

Agenda
Bayshore Gardens Park & Recreation District
Auditor Selection Committee Meeting
Wednesday; March 22, 2023, at 10:00 A.M.

1. Roll Call
2. Selection of Secretary
3. Review of Tasks
4. Discussion Regarding Future Meetings Schedule
5. Review of last RFP
6. Questions
7. Additional Items as Needed
8. Adjourn

Pursuant to Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, any handicapped person desiring to attend this meeting should contact the District Manager at least 48 hours in advance of meeting to ensure that adequate accommodations are provided for access to the meeting.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, should any person wish to appeal a decision of the Board with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, he or she will need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, including the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is based.

The Auditor Selection Committee shall follow the process and procedures as outlined in FS 218.391. Renewals may be contracted pursuant to 218.391 (8) in writing by the committee without additional selection procedures. This process must be used to employ an auditor for the District.

The Chairman must appoint an Auditor Selection Committee consisting of at least three (3) members from the community and or Trustees. The Treasurer shall not serve on this committee. The meetings of the committee must be noticed pursuant to FS 189.015. All meetings must be open to the public and minutes taken.

The first Auditor Selection Committee shall be appointed as soon as possible after the adoption of the Policy. If a change is foreseen in auditing firms, after the initial hiring of an auditor, the Committee will convene, about the beginning of February. As indicated previously, Section 218.391(3)(c), Florida Statutes, requires that the audit committee provide interested audit firms with an RFP(request for proposal). The RFP is required to include information on how proposals are to be evaluated and such other information as the committee determines is necessary for the firm to prepare a proposal.

The committee will be provided a copy of the appropriate Florida Statutes and a copy of Mid-America Intergovernmental Audit Forum's "Selecting an External Auditor". The committee will select a chairman and a secretary. Minutes of the meetings must be taken and turned into the District as a public record. The committee is subject to the Sunshine Laws.

The committee shall establish a calendar for the process:

1. Date Public Notice and RFP published in Newspaper
2. Date proposals are due (Original and 9 copies)
3. Date to be opened by Board of Trustees at a regularly scheduled Work Session
4. Date the Committee to meet to prioritize the proposals
5. Second Meeting date if necessary
6. Date referred to Board of Trustee Meeting and selection made

7. Date the Contract commences

In late February, the Chairman must place an ad for sealed bids in the Bradenton Herald (see example ad included). A deadline for auditing firm submissions should be 7:00 p.m. the day of the first Work Session meeting in March. The sealed proposals are presented to the Board. Proposals are opened at Board Meeting Work Session and then presented to the Auditor Selection Committee.

The Wednesday following the first Board Work Session in March, the Auditor Selection Committee shall meet and review proposals and select an auditing firm. If a recommendation cannot be made to the Board at the conclusion of this committee meeting, a second meeting shall be held the following Monday.

The District reserves the right to accept any proposal, to reject any or all proposals, to waive any technical errors or omissions, and to request any or all proposals, to

Once the RFP is issued all prospective applicants and any agent, representative or person acting at the request of such prospective applicant shall be prohibited from discussing any matters related in any way to this RFP with any District Board member, officer, agent, or employee other than the Auditor Selection Committee Representative or may otherwise be directed in this RFP.

The proposals will be evaluated based upon the perceived ability of the applicant to perform the services described herein, the cost of such services, the time required for implementing such services and in general the application which best meets the needs of this Special Taxing District.

The Board will select an auditing firm based on the ranking of the Committee and negotiate a contract for the District. The Firm awarded the Contract shall be notified in writing by the Board of Trustees.

