

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Commissioners
FROM: Alise Certa, Marketing Communications Manager
DATE: 3/20/2025
RE: Request to Approve Marketing Agency Contract

SYNOPSIS

Request to authorize the Executive Director to sign a one-year contract not to exceed \$95,000 with two one-year options to renew, with Place Creative Company to provide marketing and advertising services. The services shall include, but not be limited to branding, strategic development, creative services, media buying and planning, and advertising campaign management and execution. This expense is equal to one year of wages and benefits for the CSWD Creative Specialist position that has been vacant since October 2024 and is not budgeted for FY26.

HISTORY

Historically, CSWD has met most of its marketing needs with internal staff. For the last 10 years, we have had a Marketing Creative Specialist on staff to provide services such as facility signage, print collateral and web/social media design. When our most recent Marketing Creative Specialist resigned, the team evaluated our marketing needs and decided to try a different approach.

The team determined that our marketing needs are quite diverse and will expand with the upcoming construction of our new Materials Recycling Facility. To keep this work in house, we would need to replace our Marketing Creative Specialist and contract with outside vendors to accommodate the increased workload and additional services the District may require. The benefit of adding an agency is the increased bench strength and access to more creative strategy and planning. The team agreed that it is more efficient to engage a marketing agency with a wide range of expertise and talent than to look for one individual that encompassed all those qualities.

CURRENT SITUATION

This past January, CSWD issued RFP No. 20250106 Marketing and Advertising Services for a one-year contract with a marketing agency to provide services that include the creation of a marketing communication plan; development of creative direction and strategy; creative services; media planning and buying; and monthly reporting including optimization of active campaigns and campaign summary reports. The RFP was posted on the CSWD website and on the Vermont Business Registry. Seventeen qualified agencies responded, from in-state, out of state, and Canada.

CSWD staff reviewed the presentations and narrowed the field to five finalists (three in-state and two out-of-state). The finalists were interviewed and scored on experience of firm, experience of staff, quality of response, and blended fee rate. The respondent with the highest overall score is Place Creative Company (Place) of Burlington, Vermont.

Marketing Agency	Canvaas	FourNine Design	LONDON-middlebury	Place Creative Company	RoadsCG
Location	Columbus OH	Burlington VT	Winooski VT	Burlington VT	Boston MA
Blended Rate	\$150	\$130	\$135	\$140	\$175
Score	83%	89%	80%	91%	79%

Place is a full-service agency with a proven track record of working with Vermont governmental agencies (VT Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Efficiency Vermont, Let's Grow Kids) and Vermont brands (Darn Tough, Vermont Coffee Company, Dakin Farm). Place is also familiar with CSWD and our mission, as most of their staff are local to Chittenden County.

Additionally, while not the lowest fee, Place offers a very competitive hourly rate of \$140. They provided a detailed plan outlining approximate costs and time estimates for the requested services. References were called, and each remarked on the ability of the Place team to efficiently utilize their time, the client's time, and work within the client's budget. The selection team unanimously chose Place based on their capacity to handle all work in house, the quality of their creative work, excellent project management processes and their stellar client references

MOTION to authorize the Executive Director to enter a one-year contract not to exceed \$95,000 with two one-year options to renew with Place Creative Company of Burlington, VT for marketing services as described in RFP No. 20250106.

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KEEGAN ALBAUGH
Working Dad & President of Burlington's *Dad Guild*

CHRIS NELSON
Director of *Mountain View Child Care*

RACHEL WHALEN
Kindergarten Educator
Union Elementary Montpelier

There's no second
chance for a
STRONG START.

