

ODOT: Craig's bid was \$104,000 more than the only other bid for the project

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package. He also denied suggestions that his relationship with the department would bias his review.

"I think all of that enhances my ability to see what is good and bad and what needs to be improved," Craig said. "I think that is why they hired me. It has never occurred to me that somehow this would be connected to pursuing more work."

Craig has published articles praising the Department of Transportation's past work, bearing titles such as "Delivering Remarkable Results in a Changing Marketplace: Oregon's State Bridge Delivery Program."

Susan Morgan, a member of the Oregon Transportation Commission, defended Craig as independent, and said she is confident that the oversight committee "will hold Mr. Craig's team to high standards leading to an independent review of ODOT."

"Given the short time frame to completion, a consultant who is somewhat familiar with the organizational structure of ODOT may be an opportunity," Morgan said.

While the Department of Administrative Services ultimately was responsible for issuing a request for proposals and choosing Craig to do the review, Department of Transportation employees already had recruited potential consultants. Those employees also asked several firms to give input on what the review should include, according to previous reports by the Pamplin Media Group/EO Media Group Capital Bureau.

Two bidders

Only two companies bid for the project: Craig's firm and Pennsylvania-based Public Works.

The Department of Administrative Services formed a procurement team of three of its employees to score the proposals based on the quality of the executive summary, the firm's experience and approach to the audit, the consultants' resumes and pricing. Barry Pack, former chief administrative officer of the Department of Administrative Services whom Brown recently named interim director of the Oregon Lottery, made the final call on the selection, said spokesman Matt Shelby. Pack also served as a longtime aide to Brown when she was secretary of state.

Brown's office reiterated that she has entrusted the oversight committee and Department of Administrative Services to select an "experienced, independent consulting firm."

"This review will contribute to a stronger and better ODOT to serve the people of Oregon," said Bryan Hocka-

day, Brown's press secretary.

Craig's proposal scored 10 points higher than Public Works' in all areas except for price. Public Works bid \$246,600, while Craig offered to do the work for \$350,000.

Craig directed the Nebraska Department of Transportation for 10 years before becoming a consultant. Since then, he has done management reviews of "best practices" for programs administered by departments of transportation in Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and Washington state, according to his proposal. Public Works also has evaluated several departments of transportation, including those in Louisiana, West Virginia, Iowa, Colorado and New Mexico.

The request for proposal "clearly stated that we wanted someone with prior experience working with departments of transportation," Shelby said. "John has worked with ODOT and other states. We see this as a benefit."

Stakeholders expressed concerns back in January about whether a Department of Transportation audit overseen by transportation officials could be impartial.

'Truly independent' review

Several advocates with environmental and alternative transportation groups in a January letter asked Brown to hand over oversight of the audit to the Secretary of State's Office. That office already conducts performance audits for other state agencies.

"To ensure a rigorous and unbiased review, the audit must be truly independent," the letter stated. "With all due respect to the Oregon Transportation Commission, we believe the audit will be perceived as in-house if it is overseen by the Oregon Transportation Commission and if ODOT staff is engaged in scoping the audit and in hiring the consulting firm that performs the audit. An audit overseen by the Secretary of State would alleviate concerns about bias."

The state's choice of Craig to do the review deepened those concerns, said Chris Hagerbaumer, deputy director of the Oregon Environmental Council, who signed the letter.

"The more in-house the audit is, the less the people will trust that it is actually impartial, and what is the purpose of an audit that people don't see as being impartial? It isn't going to actually serve the state well," Hagerbaumer said.

Pamplin Media Group reporter Nick Budnick contributed to this report.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

Arch Cape: Plans to dissolve advisory group had been in the works for a while

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However, county counsel Chris Crean said bylaws do not prevail over the county's ability to create or disband a committee whenever it is appropriate. Crean said an issue for the county is the Arch Cape committee is a quasi-judicial committee that requires extra staff time to keep minutes and send notices for each meeting.

"It's the quasi-judicial function that they are conducting that is creating most of the difficulty and liability for the county," Crean said.

