

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2014**

**10:00 A.M.**

**PLAZA ROOM B, MUNICIPAL PLAZA BUILDING**

<b>Members Present:</b>	Councilmember Cris Medina, Chair, <i>District 7</i> Councilmember Shirley Gonzales, <i>District 5</i> Councilmember Ray Lopez, <i>District 6</i> Councilmember Ron Nirenberg, <i>District 8</i> Councilmember Mike Gallagher, <i>District 10</i>
<b>Members Absent:</b>	None
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Lisa Biediger, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Veronica Zertuche, <i>Deputy City Attorney</i> ; Shahrads Dowlatsahi, <i>Chief of Protocol</i> ; Eduardo Carrasco, <i>Senior Specialist</i> ; Christine Wright, <i>Intergovernmental Relations</i> ; Carlos Contreras, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Ryan J. Cook, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
<b>Others Present:</b>	Walter Serna, Tom Downs and Sarah Vilms, <i>Patton Boggs</i>

**1. Approval of minutes of the May 14, 2014 Intergovernmental Relations Council Committee Meeting**

Councilmember Nirenberg moved to approve the Minutes of the May 14, 2014 Intergovernmental Relations Council Committee Meeting. Councilmember Lopez seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**Briefing and Possible Action Items**

**2. Federal Legislative Priorities Update [Jeff Coyle, Intergovernmental Relations Director]**

Carlos Contreras introduced Tom Downs and Sarah Vilms of Patton Boggs.

Mr. Tom Downs stated that effective June 1, 2014, Patton Boggs had combined with Squire Sanders, a Law Firm established in Ohio in the 1890's. He noted that Squire Patton Boggs had 1,500 Lawyers spanning 44 Offices in 21 Countries. He noted that the combination placed Squire Patton Boggs among the top 25 Firms globally in term of Lawyer Headcount and 8<sup>th</sup> by Number of Countries in which the Firm had offices. He mentioned that the Firm was now ranked as one of the top 10 Largest Law Firms in the Washington, D.C. Area and among the largest in the United States. He stated that the Firm was advocating for key City of San Antonio (COSA) Funding Goals and working in close coordination with the San Antonio Congressional Delegation. He noted that to date, the U.S. House of Representatives had passed three of the 12 Annual Appropriations Bills, while two Bills have been reported out of the Senate Appropriations Committee. He added that the Senate Transportation-HUD Appropriations Bills includes \$550 million for TIGER Grants, while the House Version includes \$100 million for TIGER. He spoke of the Promise Zone Designation and stated that in January, President Obama named San Antonio as one of the five Inaugural Promise Zone Areas in the United States. He mentioned that the Firm had attended meetings and consultations on behalf of COSA with HUD and other Federal Agencies to discuss the benefits of the Promise Zone Designation.

Ms. Sarah Vilms stated that the Firm worked with the COSA Congressional Delegation and Coalition of Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Communities to secure a provision in the FY 2014 Omnibus Appropriations Act permitting the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to fund more than 25 UASI Jurisdictions. She indicated that following the meetings with DHS; San Antonio was reinstated for UASI Funding in the amount of \$1 million for 2014. He noted that the House had approved \$600 million for UASI in its version of the FY 2015 DHS Appropriations Bill.

Mr. Downs reported that the President's FY 2015 Budget did not include funding for the Federal Courthouse Construction and highlighted current Strategic Efforts: Maximizing the Federal Buildings Fund (FBF) Appropriations in FY 2015; Obtaining Zero Net Budget Authority in FY 2015 for the FBF; Setting aside FY 2015 Appropriations for Courthouse Construction; Directing FY 2015 Appropriations for Specific Courthouse Projects; Reordering Projects on the Five-Year Courthouse Construction List; and Evaluating Opportunities for Public-Private Partnership (P3) Financing. He spoke of the Urban Waters Partnership Program (UWFP). He stated that since 2012, the Firm had advocated for the City's Designation as a UWFP. He noted that the Firm arranged meetings with the White House, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Headquarters, EPA Region 6, HUD and other agencies to discuss the City's inclusion in the UWFP. He stated that following the designation of 18 UWFP Communities in 2012 and 2013, the Firm was informed that San Antonio would be the only new UWFP.