Sample Advertisement for Bradenton Herald

BAYSHORE GARDENS PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT hereby requests sealed proposals for financial audit services for the fiscal year ending September 30, _____ as required by Section 218.39, Florida Statutes. The Auditing entity submitting a proposal must be duly licensed under Chapter 473, qualified to conduct audits in accordance with government auditing standards as adopted by the Florida Board of Accountancy, and able to provide the Annual Financial Audit Report/Financial Statements by December 1, _____. Proposal shall include references for current government auditing engagements, a description of the staff to be assigned to the engagement, proposal timeline, and proposed fee. Additionally, the proposal should include the proposed compensation for renewals. All applicants interested in providing the above-described services to the District must submit in a sealed envelope one (1) signed original and three (3) copies of the above referenced information, as well as a resume of the applicant's qualifications and experience along with any pertinent supporting data by 7:00 p.m. local time, _____, to the attention of Auditor Selection Committee, Bayshore Gardens Park & Recreation District, 6919 26th Street West, Bradenton, FL 34207. Any proposals received by the District after the stated date and time will not be considered. The proposals will be publicly opened at the Board of Trustees' Work Session, _____, 7:00p.m., Board Room, 6919 26th Street West, Bradenton, Florida 34207. Proposals shall clearly indicate the legal name of the applicant, as well as current contact information, and shall be signed by the owner or an agent or officer having legal authority to bind the applicant. The applicant must be authorized to conduct business in the State of Florida. All expenses incurred in making the proposal shall be done by the applicant. The applicant understands that upon receipt of the proposal by the District the proposal documents become a "public record", as defined in Chapter 119, Florida Statutes and those documents are subject to public disclosure in accordance with that chapter

Any comments, questions, or requests for clarification, interpretation or additional information concerning the RFP should be submitted in writing to the Auditor Selection Committee, Attn: _____, at the above address. The applicant is not entitled to rely upon, and the District will not be bound by, any oral interpretations given by District staff or representatives. Written addenda or determinations issued by Auditor Selection Committee are the only method by which this RFP may be clarified, interpreted or modified. If any such written decisions are issued, the District will make reasonable efforts to notify all applicants. However, each applicant shall be responsible for contacting the District Office, prior to submitting their proposal, to determine if any such written decisions have been issued and to amend their proposal as necessary.

APPENDIX A

Auditor Selection Law Pages 23 and 24

218.391 Auditor selection procedures.--

(1) Each local governmental entity, district school board, charter school, or charter technical career center, prior to entering into a written contract pursuant to subsection (7), except as provided in subsection (8), shall use auditor selection procedures when selecting an auditor to conduct the annual financial audit required in s. 218.39.

(2) The governing body of a charter county, municipality, special district, district school board, charter school, or charter technical career center shall establish an audit committee. Each noncharter county shall establish an audit committee that, at a minimum, shall consist of each of the county officers elected pursuant to s. 1(d), Art. VIII of the State Constitution, or a designee, and one member of the board of county commissioners or its designee. The primary purpose of the audit committee is to assist the governing body in selecting an auditor to conduct the annual financial audit required in s. 218.39; however, the audit committee may

serve other audit oversight purposes as determined by the entity's governing body. The public shall not be excluded from the proceedings under this section.

(3) The audit committee shall:

(a) Establish factors to use for the evaluation of audit services to be provided by a certified public accounting firm duly licensed under chapter 473 and qualified to conduct audits in accordance with government auditing standards as adopted by the Florida Board of Accountancy. Such factors shall include, but are not limited to, ability of personnel, experience, ability to furnish the required services, and such other factors as may be determined by the committee to be applicable to its particular requirements.

(b) Publicly announce requests for proposals. Public announcements must include, at a minimum, a brief description of the audit and indicate how interested firms can apply for consideration.

(c) Provide interested firms with a request for proposal. The request for proposal shall include information on how proposals are to be evaluated and such other information the committee determines is necessary for the firm to prepare a proposal.

(d) Evaluate proposals provided by qualified firms. If compensation is one of the factors established pursuant to paragraph (a), it shall not be the sole or predominant factor used to evaluate proposals.

(e) Rank and recommend in order of preference no fewer than three firms deemed to be the most highly qualified to perform the required services after considering the factors established pursuant to paragraph (a). If fewer than three firms respond to the request for proposal, the committee shall recommend such firms as it deems to be the most highly qualified.

(4) The governing body shall inquire of qualified firms as to the basis of compensation, select one of the firms recommended by the audit committee, and negotiate a contract, using one of the following methods:

(a) If compensation is not one of the factors established pursuant to paragraph (3)(a) and not used to evaluate firms pursuant to paragraph (3)(e), the governing body shall negotiate a contract with the firm ranked first. If the governing body is unable to negotiate a satisfactory contract with that firm, negotiations with that firm shall be formally terminated, and the governing body shall then undertake negotiations with the second-ranked firm. Failing accord with the second-ranked firm, negotiations shall then be terminated with that firm and undertaken with the third-ranked firm. Negotiations with the other ranked firms shall be undertaken in the same manner. The governing body, in negotiating with firms, may reopen formal negotiations with any one of the three top-ranked firms, but it may not negotiate with more than one firm at a time.

