




MEMORANDUM

Date: April 18, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Commissioners

Via: Albert P. Childress 
City Manager

From: Katie Halloran
Planning Director

Subject: **Interlocal Agreement with the College of the Florida Keys for Water Quality Partnership, involving funding, equipment, services, deliverables, and insurance**

Introduction

Authorize the City Manager to approve an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) outlining the funding, equipment, services, deliverables, and insurance for a water quality partnership with the College of the Florida Keys (CFK).

Background

In the fall of 2020, CFK began sampling water quality within Key West Harbor to capture the effects of an absence of cruise ships during the Covid shutdown. Based on funding priorities set by the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Water Quality Protection Program Steering Committee (WQPP), CFK then received a grant from EPA to expand the monitoring stations and sampling post Covid.

In 2021, the City of Key West surveyed its residents for the creation of a Strategic Plan, finalized in August of that year. Environmental Protection of Nearshore Waters was 4th of 6 community priorities that came from that survey effort. Per Strategic Plan action items, City staff met with CFK, as well as technical experts from the WQPP to determine sampling priorities and a budget, which was proposed in April of 2022 and approved for the FY23 budget which started in October of 2022. Dr. Patrick Rice's presentation to the City Commission from April 5, 2022, is included in the attachments.

During the summer of 2022, the City partnered with CFK on a 2nd EPA grant proposal to expand the Key West Harbor monitoring and add the City's sampling priorities (Mooring Fields, Mt Trashmore and Smathers Beach). EPA announced that CFK had been awarded the 2nd grant in December of 2022.

The City and CFK have continued to meet with the WQPP Steering Committee and are wrapping up a draft Key West Water Quality Improvement Plan, which will be presented to the Commission early summer and supports budget recommendations for FY24 in line with the Strategic Plan.

The City budgeted \$180,000.00 to partner with CFK on a Water Quality Testing Program. The ILA specifies that the bulk of the funding (~\$160,000.00) will pay for half of an autonomous vessel which CFK will use to expand sampling in Key West Harbor and three additional Key West priority areas. Remaining funds (~\$20,000.00) will pay for lab supplies and sample testing.

The ILA also allows CFK to install its continuous water quality monitoring system near Mallory Square and ensure that it carries enough insurance to protect the CITY.

Per the ILA and terms of EPA Grant #1, CFK will perform bi-weekly field measurements and monthly collection of water samples at the Key West Harbor for one year. The CFK team will also perform episodic measurements when large ships enter and exit the Harbor.

Per EPA Grant #2, CFK will extend the Key West Harbor monitoring program for another year and begin monitoring the three Key West priority areas. Upon completion of each EPA Grant, CFK will report to the City its findings, ensure the data is provided to the WQPP Steering Committee and assist the City in finalizing a Water Quality Improvement Plan.

Procurement

The City has budgeted \$180,000.00 in FY23 to create a Water Quality Testing Program with CFK, which amounts to approximately 18% of the entire project under both grants. This is a highly leveraged investment compared to the 82% funding provided by EPA and CFK. Providing capital equipment funds allows CFK staff to monitor more area and more variables which helps the City better understand how to protect its nearshore waters, something of immense value to Key West residents.

Recommendation

Staff recommends authorizing City Manager approval of this Water Quality Partnership Interlocal Agreement with The College of the Florida Keys to authorize funding, equipment, services, deliverables, and insurance requirements.

Attachments:
Management Agreement