

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 10, 2014
TO: Members of the School Board
VIA: Patrick K. Murphy
FROM: John C. Chadwick

BUDGET QUESTION: How much money does APS spend on Public Relations and Communication consultants for CIP community engagement?

RESPONSE:

Costs/Services Provided

Reingold Link is retained under a fixed price contract in the amount of \$169,000 for FY14 for various public relations and communication services, the most notable of which is the CIP. Services performed on the CIP include:

- Assistance in brainstorming and developing community engagement process
- Preparation of mailers, flyers, and other printed materials
- Preparation for, rehearsal of, and facilitation at community meetings
- Development of talking points
- Development, hosting, and analysis of feedback forms

Other Facilities and Operations (F&O) initiatives on which Reingold Link has performed similar public relations and communication services include:

- APS Go! branding, graphics, surveys, and talking points
- 2012 CIP projects, talking points, community updates, and press releases
- Aquatics business and community engagement plan

Rationale for Retaining Consultant

F&O is tasked with a number of initiatives, particularly the CIP and APS Go!, that are a direct response to the rapid growth in enrollment at APS. These initiatives all demand massive outreach and engagement with individuals and stakeholder groups throughout the Arlington community. F&O staff does not have the skills or capacity to perform these services successfully. While F&O collaborates closely with School and Community Relations, its staff does not have the capacity to provide all of the services required.

Consequences of Not Retaining Consultant Services

Without these services F&O would be overwhelmed by the amount of interaction demanded by our community around initiatives like the CIP and APS Go! The consultant services help F&O to manage the process as efficiently and smoothly as possible and stay on message at all times. Without these services:

- The APS Go! initiative would likely not facilitate the transformation of transportation at APS that is intended.
- The 2014 CIP process would become far more contentious and protracted, and the June deadline for School Board approval required to meet the County CIP deadline would likely be jeopardized.