(b) If compensation is one of the factors established pursuant to paragraph (3)(a) and used in the evaluation of proposals pursuant to paragraph (3)(d), the governing body shall select the highest-ranked qualified firm or must document in its public records the reason for not selecting the highest-ranked qualified firm.

(c) The governing body may select a firm recommended by the audit committee and negotiate a contract with one of the recommended firms using an appropriate alternative negotiation method for which compensation is not the sole or predominant factor used to select the firm.

(d) In negotiations with firms under this section, the governing body may allow a designee to conduct negotiations on its behalf.

(5) The method used by the governing body to select a firm recommended by the audit committee and negotiate a contract with such firm must ensure that the agreed-upon compensation is reasonable to satisfy the requirements of s. 218.39 and the needs of the governing body.

(6) If the governing body is unable to negotiate a satisfactory contract with any of the recommended firms, the committee shall recommend additional firms, and negotiations shall continue in accordance with this section until an agreement is reached.

(7) Every procurement of audit services shall be evidenced by a written contract embodying all provisions and conditions of the procurement of such services. For purposes of this section, an engagement letter signed and executed by both parties shall constitute a written contract. The written contract shall, at a minimum, include the following:

(a) A provision specifying the services to be provided and fees or other compensation for such services.

(b) A provision requiring that invoices for fees or other compensation be submitted in sufficient detail to demonstrate compliance with the terms of the contract.

(c) A provision specifying the contract period, including renewals, and conditions under which the contract may be terminated or renewed.

(8) Written contracts entered into pursuant to subsection (7) may be renewed. Such renewals may be done without the use of the auditor selection procedures provided in this section. Renewal of a contract shall be in writing.

Approved 5/15/2018 Sharon Denson

Revised _____

Effective 5/15/2018

Auditor Selection Law

Section 218.391, Florida Statutes,¹ the auditor selection law, establishes required procedures for the selection of auditors to perform the financial audits required by Section 218.39, Florida Statutes, for counties, municipalities, special districts, district school boards, charter schools, and charter career technical centers. These procedures help ensure selection of a qualified auditor and satisfactory audit effort. Section 218.391, Florida Statutes, is included as Appendix A to this document.

The established auditor selection process requires a request for proposal (RFP) for the solicitation of the necessary audit services, and a selection and negotiation process in which fees cannot be the sole or predominant reason for selecting a particular audit firm.

The auditor selection law requires that the governing body of each county, municipality, special district, district school board, charter school, and charter technical career center establish an auditor selection committee. Section 218.391(2)(d), Florida Statutes, provides that while the primary purpose of the auditor selection committee is to assist the governing body in selecting an auditor to conduct the financial audit, the auditor selection committee may serve other audit oversight purposes as determined by the entity's governing body.

The purpose of this document, which was initially prepared by an Auditor Selection Task Force² established by the Auditor General, is to provide additional nonmandatory guidance regarding the auditor selection committee and the selection of auditors for performing the financial audit required by Section 218.39, Florida Statutes. Specifically, this document provides guidance in the following areas:

- Composition of auditor selection committees.
- Responsibilities of auditor selection committees.
- Audit proposal evaluation factors.
- Use and elements of an RFP for audit services.
- Use and elements of audit services contracts.

Additional auditor selection topics are included in Appendix B - Questions and Answers. A listing of resources used to prepare this guidance is included in Appendix C.

This document includes numerous references to guidance from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for audit committees because such guidance is relevant to auditor selection committees assigned audit oversight responsibilities.

Auditor Selection Committee Composition and Size

Legal Requirements

Section 218.391, Florida Statutes, provides that the auditor selection committee for a county must, at a minimum, include each of the county officers elected pursuant to the county charter or Article VIII, Section 1(d) of the State Constitution, or their respective designees, and one member of the board of county commissioners or its designee. The auditor selection committee for a municipality, special district, district school board, charter school, or charter technical career center must consist of at least three

¹ All statutory references in this guidance are to the 2020 Florida Statutes.

