October 30, 2019

To: Brattleboro Selectboard
From: The Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Brattleboro Alliance
Re: Brattleboro Community Marketing Initiative

On March 23, 2019, Brattleboro Town Meeting Representatives appropriated the sum of $42,119 for the joint promotion of Brattleboro by the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Brattleboro Alliance. Town meeting representatives allowed the release of the funds by the selectboard “upon review and acceptance of a satisfactory plan for the use of the funds and the evaluation of the results.”

The Brattleboro Community Marketing Initiative (CMI) is the result of this action. The $42,119 is 1% of the Meals and Rooms Tax the town collects through the 1% local option tax. We take the use of taxpayer dollars seriously and have worked hard to develop a marketing strategy that will make the best use of these dollars and accomplish our goal of increasing visitors in the town of Brattleboro.

As you know, this is our second time before you. Because we were not able to confidently recommend a marketing firm after the first RFP was issued on July 22, we issued the RFP for a second time on August 30. We are pleased to let you know that after much consideration we have selected Penniless Projects of South Newfane, VT.

Attached is the proposal we received from Penniless Projects, along with the RFP, and an outline of the process we used to come to our decision.

The selection of Penniless Projects came out of an extensive review and interview process conducted by a project team made up of 10 members of the community (the project team is listed on pages 2 and 3 of the attached process memo). The project team’s recommendation was approved by the Boards of Directors of the Chamber and DBA.

It is important to note that our work has just begun. The proposal we received from Penniless Projects showed us part of their portfolio and pitched us on an example strategy. Their first step will be community research and target research to finalize their strategy.

Although the Downtown Brattleboro Alliance and the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce will have daily oversight of the project, we have formed a steering committee made up of members of the project team who will work with our organizations to guide and manage the marketing initiative to fruition. We would like to take this opportunity to thank these individuals for offering their time and expertise: Zon Eastes, Lindsay Fahey, and Curtiss Reed.

We look forward to discussing this project with you on November 5.
A SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS

The mission of the Brattleboro Community Marketing Initiative (CMI) is to increase the growth of visitors in the town of Brattleboro by telling Brattleboro’s story to a strategic and well defined audience.

Process Goals:

- Involve engagement, community building, participatory.
- Learn from agency experience.
- Our community having Brattleboro pride.
- Encourage collaboration on marketing among Brattleboro’s town, non-profit and business organizations.
- To be mindful and thoughtful of diversity: The Town of Brattleboro is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We intentionally encourage our story to include what our community looks like and what we want it to look like. This is to include people of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQ, and people from other underrepresented groups. We must effectively and authentically connect with all consumers.

Project Team:

The individuals on the 10-member project team represent a variety of sectors located throughout the town. As a team we outlined the objectives of the initiative and talked about what success looked like. The team was responsible for reviewing the submitted proposals; choosing the three finalists; interviewing the finalists and making a recommendation to the Chamber and DBA Boards of Directors.

Members of the Project Team

Zon Eastes, Founder and Music Director
Juno Orchestra

Lindsay Fahey, Chief Operating Officer
Retreat Farm

Sarah Lang, Talent Specialist
Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation/Southern Vermont Young Professionals
Jon Megas-Russell, Marketing and Public Relations Manager
Brattleboro Food Co-op

Sujay Patel, Owner
In the Moment Records

Gina Pattison, Director of Development and Marketing
Brattleboro Memorial Hospital

Curtiss Reed
Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity

Kora Skeele, Sales and Marketing Manager
Mocha Joe’s Roasting Co

Stephanie Bonin, Executive Director
Downtown Brattleboro Alliance

Kate O’Connor, Executive Director
Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce

The Timeline:

August 30, 2019 – RFP issued to the public
September 19, 2019 – RFP proposals due
September 23, 2019 – Project team reviews submitted proposals; chooses the top three
September 23, 2019 – Seven additional stakeholders were asked to give feedback on the top three
October 4, 2019 – Project team conducts interviews with the top three and makes hiring
recommendation to Chamber and DBA Boards
October 11, 2019 – Project team conducts follow-up interview

Request for Proposals (RFP):

The CMI project team issued an RFP to identify a marketing professional with the ability to develop
and execute a strategic and tactical marketing plan that will attract visitors to Brattleboro to shop,
dine, stay and enjoy the town.

