (SLG) and special grants like ARPA. We are excited to have the opportunity again to work with the Town.

Shawn McGoldrick stated that back in 2019 the current structure that was proposed back then the structure has changed and positions have changed. We went from a crew of 6 on the last proposal to 10. Many moved up to more senior rolls. The first CLA contract with the town it was more of a split with Dan Sullivan and Shawn McGoldrick. It was a brand new contract and I was new in the role. After a year I, Shawn have done a lot more of the work. The hope and the game plan is to get other people more involved. You will not lose me, I will be more of a review of their work. The first contract with the town was more or less low-balled it to get our foot in the door. We wanted this experience. We wanted to

work with the Town of Braintree. CLA is mandating us to get our rates. It is critical to get other people on our team to do this work as well. I will still be your direct contact.

Hannah York stated we are very committed to retain our top talent in CLA. We have an amazing group and award that with advancement and compensation. We need to do this to compete with the market. We have had low turnover.

Chairman Reynolds asked if any Committee members would like to speak on Order 22 066.

Councilor Flaherty stated that I enjoy working with Shawn and others from CLA. I made a call to Melrose as a reference and Shawn got 5 stars. He is very responsive to calls and trust is very high.

It is hard to compare this contract to the next one. Structure is a little different. Why is there a range of rate for the one Controller?

Shawn McGoldrick stated over a 3 year contract others could be elevated to that Controller level. Their pay would start with a lower billing rate at that first tier. Top tier would be for the Controller who has had much more experience.

Councilor Flaherty asked if it can be predicted which staff would do what percentage of the work.

Shawn McGoldrick stated the way the team is right now, I would see the Assistant Controller and some of the Seniors doing the work. I could ask for a team member to prep the work and I would review it. I am hoping it is me at 50% and Senior and Assistant Controller equaling 50%.

Hannah York stated it is also hard to predict because it depends on what kind of project Braintree asks us to do. The structure with Braintree is we do a lot of different projects. Our staff has a lot of different abilities and backgrounds so we can juggle that workload. We have a lot of options. Shawn has always done very well at the overall but not to exceed budget to get you the most for your money. We can do that by providing a mix with the different levels. We will do the highest quality work with the lowest price person that we can do.

Shawn McGoldrick stated we have never gone over our appropriation, we have never asked for a supplemental, we have turned over money most years. I do not go to Braintree if it is not necessary and if it is a slow time.

Councilor Flaherty asked about Technology Fee at 5% and if that can be negotiated.

Shawn McGoldrick stated that is a directive here at CLA. We spend a significant amount of money in technology. We take security very highly and scrutinize it and take it very seriously.

Councilor Maglio stated this is the first year I have worked with Shawn McGoldrick. You are by far the best. You have a connection, you have history with the town, you are accessible. If you do not have an answer you will get it. If there is wiggle room with this contract, I would hope it would be in the middle tier.

Chairman Reynolds stated I now understand the new organizational charts. I like this strategy of yours and bring up the senior team to have a stable and strong organization. You are giving the newer professionals in the field and having Shawn as the person to overlook and provide guidance. I would not

expect our level of service drop because you are there for guidance and supervision. How will the work % be divided.

Shawn McGoldrick stated I am hoping it is me at 50% and Senior and Assistant Controller equaling 50%. At other towns I set the other team members up and they do the work and use their skills and I review it and the community gets the benefit of a lower rate.

Chairman Reynolds stated Braintree has asked for a cap each year and you have consistently come in under that cap based on the services and what has been asked of you. Chairman Reynolds asked about spending the allocation of funds.

Shawn McGoldrick stated sometimes there is something in the news and it is asked can this happen in Braintree. There are also certain times of the year when we have more work to do than others like Budget Season. If your concern is we need more projects done then we can scale back and figure it out. We will have this discussion. We have never asked for more funding.

Hannah York stated we understand budgetary constraints. The last thing you want to do is cut on compliance and monitoring and oversight versus the risk if you do not have that going on. Having us as part of this team we can help provide other services.

Chairman Reynolds stated looking at the total picture your answers are very assuring.

Councilor Flaherty asked about a cap for this contract.

Shawn McGoldrick stated whatever the Town sets is what it is.

Councilor Flaherty stated I want the cap to be reasonable. I do not want you to cut back on the work you are doing.

Clerk of the Council Cimino weighed in the cap was at \$74,000 for most of these contracts. The past two years CLA agreed to a cap of \$71,000 due to the mayor's office ask for all departments to cut budgets. CLA has never exceeded the cap in any given year.

Councilor Flaherty stated I would like to suggest a cap of not to exceed \$76,000 for the next 3 years.

Hannah York stated we work within the budget we are given but if we leave a number out of the contract and state we work to the appropriation given there is no need to go back and re-negotiate the contract if we ever had a time where there were say a special project and needed more funding.

Clerk Cimino stated that a decision should be made on the appropriation each budget season with the Council President. We should not have a definite number be in the contract. If we ever wanted to exceed the number we would not want to have to re-negotiate.

Councilor Flaherty asked about staff members being at \$55 last contract. Was very little work assigned because the rate was so low or does the Braintree work need to be assigned to a more knowledgeable person.

Shawn McGoldrick stated I would not be able to use a staff member at \$55 per hour versus the actual going rate of \$130.

Hannah York stated our Interns now are in the \$120 to \$130 rate now. Our staff member now is a very high level person. We need a certain skill set and professionalism.

Councilor Flaherty asked if CLA is willing to come down in rates?

Hannah York stated at this time to keep competitive we feel those are fair rates.

Hannah York stated what if the cap would be whatever the annual appropriation is that the town agrees on each year.

Councilor Flaherty asked Clerk Cimino if that would work.

Clerk Cimino stated that would work. Each year the appropriation would be determined by the Town Council at budget time. It would be our decision.

Councilor Flaherty stated I like that and would like to make a favorable recommendation if you all agree.

Chairman Reynolds stated looking at the rates at the lower end. I have come up with about 372 hours billable hours divided by 6. I then multiplied the average rate of \$210 from the 6 different levels of rates and came up somewhere about \$78,000. I feel we are in the ballpark. I have a level of confidence we would have a budgeted amount each year that we decide upon with the flexibility.

Chairman Reynolds asked if there is a Motion for Order 22 066.

Motion read by Councilor Flaherty for Favorable Recommendation to the full Council:

MOTION: UPON THE REQUEST OF THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT, THE TOWN OF BRAINTREE, THROUGH THE BRAINTREE TOWN COUNCIL, IT IS SO ORDERED Pursuant to Section 2-8 (A) of the Charter of the Town of Braintree the Town Council to appoint Clifton Larson Allen as Town Auditor for a three year contract effective April 24, 2023 through April 23, 2026.

Motion: by Councilor Flaherty for Favorable Recommendation to the full Council to Approve Order 22 066

Second: by Councilor Maglio

Vote: For (3–Flaherty, Maglio, Reynolds), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

New Business

- None

It was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:41p.m. by Roll Call Vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan M. Cimino
Clerk of the Council

Documents provided for Meeting

- 22 066 Council President: Appointment - Town Auditor or take up any action relative thereto