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COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM

Item No.

ACTION ITEM

Date of Meeting

8p
September 13, 2022

DATE :

August 4, 2022

TO:

Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

FROM:

Sarah Ogier, Director-Maritime Environment & Sustainability
Kathleen Hurley, Sr. Program Manager- Maritime Environment & Sustainability

SUBJECT: Interlocal Agreement with Washington Sea Grant for Hershman/Keystone
Fellowships

Amount of this request:

Total estimated project cost:

\$ 110,000

\$150,000

ACTION REQUESTED

Request Commission authorization for the Executive Director to sign a 3-year Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the University of Washington's Sea Grant program, substantially in the form attached with minor changes to be approved by legal counsel. The ILA will allow the Port to host one (1) 12-month Sea Grant Fellowship position annually from September 2022 – October 2025. The maximum expenditure will be \$150,000.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Washington Sea Grant, based out of the University of Washington, was established to help people understand and address the challenges facing Washington's oceans and coasts. Sea Grant funds research, fosters education, and supports several graduate fellowship programs. The Hershman Fellowship program is for soon-to-graduate or recently finished graduate students who are engaged in ocean and coastal policy issues. The Keystone Fellowship recruits and engages early career professionals who are underrepresented in the marine science, policy, and industry workforce providing them with experience, training, and mentorship in these fields.

Over the 3-year duration of the ILA, the Port will participate in the Sea Grant program hosting a fellow from either the Hershman or Keystone Fellowship programs. The purpose is to develop marine and natural resource professionals and provide experience related to Port operations and/or management of Port properties with the graduate student fellows. The Port of Seattle (Port) has successfully hosted three fellows since September 2020. For the 2022-2023 fellowship year, the Port will host one (1) Keystone Fellow starting on October 1, 2022. In exchange for the services of the Fellow, the Port will provide \$40,000 to the Sea Grant program. Funding for the 2022-2023 is already authorized in the annual expense budget for the Maritime Environment and Sustainability Department (ME&S). The Fellow will be an employee of the University of Washington, which will pay their salaries and benefits, but the Fellow will be hosted by the Port and embedded within the ME&S department and located at Pier 69.

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JUSTIFICATION

The Port of Seattle's ME&S department routinely works to address complex environmental problems in the maritime industry. This work creates opportunities to engage early career professionals through internships and/or fellowships to participate, providing value-added services to the Port while also furthering career-development and educational objectives. The Washington Sea Grant Fellowship program is a good fit for the Port in that it provides 12-months of employment for highly competent recent post-grads with interest in our work, at very low cost. In exchange, the Port will receive the benefit of their experience and assistance with developing policies and programs related to operation of its seaport, including energy, habitat restoration, climate resiliency, and community engagement.

Diversity in Contracting

For the 2022-2023 fellowship, the Port will to host a Keystone Fellow, a program that seeks to broaden representation in the marine science, policy, and industry workforce, which is aligned with the Port's equity goals.

The Port participated in interviews of fellowship candidates through a matching process managed by the University of Washington. The interviews included questions about the candidates' views on sustainability, maritime environment as well as diversity, equity and inclusion. During the selection process, candidates expressed a passion for environmental matters, science communication, and the maritime industry, as well as social justice.

DETAILS

The ME&S department first applied to be a host agency to the Hershman Fellowship program in February 2020. We hosted two fellowship positions in 2020-21 and one fellowship position in 2022-2023. The fellows were an excellent fit at the Port and contributed value-added work throughout their fellowships.

For 2022-23, the Port is requesting a Washington Sea Grant Keystone Fellow to assist with the following priority environmental work:

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Participate in design, construction and monitoring of mitigation bank projects in the Green-Duwamish River Watershed and associated nearshore areas, including coordination with project sponsor, project managers, designers, and other project team members; and

Work with port staff, consultants and stakeholders to support habitat and stewardship initiatives, including community engagement, stewardship, research and writing, data analysis, project coordination, and other tasks.

The above work is critical to achieving the Port's environmental goals related to habitat restoration. Additional staffing support provided by Washington Sea Grant Fellows will help the Port make progress on these goals. At the same time, the

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work will provide important professional experience for the Fellow, open pathways for underrepresented groups in the marine and maritime science and policy fields. The Fellowship program provides experience in local government and the environmental sciences to early career professionals to launch them into careers in the maritime and/or environmental industry.

Scope of Work

The Fellowship will provide support to the Port's Maritime Environment and Sustainability team.

Specific project and work are often defined in consultation with the fellow and their academic and/or professional interests. Past fellows have supported the following areas of work:

(1)

- (2)
- (3)
- (4)
- (5)

Sustainable Shorelines Program
Science Communications
Stewardship and Habitat Restoration activities
Ocean Acidification Action Plan
Monitoring of eelgrass, kelp, and oyster enhancement

Schedule

Fellowship positions are scheduled to begin in mid-September annually and will run for 12months. For 2022-2023, the Keystone Fellow will start on October 1, 2022. The interlocal agreement needs to be finalized with the University of Washington prior to October 1, 2022.