- **Content:** The full RFP is attached for your information. The key points in the RFP:

  **What we were looking for from the RFP:** We were looking for proposals that will utilize a
  $42,119 total budget over a 12-month period (following the town’s fiscal year).

  **The goal:** The purpose of this RFP was to identify a marketing professional that will have the
  ability to develop and execute a strategic and tactical marketing plan that will attract visitors
to Brattleboro to shop, dine, stay and enjoy our town. Given the modest amount of money
we have been allocated, we looked for a creative thinker who can give us the best bang for
our limited marketing bucks!
The scope of work desired: The marketing professional will:

- Create a one (1) year marketing plan to drive more visitation to Brattleboro. The plan must include a single-year implementation plan with usable materials and budget.
- Identify the target audience and create appropriate marketing concepts and messaging that resonates with a wide demographic, paying careful attention to diversity and inclusion.
- Develop systems of measurement for short-term success that will feed into longer range goals and objectives.
- Report to the executive directors of the Chamber and the DBA monthly in writing and/or in person on upcoming campaigns as well as results and analytics.
- Provide a year-end summary of progress and results to the project team.

Review of Submitted Proposals:

The CMI received eight (8) proposals. They came from marketing firms in Brattleboro (2); South Newfane; Manchester, VT; Bloomington, Illinois; Rochester, NY; Madison, CT; and Atlanta, GA.

- The project team met on September 23 to review the proposals and narrow the finalists to three. Each proposal was judged on the following criteria:
  - Had a plan to identify the target audience
  - Had a plan to measure the success of the marketing effort
  - Had a strategy that will see results in the first year
  - Made best use of the $42,119 and budgeted money to implement the recommended strategy in the first year
- The CMI project team met on October 4 to interview the three finalists and make a recommendation to the Chamber and DBA Boards of Directors based on the following criteria:
  - They have a plan to identify the target audience.
  - The strategy outlines a plan to represent the many different sectors in Brattleboro (i.e. distilleries, festivals, the arts, outdoor recreation, etc.).
  - The agency has the skills and capacity to successfully execute the proposed strategy.
  - The strategy will be informed by current campaigns and information gathering from a diverse group of stakeholders.
  - The proposal is innovative and creative - we are not interested in business as usual.
  - The proposal presents an achievable timeline and budget to implement the recommended strategy in the first year.
  - The plan contains clear metrics for success and reporting of results.
• The CMI project team also gathered input from local stakeholders:
  o Jamie Mohr, Epsilon Spires
  o Eugene Uman, Vermont Jazz Center
  o Maeve Shaughness, BMH
  o Jon Potter, Latchis Theatre
  o Joslyn, Outside Eye Consulting
  o Amber Arnold, Sacred Vibrations Sound Healing
  o Leda Scheintaub, Dosa Kitchen

**Project Administration:**

• The Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce will serve as the project’s fiscal agent. The Chamber will assume the costs of serving as the fiscal agent.

• The selectboard will receive a written report every two months on the marketing strategy’s progress, as well as a financial report.
Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors

Nicole Braun
Great Eastern Radio
Vickie Case
Retreat Farm
Michele Coursen
Brattleboro Savings & Loan
Cindy Delgatto
Windham Grows
Bradford Ellis
Vernon Homes
Bob Gammon
WTSA
Ross Gibson
The Richards Group
David Harlow
Downs Rachlin Martin
Ryan Jennings
Community Bank
Tracey John
Vermont Country Deli
Gina Pattison
Brattleboro Memorial Hospital
John Sciacca
Brattleboro Subaru
Deane Wilson
Southern Vermont Wellness

Brattleboro Downtown Alliance
Board of Directors

Jennifer Aberico
Community College of Vermont
Francesca Bourgault
Windham Movement Apparel
Mike Ekblom
Saga Communications
Sue Fillion
Town of Brattleboro
Steve Heim
Heim Properties LLC
Stephanie Huestis
Brattleboro Savings & Loan
Akosua Hyako
SIT
Peter F. May
Peter F. May Consulting International
Kate O’Connor
Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce
Annie Richards
AWR Associates
Claire Renaud
Berkley & Veller
Erin Scaggs
Elliot St. Fish & Chips
Greg Worden
Vermont Artisan Designs and Kitchen Sync
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
MARKETING SERVICES
JULY 2019

RFP ISSUE DATE: July 22, 2019

PROPOSALS DUE BY: August 19, 2019

SEND TO: Submitted no later than 5pm on August 19, 2019 to the following email addresses: kate@brattleborochamber.org and stephanie@brattleboro.com.

