Assembly Approves Dock Work, Tackles Contract Issues

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Work on the long awaited new dock in Anton Larsen Bay should begin in the near future. On Thursday the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly voted for Jensen Yorba Lott to begin architectural and engineering services for pre design work on the dock replacement project. Thursday’s 5-2 vote wasn’t without a bit of disagreement, though not over the actual dock.

The vote was actually a change order approval for an already existing contract with Jensen Yorba Lott. Borough Manager Bud Cassidy explains:

“There are occasions when we need architectural and engineering services and we just don’t want to go out for RFPs every time we need the service so we go out for a master project.”

Cassidy said Jensen Yorba Lott was selected for that master contract. Basically the contract means the company will help the borough with pre design work as needed for a handful of projects. The borough manager is allowed to award contracts up to $25,000 without assembly approval, and since the original contract didn’t have a dollar amount, Cassidy was able to award it.

Cassidy said the reason the dock replacement project was before the assembly was because the $43,760 pre design price tag would put the contract over $25,000, and now needed assembly approval.

Assemblyman Mel Stephens took issue with the fact that the assembly didn’t have a say in the original contract.

“The manager has authority only if the value of the contract does not exceed $25,000. And so while no specific numbers were included in this particular contract when it was signed, I think any reasonable person looking at it would say that the value of the contract was almost certainly above the manager’s $25,000 authority.”

Stephens also brought up the fact that Jensen Yorba Lott would be reimbursed 110 percent for reimbursable expenses related to the project, like travel to and from Kodiak.

The extra 10 percent is supposed to cover administrative costs, but Assemblyman Tuck Bonney said he also wasn’t comfortable with that kind of reimbursement.

“What is to keep Yorba and associates from, oh we have a $5,000 travel bill here. There’s no check

and balance on a travel bill. They can run up that bill up to anything they want and we’ve essentially guaranteed that to 110 percent and I won’t do that for anybody. And the other issue is like Mel said, this never really came up, we never really talked a lot about this that I can remember. So I was surprised when I saw this when it didn’t come to the assembly. Clearly we had numerous meetings on Bud could only go to $25,000 otherwise it has to come to the assembly. That didn’t happen. And for those two reasons I think we should vote against this, get it in front of the assembly, talk about it and then put it back.”

Assemblywoman Carol Austerman said that procedure is how the borough regularly handles term contracts.

“Where we put together a proposal for a contract to provide services to the borough on an as needed basis. And those contracts are done by the manger and then the individual invoices or jobs that come up, once that goes to $25,000 comes before the assembly comes before the assembly just like we have done for a very long time. Personally I don’t want to sit and go through every one of our term contracts on the assembly when we might never use them or we might not use them for more than $25,000. So I’m perfectly happy voting for this. As far as the 110 percent that’s a standard mark up and…I don’t have a problem with that.”

The change order passed, along with two other change orders for different projects under the Jensen Yorba Lott contract. Those projects included pre design work for installing new electrical generators at Old Harbor, Karluk, Port Lions and North Star Elementary schools, as well as work for the borough building renovation.