² The Task Force included representatives of the Florida Association of Counties, Florida Association of Court Clerks and Controller, Florida Association of Public Purchasing Officers, Florida Association of Special Districts, Florida Government Finance Officers Association, Florida Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Florida League of Cities, and Florida School Finance Officers Association. Also included were representatives of the Auditor General's Office, the Legislative Auditing Committee, and the former Legislative Committee on Intergovernmental Relations.

members, one of which must be a member of the governing body and who must serve as the committee chair.

No employee of the county, municipality, special district, district school board, charter school, or charter technical career center may serve as a member of the auditor selection committee; however, an employee of the county, municipality, special district, district school board, charter school, or charter technical career center may serve in an advisory capacity.

Nonmandatory Guidance

The effectiveness of an auditor selection committee in performing its assigned duties is dependent on the qualifications and skills of its members and the relationship of the members to the governing body.

GFOA Best Practices³ recommend the following regarding the composition of audit committees, which would also apply to auditor selection committees:

- *Ideally, all members of the committee should possess or obtain a basic understanding of governmental financial reporting and auditing. The audit committee also should have access to the services of at least one financial expert, either a committee member or an outside party engaged by the committee for this purpose. Such a financial expert should through both education and experience, and in a manner specifically relevant to the government sector, possess 1) an understanding of generally accepted accounting principles and financial statements; 2) experience in preparing or auditing financial statements of comparable entities; 3) experience in applying such principles in connection with the accounting for estimates, accruals, and reserves; 4) experience with internal controls; and 5) an understanding of audit committee functions.*

For governmental entities experiencing difficulty in acquiring financial expertise on the audit committee, alternative means of acquiring such expertise include, but are not limited to, obtaining assistance from another governmental entity's chief financial officer, engaging an independent financial professional, or providing a training program for audit committee members to develop the necessary financial knowledge.

- *To ensure the committee's independence and effectiveness, no governing body member who exercises managerial responsibilities that fall within the scope of the audit should serve as a member of the audit committee.*

GFOA Best Practices⁴ suggest that the actual audit committee membership be composed of the governing body or a subset of the governing body. Under this approach, it is likely that the entity will need to engage an outside party to obtain the needed experience in governmental financial reporting and auditing. The audit committee members should be provided an orientation on the duties and responsibilities of the committee, including such topics as objectives of internal control, accounting, auditing, and financial reporting to assist in making sound judgments.

- *An audit committee should have sufficient members for meaningful discussion and deliberation, but not so many as to impede its efficient operation. As a general rule, the minimum membership of the committee should be no fewer than three.*

Another factor that could affect the size of the audit committee, particularly in smaller communities, is the availability of individuals who possess both the skills desired of an audit committee member and the willingness to make the commitment to perform effectively as a member. It is important that the entity not compromise these factors, as well as independence considerations, in establishing the size of the audit committee.

³ GFOA's Best Practice: *Audit Committees.*

⁴ GFOA's Best Practice: *Audit Committees.*

- *Members of the audit committee should be educated regarding both the role of the audit committee and their personal responsibility as members, including their duty to exercise an appropriate degree of professional skepticism.*

GFOA Best Practices⁵ suggest that audit committee members be provided training regarding the audit committee function. This is particularly critical where the committee members are governing body members who may not possess the needed experience in governmental financial reporting and auditing. At a minimum, such training might include making members familiar with this guidance and the publications referenced herein.

Small Government Considerations

Smaller entities may experience difficulty in obtaining the necessary experience in governmental financial reporting and auditing from a source that is independent from financial management of the entity. Qualified persons willing to provide such experience may simply not be available within the community. In such instances, the small entity might consider consulting with larger entities in the area to identify employees or consultants of those entities who might be willing to work with their auditor selection committee. A smaller entity may also opt to include members of the auditor selection committee of the larger entity on its auditor selection committee. Regardless of the method used to provide an auditor selection committee function, ultimate responsibility for the selection of the auditor rests with the governing body.

Auditor Selection Committee Responsibilities

Legal Requirements

The primary purpose of the auditor selection committee, as contemplated in Section 218.391, Florida Statutes, is to assist in the selection of an auditor to conduct the financial audit required by Section 218.39, Florida Statutes.