WHO WE ARE: The Brattleboro (Vermont) Community Marketing Initiative is a collaboration between the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) and the Downtown Brattleboro Alliance (DBA). We are comprised of an 11-member project team with the objective of developing and implementing a marketing plan for the town of Brattleboro, Vermont.

For the purposes of this RFP, the fiduciary agent will be the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce

WHAT WE WANT: We are looking for proposals that will utilize a $42,119 total budget over a 12-month period. The contract period would be for 12 months with the possibility of renewal.

BACKGROUND: On March 23, 2019, Brattleboro Town Meeting Representatives appropriated the sum of $42,119 for the joint promotion of Brattleboro by the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Brattleboro Alliance.

GOALS: The purpose of this RFP is to identify a marketing professional that will have the ability to develop and execute a strategic and tactical marketing plan that will attract visitors to Brattleboro to shop, dine, stay and enjoy our town. Given the modest amount of money we have been allocated, we are looking for a creative thinker who can give us the best bang for our limited marketing bucks!

The goal of the overall marketing initiative is to support the growth of tourism in the town of Brattleboro.

SCOPE OF WORK: The marketing professional will:

- Create a five (5) year marketing plan to drive more visitation to Brattleboro. The plan must include a short term, single year implementation plan with usable materials and budget.
- Identify the target audience and create appropriate marketing concepts and messaging that resonates with a wide demographic, paying careful attention to diversity and inclusion.

- Develop systems of measurement for short-term success that will feed into longer range goals and objectives.

- Report to the executive directors of the Chamber and the DBA monthly in writing and/or in person on upcoming campaigns as well as results and analytics.

- Provide a year-end summary of progress and results to the project team.

**SUBMISSIONS:** Submit any questions and final proposal to the executive directors of the Chamber (Kate O’Connor, kate@brattleborochamber.org) and the DBA (Stephanie Bonin, stephanie@brattleboro.com). Submissions will be accepted until August 19, 2019 with final decision on or about September 30, 2019 (Note: This date is approximate.)

**TIMELINE:**

RFP ISSUED: Monday, July 22, 2019
PROPOSALS DUE BY: Monday, August 19, 2019
CONTACT AWARDED: Monday, September 30, 2019 (Note: This date is approximate)

**A. KEY ASPECTS**

1. RFP Corrections or Changes. The project team reserves the right to:

   - Modify any date or deadline appearing in this RFP.
   - Issue clarification notices, addenda, alternative RFP instructions, forms, and/or other relevant documentation.
   - Waive any RFP requirement or instruction for all bidders if the project team determines that the requirement or instruction was unnecessary, erroneous, or unreasonable.
   - Extend the proposal submission deadline.
   - Overlook or correct any clerical or mathematical errors occurring in this RFP.

Bidders shall notify the executive directors of the Chamber and DBA immediately to report a known or suspected problem with this RFP. Bidders who fail to report a known or suspected problem with this RFP shall submit a proposal at their own risk.
2. Correction of Bidder Information. The project team reserves the right to:

- Request a bidder to submit additional documentation during or after the proposal evaluation process.
- Collect omitted documentation from bidders.
- Waive any immaterial deviation or defect as may be adjudged by the project team in any proposal and allow the bidder to remedy such defects.
- Overlook, correct or require a bidder to remedy any obvious clerical or mathematical errors.

Bidders’ failure to adhere to the project team’s requests may result in the bidder proposals being determined unresponsive and rejected from further consideration.

3. Cost is a significant factor in selecting the successful bidder, but it is not necessarily the determining factor. A bidder’s comparative superior experience and knowledge may result in a bid selection other than the lowest bid submitted.