Ms. Vilms stated that the Firm was advocating for Pre-K Programming and Funding at the Federal Level and promoting Pre-K 4 SA as a National Model. She noted that the Firm obtained approval by the Senate HELP Committee Chairman Tom Harkin of Key Amendments included in Senate Bill 1697, "Strong Start for America's Children Act." She stated that the Amendments addressed key COSA concerns including: 1) Cities must be eligible as Direct Grantees, along with Local School Districts; and 2) Cities must have the ability to apply directly for Funding should their Governors elect to forgo participation in Federal Pre-K Programs.

Councilmember Gallagher asked of feedback from schools. Mr. Downs replied that he had not heard anything negative from schools.

Councilmember Lopez stated that the City needed to find a way to make known that they were a partner and not a competitor for Funding.

Mr. Downs spoke of efforts pertaining to the Bracken Bat Cave Conservation. He stated that the Firm had worked to gain the support of the U.S. Department of Interior including the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), for conservation of the Cave. He stated that the Firm had also discussed protections for the Cave through the Agricultural Easements offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). He indicated that the Firm had organized meetings for COSA with the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, FWS and NRCS. He noted that the FWS Deputy Director would be visiting the Cave in July.

Ms. Vilms spoke of the veterans Outreach Transition Center (VOTC). She stated that the Firm was assisting the City with efforts to obtain Grant Assistance from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) to advance the VOTC Project. She indicated that the Firm had arranged meetings for COSA City Council Members with EDA and helped identify key EDA Priorities in order to improve the prospects for a successful Grant Application. She noted that the Firm had obtained a COSA Congressional Delegation Letter to U.S. Commerce Secretary Pritzker in support of the VOTC Project. She spoke of the EPA Ground-Level Ozone Regulation and stated that the EPA was preparing to revise the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for Ground-Level Ozone. She noted that the EPA was considering a reduction from the current standard of 75 parts per billion (ppb) to between 60 and 70 ppb. She indicated that the proposed regulatory change could jeopardize the City's standing as the only major U.S. City in compliance with NAAQS for Ground-Level Ozone. She mentioned that over the past several years, the Firm has arranged contracts for COSA with EPA Headquarters and with EPA Region 6 in order to convey concerns about proposed changes in the NAAQS.

Councilmember Gallagher asked if there was any Congressional Oversight of the EPA. Mr. Downs replied that a Bill was recently introduced to prevent the EPA from moving forward and stated that it was very controversial.

Councilmember Lopez asked if Federal Funding was available for Studies. Mr. Down replied that under an Earmark Environment, the Firm could have sought out a Grant. However, he was unaware of any Federal Funds. Discussion ensued regarding Air Quality and Funding.

Ms. Vilms briefed the Committee on the remaining schedule for the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress.

No action was required for Item 2.

**3. Grants Update [Jeff Coyle, Intergovernmental Relations Director]**

Sally Basurto stated that Item 3 was presented with Item 2.

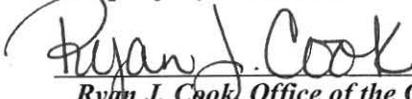
**Consideration for Future Meetings:**

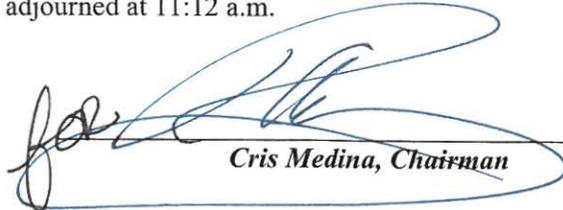
**4. Next Meeting Scheduled:** August 13, 2014

**Adjourn**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

  
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*Ryan J. Cook, Office of the City Clerk*

  
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*Cris Medina, Chairman*