Section 218.391(3), Florida Statutes, establishes the duties of the auditor selection committee to include:

- Establishment of factors to be used for the evaluation of audit services to be provided by an audit firm.
- Public announcement of an RFP.
- Provision of interested firms with the RFP.
- Evaluation of proposals provided by qualified firms.
- Ranking and recommendation in order of preference of no fewer than three firms deemed to be the most highly qualified to perform the required services. If fewer than three firms respond to the RFP, the committee shall recommend such firms as it deems to be the most highly qualified.

The auditor selection committee may also serve other audit oversight purposes as determined by the entity's governing body.

Nonmandatory Guidance

- Establishment of the Auditor Selection Committee. GFOA Best Practices⁶ advise that the audit committee be formally established by charter, enabling resolution, or other appropriate legal means. Likewise, Florida local governmental entity auditor selection committees should be formally established by charter, ordinance, resolution, or written policies and procedures adopted by the governing body. In addition to addressing the composition of the auditor selection committee (see the previous section, Auditor Selection Committee Composition and Size), the formal means by which the auditor selection committee is established should define the

⁵ GFOA's Best Practice: *Audit Committees.*

⁶ GFOA's Best Practice: *Audit Committees.*

committee's responsibilities and prescribe committee member qualifications consistent with GFOA recommendations.

GFOA Best Practices⁷ recommend that the audit committee be established in such a manner that the auditors engaged to conduct the financial audit report directly to the audit committee. If the auditor selection committee is assigned oversight responsibilities with respect to the independent audit and the establishment of internal controls and adequate management processes, the GFOA's Best Practice: *Audit Committees* (October 2008) should be consulted for additional guidance.

- Auditor Selection Committee Responsibilities. GFOA Best Practices⁸ indicate that an audit committee is a practical means for a governing body to provide much needed independent review and oversight of the government's financial reporting processes, internal controls, and independent auditors. GFOA Best Practices further indicate that, by effectively carrying out its functions and responsibilities, an audit committee helps to ensure that management properly develops and adheres to a sound system of internal controls, that procedures are in place to objectively assess management's practices, and that the independent auditors, through their own review, objectively assess the entity's financial reporting practices.

The GFOA's publication, *Governmental Accounting, Auditing, and Financial Reporting* (2020), also known as the GFOA Blue Book,⁹ indicates that governing bodies are responsible for ensuring that management fulfills its obligations in regard to internal control and financial reporting. The GFOA Blue Book¹⁰ also indicates that governing bodies typically establish audit committees for this purpose and audit committee responsibilities, in addition to audit oversight, include selecting the auditors. Accordingly, although State law assigns this task to the auditor selection committee, consideration should be given to using the auditor selection committee as an audit committee as contemplated by the GFOA.

The GFOA Blue Book¹¹ further indicates that:

- The auditors should report directly to the audit committee.
- The audit committee should have access to the reports of any internal auditors, as well as access to any annual internal audit work plans.
- The audit committee should publish the results of its work in an annual written report to the governing body.

Should the auditor selection committee be assigned audit oversight responsibilities that are in addition to the statutorily mandated auditor selection committee responsibilities (i.e., used as an audit committee as contemplated by the GFOA), consideration should be given to GFOA guidance regarding audit committee responsibilities. For example, the GFOA's *Audit Management Handbook* (GFOA Handbook) recommends that, in addition to auditor selection, the audit committee perform the following functions:

- Monitoring the Audit
 - Monitoring Activity During the Audit. The GFOA Handbook¹² indicates that concerns of interest to the audit committee during the audit would include whether the audit is progressing on schedule and whether potential problems are identified and immediately corrected, if appropriate. Potential problems might include difficulties in gathering information or contacting key personnel, discovery of instances or indications of fraud,

⁷ GFOA's Best Practice: *Audit Committees*.

⁸ GFOA's Best Practice: *Audit Committees*.

⁹ GFOA Blue Book, Chapter 43, page 43-1.

¹⁰ GFOA Blue Book, Chapter 43, pages 43-1 and 43-2.

¹¹ GFOA Blue Book, Chapter 43, pages 43-2 through 43-4.

¹² GFOA Handbook, Chapter 6, pages 87 and 88.