4. It is understood that no vendor will be compensated for the time spent in developing the bid proposal.

5. At the project team’s option, oral presentations by bidders may be required. Bidders will be notified if an oral presentation is required. Bidders may be requested to provide a presentation of the services offered in their proposal. Bidders are responsible for all costs associated with an oral presentation. The bidder will not be compensated by the project team, the Chamber or the DBA.

Bidders should present complete, comprehensive proposals without relying on oral presentations, because the Chamber and the DBA reserve the right to award a contract without further discussions.

6. All materials submitted by bidders become the property of the Chamber and the DBA, which are under no obligation to return any of the materials submitted in response to this RFP. The Chamber and the DBA shall have the right to use all system concepts, or adaptations of such concepts, contained in any proposal. This right will not be affected by selection or rejection of the proposal.

B. BASE CONTRACT TERMS

Contract Period: The contract arising from this request for proposal will be for a period of twelve (12) months with an option to renew for additional twelve-month periods through
written amendment. Proposed start date will be on or around October 1, 2019, but note this date is approximate.

**Contract Terms**: The selected vendor will sign a contract with the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce to provide the items named in their proposal, at the prices negotiated. Minimum support levels, as well as terms and conditions from this RFP and the vendor’s response, will become part of the contract. This contract will be subject to review throughout its term. The Chamber will consider cancellation upon discovery that a vendor is in violation of any portion of the agreement, including an inability by the vendor to provide the products, support and/or service offered in their proposal.

C. **REQUIRED CONTENT**

To aid in the project team’s review and comparison of all proposals received, we ask bidder’s to provide the following:

1. **Identity of point of contact.** Please identify a single point of contact for clarification of information if needed.

2. **Experience.** Please provide a description of your experience with similar projects.

3. **Understanding of audience.** Please explain your understanding of the target audience paying careful attention to diversity and inclusion and the most efficient way to reach these audiences.

4. **Project plan.** Please explain how you will perform tasks listed in the Scope of Work, including a proposed timeline for completion of required tasks. Specifically, please prepare a proposed work plan organized by key activities, target dates, and deliverables.

5. **Budget.** Please submit a budget that is both realistic and reasonable to complete the scope of work. Proposals shall include a detailed scope of work for services, with a clear cost associated for each piece of the proposal and any related expenses to be billed including advertising placement. No need to detail out hours. Our budget cannot exceed $42,119 for the first 12 months. Please include basic hourly rate for work outside the project scope.

D. **PAYMENT PROVISIONS**

Once contracts are executed, the Chamber will reimburse contractors for pre-approved expenses. All reimbursable expenses must be documented with receipts. Contractors must bill the Chamber for work performed once a month during all months that work occurs. Payment terms will be net 30 days.
E. CONFIDENTIALITY

Contractors must agree to keep information related to the project team, the Chamber, the DBA and all partners related to this contract confidential. The Contractor agrees not to publish, reproduce, or otherwise divulge such information in whole or in part, in any manner or form, or authorize or permit others to do so unless authorized in writing by the Chamber and DBA.

F. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

1. Governing Law. All submissions and agreement shall be in conformance with and governed by applicable laws of the State of Vermont.

2. Submission Expenses.
   - Submission Preparation: No expenses associated with the preparation of the submission response shall be borne by the project team, the Chamber or the DBA.
   - Presentations and/or Demonstrations: No expenses shall be borne by the project team, the Chamber or the DBA for oral presentations or demonstrations made by the individual and/or firm.

3. Discrimination. The contractor will be required to agree to comply with all requirements of Title 21, Chapter 5, Sub-chapter 6, Section 495A relating to fair employment practices.

4. Statement of Rights. The project team, the Chamber and the DBA reserve the right to accept or reject any and all submissions, with or without cause, and the individual and/or firm shall have no recourse. The project team, the Chamber and the DBA reserve the right to waive technicalities to assure the project provides the greatest benefit to the marketing initiative.

5. Submission Price or Best Final Offer. Responses to this RFP will be considered firm for one hundred twenty (120) days after the closing date of submission.

MARKETING PARTNERS

Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce
180 Main Street
Brattleboro, VT 05301
(802) 254-4565
www.BrattleboroChamber.org

Downtown Brattleboro Alliance
P.O. Box 961
Brattleboro, VT 05301
(802) 257-4866
www.Brattleboro.com