Activity

Commission authorization

Fellowship start date

Cost Breakdown

2022-2023 Fellowship

Total

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

2022 Quarter 3

2022 Quarter 4

This Request

Total Project

\$40,000

\$0

\$150,000

\$150,000

Alternative 1 – Engage graduate or undergraduate interns from alternate program to participate in the work.

Cost Implications: Cost would be approximately the same, approximately \$42,000 per position for 12- months of full-time work

Pros:

- (1) Builds on a robust internship program.
- (2) Introduces maritime environmental issues to students earlier in their education.

Cons:

- (1)
- (2)

Interns are typically less experienced than Fellow candidates and do not provide the same value-add as the Sea Grant Fellows.

Interns are generally limited to a 3-month period.

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This is not the recommended alternative.

Alternative 2 – Engage a full-time staff position to undertake the work.

Cost Implications: Cost would be substantially higher at \$175,000 per position.

Pros:

- (1) Hiring full-time employee is an investment which develops long-term internal competency and provides the Port with more consistency over time.

Cons:

- (1) Cost of a full-time employee is substantially higher.
 - (2) Hiring an additional FTE requires a longer lead time and investment of resources.
 - (3) The Sea Grant fellowship exposes many individuals to career development opportunities, whereas this alternative does not.
- This is not the recommended alternative.

Alternative 3 – Engage a Washington Sea Grant Fellow to participate in the work.
Cost Implications: Positions require contribution of \$40,000 per position to University of Washington with annual rate escalations over the 3-year period of the ILA.

Pros:

- (1) Port benefits from experience and energy of highly capable post-grads who are eager to engage in maritime environmental issues at a much lower cost than hiring a full-time employee.
- (2) Continues partnership with University of Washington Sea Grant program.
- (3) Enables the Port to fully staff habitat planning and community stewardship projects.
- (4) Supports multiple early career professionals and creates pathways for professionals who are underrepresented in the marine science, policy, and industry.

Cons:

- (1) Because the fellowship is only a short-term (1 year) employment opportunity, the Port can only access the experience of the individual fellows during the one-year period.
- This is the recommended alternative.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Hiring an FTE to undertake similar work would cost up to \$175,000 plus the administrative time related to the hiring process. The Sea Grant Fellowship program offers an exceptional value to the Port related to expertise and contributions to the Maritime Environment and Sustainability program. For years 2 and 3 of the ILA, the Washington Sea Grant (WSG) program requests that host agencies increase their contributions to offset the sizeable subsidy WSG provides. For that reason, the Port will commit \$50,000 to the program for year 2 and \$60,000 for year 3. This Template revised June 27, 2019 (Diversity in Contracting).

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increase not only helps WSG maintain its program and it also helps account for inflation and the high cost of living in the Seattle area.
Cost Estimate/Authorization Summary

Capital

Expense

Total

COST ESTIMATE

Original estimate

\$0

NA

\$0

AUTHORIZATION

Previous authorizations

Current request for authorization

Total authorizations, including this request

Remaining amount to be authorized

0

0

0

\$0

\$98,000

\$40,000

0

\$0

\$98,000

\$150,000

\$238,000

\$110,000

Annual Budget Status and Source of Funds

The fellowship position was included in the approved 2022 and the proposed 2023 expense budget requests. This position will be funded from the Maritime Environment and Sustainability's annual expense budget. Budget requests will be included in the annual expense budget requests moving forward.

Future Revenues and Expenses (Total cost of ownership)

Future expenses are associated with funding the fellowship annually from 2022-2025. The expected cost for 2023-2024 fellow is \$50,000 and for 2024-2024 is \$60,000. The Washington Sea Grant (WSG) program requests that host agencies increase their contributions to offset the sizeable subsidy WSG provides and annual increase and the future expenses account for inflation and higher cost of living in the Seattle area.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

The Washington Sea Grant Program supports several fellowships. These fellowships provide excellent opportunities for students to strengthen research and policy skills. Washington Sea Grant fellows have gone on to work in ocean science and marine policy at state, national and international levels. The Port of Seattle has hosted three Sea Grant Fellows since September 2020 through the Hershman Fellowship Program, in which fellows spend a year working with Washington host offices on ocean and coastal science and management issues. For the 20222023 year, the Sea Grant program reached out to Port staff requesting the Port host a Keystone Fellow. The Keystone Fellowship is their newest program which aims to build pathways into marine science and policy careers for individuals who are historically underrepresented in those fields.

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REQUEST

(1)

(2)

Draft Interlocal Agreement
Presentation slides

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PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

August 10, 2021 – The Commission authorized the ILA for the 2021-2022 Sea Grant Hershman Fellowship to host two fellows

August 11, 2020 – The Commission authorized the ILA for the 2020-2021 Sea Grant Hershman Fellowship

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