



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0012, **Version:** 3

Agenda Item Name:

County Attorney requests appointment of a special attorney (outside counsel) regarding Employment-Based Visas

Presenter:

Courtney Wilson

Description:

The County Attorney wishes to retain special attorney Laura Cabrera to provide legal services to the BoCC to map out the policy process, cost and timeline regarding Employment-Based Visas (U.S. H-1B Visa). Pursuant to Section 31.42, Alachua County Code (Special Attorneys), the Board of County Commissioners must appoint special attorneys.

Recommended Action:

Authorize the County Attorney to retain special attorney Laura Cabrera to provide legal service to the BoCC regarding Employment-Based Visas.

Prior Board Motions:

At the BoCC's meeting on December 10, 2019, Commissioner Cornell moved to direct staff to create a policy for the Board to adopt and direct staff to expedite the matters with the two employees in Information Technology. The motion carried 4-0.

Fiscal Consideration:

Contract is within the County Manager's authority to enter.

The fees applicable to Step 1 of the process are as follows:

- a. Legal Fee: \$900 flat fee (per beneficiary)
- b. USCIS Fee: \$10 registration fee (per beneficiary)

The fees applicable to Step 2 of the process are as follows:

- a. Legal Fee: \$2100 flat fee (per beneficiary) (+\$250 for premium processing, if desired)
- b. USCIS Fee: \$460 (base fee);
\$500 (anti-fraud fee);
\$750 - 25 or fewer full-time staff/\$1500 - 26 or more full time staff (AICWA fee)
\$1440 Premium Processing (optional, if available)

As of 1/6/2020, there is \$1,000 for attorney fees in the Human Resources budget and \$12,125 remains for outside attorney fees in the County Attorney's budget, but this is shared with other attorneys hired for specific topics. There is also \$50,000 budgeted in Special Expense for attorney fees, though \$22,000 has already been spent on other projects. It is possible that this expense can be absorbed by the two departments, but it is also possible that additional funding will be required before this process is completed. There is no funding for attorney fees in the Information Technology

Department's budget.

Background:

None.