In addition to continuing the discussion, the Planning Commission directed county staff to research alternatives to resolve concerns without disbanding the group. Various options will be presented at the September meeting.

Losing history

The 39-year-old committee is the last active citizens advisory committee in Clatsop County. It is becoming commonplace in the region for such groups to be dissolved.

Last week, Pacific County Commissioners in Washington state voted to end Oysterville's Design Review Board. The Oysterville board had existed for four decades.

When the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners unanimously voted in February to dissolve Arch Cape's committee, it offered to recognize neighborhood associations instead.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

The Clatsop County Planning Commission listens to Arch Cape resident Michael Manzulli speak during a public hearing on the Arch Cape Design Review Committee Tuesday in Astoria.

Residents are not ready to entertain such an idea, as they continue to protect the current committee.

"Any ad hoc committee that is appointed for an individual issue, wouldn't necessarily be the same people that would be appointed for another issue," Gordon Church, of Arch Cape, said. "We lose all the history and structure of Arch Cape's involvement with the county."

Virginia Murphy, a committee member, took it one step further by suggesting the county reintroduce other citizen advisory committees around the county.

"In my eyes, the current Board of Commissioners and staff would better serve the cit-

izens by instituting advisory committees in the other areas to decentralize government and build grassroots involvement."

Why now?

Each of the residents who spoke Tuesday in some way asked why the county was taking action now.

Committee chairman Theodore Lundy wanted to contest the image of the group as an unnecessary bureaucratic layer. He also challenged the former interim county manager's assertion that the group created a hostile work environment.

"We serve the community," Lundy said. "We are there to help people work their way through the process."

County counsel explained how plans to dissolve the group had been in the works for a while.

What Mays witnessed at a committee meeting in January accelerated the process.

"This creates a huge liability for the county," Crean said.

Overall, the Planning Commission showed its support and understanding to the residents.

"It seems like a greatly valuable committee, and I was real disturbed that this whole thing would go this way," Commissioner Christopher Farrar said. "To me, the idea of rewriting the ordinances so the committee doesn't exist seems like some kind of a fairy tale, frankly."

Port: Commissioners expressed some buyer's remorse

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nearly 54 percent of the loan. The agency has included options to amortize the loan amount over 10 to 25 years.

"I think we're demonstrating successfully here that we're able to get a commitment on 95 percent of this project through Key Bank," said Jim Knight, the Port's executive director. "The only thing we need is an agreement from the Port Commission."

Commissioners expressed some buyer's remorse, discussing other funding options and whether the entire central waterfront should share in the cost of a stormwater system ultimately meant to serve all of them. But commissioners, under pressure from the state to make progress, voted unanimously to move forward with the loan.

The Port was flagged by the state Department of Environmental Quality in August 2014 after tests over two years showed elevated levels of copper entering the Columbia River. The metal can damage the olfactory and navigational abilities of salmon and other marine life. The state required the agency to have a stormwater treatment system that lowers the level of copper below federal benchmarks. The agency is already a month behind the June deadline to complete the system, but is getting leniency in exchange for progress.

Stormwater will be col-

lected from all of Pier 3 and the upland portions of the central waterfront excluding piers 1 and 2, and pumped to a centralized system of settling ponds and biowswales on Pier 3. Astoria Forest Products leases much of Pier 3 for its timber-sorting and processing yard, one-fifth of the affected land and possibly 20 percent of the loan.

"I think it's probably a fair thing that the leaseholders help

pay for it," said Robert Moon, acting manager for Astoria Forest Products, adding the payments should be tied to the life of the stormwater system.

Bornstein Seafoods, Englund Marine & Industrial Supply, Bergerson Construction and River Land Co. LLC each lease between 6 and 7 percent of the affected area. The Port has met with tenants about the proposal and is planning

further meetings to iron out the details.

"Overall, Englund is not happy about the additional costs, nor the Tier II situation," Jeremy Davis, the chief financial officer for Englund Marine, said of the state designation. "However, we realize that water standards are becoming more strict, that treatment is inevitable and that someone has to pay for it."



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