



# Third Amendment with Spanish Group, LLC to Contract for Translation Services

Nicolas Traylor, Executive Director

ITEM H-1

July 19, 2023

## Statement of the Issue

During April 2020, the City, acting as the Rent Board, solicited quotes from qualified service providers in accordance with the City's procurement policies and entered into a contract with The Spanish Group, LLC to provide translation services to the Rent Program. Staff members are requesting Board approval of the third amendment to the contract to extend the term through June 30, 2024, and increase the payment limit by \$9,500 of budgeted funds to cover anticipated expenses in Fiscal Year 2023-24.

## Fiscal Impact

The Fiscal Year 2023-24 Rent Program budget, adopted by the Rent Board on June 12, 2023, allocates \$9,500 for translation services to obtain the requested deliverables. Staff members anticipate awarding The Spanish Group, LLC as the qualified vendor to provide services in a total contract amount not to exceed \$9,500.

## Background

- ▶ During April 2020, the City, acting as the Rent Board, solicited quotes from qualified service providers in accordance with the City's procurement policies and entered into a contract with The Spanish Group, LLC to provide translation services to the Rent Program.
- ▶ In June 2020, the Executive Director approved a short form original contract to commence the term through June 30, 2021. Staff members are requesting Board approval of a third amendment to the contract to extend the term through June 30, 2024, and increase the payment limit by \$9,500 of budgeted funds to cover anticipated expenses in Fiscal Year 2022-23.
- ▶ The Spanish Group, LLC provides timely translation of a wide range of documents produced by the Rent Program (e.g. Hearings Decisions, Appeal Recommendations, Settlements, Comprehensive Fact-Sheets, and Workshops) through a convenient, easy-to-navigate interface. Staff members are satisfied with the company's performance to date and desire to continue working with The Spanish Group, LLC.

## Recommended Action

- ▶ APPROVE an amendment to the contract for translation services with The Spanish Group, LLC increasing the contract amount by \$9,500 for Fiscal Year 2023-24, to a total not to exceed \$29,600 for the Fiscal Year 2023-24 (July 1, 2023- June 30, 2024) - Rent Program (Nicolas Traylor- 620-6564).

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**PROPOSED REGULATION 842.25:  
CODIFYING EXISTING EMERGENCY  
REGULATION THAT MODIFIED HEARINGS  
AND APPEALS PROCEDURES DURING  
DECLARED STATEWIDE AND LOCAL  
EMERGENCIES**

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CHARLES OSHINUGA, GENERAL COUNSEL &  
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JULY 19, 2023

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# STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

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During the State and Local emergency due to COVID-19, the Rent Board passed an emergency regulation that allowed for the following:

(1) permitted the conducting of hearing and appeals through telecommunication and/or videoconferencing; (2) permitted the service of documents be performed via email; and (3) required that both parties agree to a hearing by telecommunication and/or videoconferencing prior to such a hearing being conducted. The emergency regulation appeared to be well received and seamlessly worked its way into the Hearing Unit's processes and procedures. At the request of the Hearings Unit and some members of the public, staff members are requesting that the emergency regulation be officially incorporated into Chapter 8 of the Rent Board Regulations.

# FISCAL IMPACT

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There is no fiscal impact related to this item.



# DISCUSSION AND BACKGROUND

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- ❑ Local, state and federal emergency orders designed to limit the spread of the novel corona virus (COVID-19) were declared in March of 2020.
- ❑ To comply with these various orders, many businesses had closed or allowed for their employees to work from home. All Richmond residents had been impacted by this shelter in place Order and many were in the “high risk” category if they were to contract COVID-19; however, despite the Order, many Richmond Residents were still facing issues that impacted their home. Some Landlords were seeking Fair Return increases, while some Tenants were seeking habitability-related rent decreases.

# DISCUSSION AND BACKGROUND

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- ❑ To assist the public in properly engaging their rights and obligations, in May 2020, the Richmond Rent Board adopted an emergency regulation that did the following: (1) permitted the conducting of hearing and appeals through telecommunication and/or videoconferencing; (2) permitted the service of documents be performed via email; and (3) required that both parties agree to a hearing by telecommunication and/or videoconferencing prior to such a hearing being conducted.
- ❑ Despite its success, the emergency regulation lapsed at the end of the local emergency. The lack of telecommunication and/or videoconferencing, and other aspects of the emergency regulation, has impacted staff members' ability to manage their hearings and has decreased public access in participating in the hearings. At the request of the Hearing Unit and some members of the public, staff members recommend the Rent Board officially codify the emergency regulations as regulation 842.25

# WHAT WOULD REGULATION 842.25 PERMIT?

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- ❑ Proposed Regulation 842.25 would permit the service of documents by email and allow the conducting of hearings and appeals through telecommunications and/or videoconferencing.
- ❑ The Proposed Regulation would be a continuation of rights and obligations that the public adjusted itself to during the local emergency. Specifically, the regulation would expand the method of service of any document related to hearings and appeals, by allowing for those documents to be delivered via email.
- ❑ Additionally, the proposed regulation offers a continuation of a popular community engagement tool, namely remote hearings. Specifically, the proposed regulation would permit the use of telecommunication and/or videoconferencing to conduct hearings and appeals. To ensure fairness in the process and respect rights conferred under existing regulations, the proposed regulation would require both parties' written consent to a telecommunicated and/or videoconference hearing prior to the hearing being conducted. Such a requirement would not attach to appeal sessions as such sessions do not regard the submission of evidence but rather are concerned with only argument.

# RECOMMENDED ACTION

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ADOPT Regulation 842.25 to continue to: (1) Permit the conducting of hearing and appeals through telecommunications and/or videoconferencing; (2) Allow for service via email of any document tied to hearings and appeals; and (3) require that both parties agree in writing to a hearing by telecommunication and/or videoconferencing prior to such a hearing being conducted.

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