

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

Meeting Date: January 8, 2007

Agenda Item: 7(I)	Prepared By: A. William Moss, City Manager Date: January 4, 2007
Agenda Section: Business: Discussion	
Subject: Legislative Assistance	Department: City Manager

BACKGROUND:

City Council is asked to authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Southern Strategies, Inc. to represent the City in its endeavor to obtain state funding assistance for the East Winterberry Drive Bridge replacement.

On December 19, 2006 Chairwoman DiSciullo addressed the Collier County Legislative Delegation during their annual public hearing. The Chair conveyed a request for legislative funding ("Community Budget Issues Request") in the amount of \$1.0 million for the replacement of the East Winterberry Drive Bridge. The current replacement cost for the bridge is \$5.75 million with \$4.5 million in City funds that are set aside for the project.

The Legislative Delegation advised that Senator Saunders and Representative Richter would sponsor a Bill for the requested allocation. Upon introduction of the Bill in the House and Senate, it will be up to the Legislature and the Governor to determine whether funding will become available. Similar requests are made by local government jurisdictions throughout the State of Florida and competition is intense.

City Council has previously discussed the retention of lobbyists to assist the City in the attainment of federal and state funds. Because of the importance of this funding request and the amount involved, and because this is the first time that the City has requested legislative funding since its incorporation in 1997, the City Manager recommends that Southern Strategies, Inc. be placed on retainer to represent the City's interests in this and any other legislative matters that may occur during this legislative session.

While the duration of a retainer may be for a twelve-month period, it is recommended that the firm be placed on retainer through the legislative session and through review by the Governor only. The timeframe for a bill to work through the Legislature to the Executive Branch may be five or six months. The retainer fee is \$6,000 per month.

The fund source for this request is the Capital Improvement Contingency Account since this funding request is for a capital improvement project.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Southern Strategies, Inc. to assist the City in seeking Legislative and Executive approval of funding assistance and for other matters that may arise.

Reviewed by Department Director	Reviewed by City Manager
Council Action: Motion by:	Second by: