



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:

Agenda Item Number: 15

Agenda Date: February 2, 2023

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Office of Mayor and Council

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Emily McGinn

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Amendment of the City of San Antonio City Council Project Funds Ordinance

SUMMARY:

The City Council Project Fund (CCPF) Ordinance limits City Council members' expenditures from the CCPF during the election season (February through June of a City Council election year). The Ordinance places a cap on expenditures related to creation and mailing of material to constituents. Specifically, during election years, between the months of February through June, Councilmembers may not exceed the amount spent for binding and printing, mail and parcel post, and advertising and publications during the same period in the previous non-election year.

Councilmembers use their budgeted binding and printing, mail and parcel post, and advertising and publications funds as well as savings in other line items and/or carry-forward funds, to send newsletters and other communications to their constituents during the year. Given the fluctuations in individual Council office expenditures over the calendar year and the disparity between spending between respective Council offices, the direct comparison to the same months in the previous year may not be the optimal way to address election season spending. This item amends the CCPF Ordinance to expand the funds available to continue communication practices established during the preceding calendar year.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

To avoid the appearance of Council members running for re-election using increased communications to constituents as a way to bolster election opportunities, the CCPF Ordinance limits the City Council members' expenditures during the election season. Please note that the actual spending of public funds for campaign purposes is strictly prohibited by law. During election years, between the months of February and June, Councilmembers may not exceed the amount spent for binding and printing, mail and parcel post, and advertising and publications during the same period in the previous non-election year. Councilmembers use their budgeted binding and printing, mail and parcel post, and advertising and publications funds as well as savings in other line items and/or carry-forward funds, to send newsletters and other communications to their constituents during the year.

ISSUE:

The moratorium on these expenses has resulted in some Councilmembers not having funds available to send communications to their constituents in the manner they have established over the course of the calendar year and in some instances dramatically reducing the content and scope of communications their constituents have become accustomed to.

For example, during the moratorium calculation period for 2022, February through June, the City Council members spent a range between just over \$300 to over \$7,500 on binding and printing, mail and parcel post, and advertising and publications.

This ordinance addresses this funding issue by amending the moratorium formula to use the average monthly binding and printing, mail and parcel post, and advertising and publications expense across Council Districts to create a spending limit based on that amount over the five-month period of February to June in the election year. For example, a Council District would use the aggregate City Council average or the average their District spent in 2022, whichever is higher. The average spent by the Council in the aggregate is \$1,842.66 per month, for an available funding during the election season moratorium of \$9,213.30. Using the revised formula results in a range of \$9,213.30 to \$36,570.82 for the moratorium allowance.

ALTERNATIVES:

City Council can choose to leave the moratorium in place, select one or the other of the options above, or arrive at a different option of their choice.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact. The amendment would not increase the amount budgeted for each Council office.

RECOMMENDATION:

City council may revise the CCPF Ordinance and the moratorium to permit each Council District to spend the average of the expenses for the entire Council during the preceding non-election calendar year, or to spend the average their District spent, whichever is higher.