

**INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION
OFFICE OF CORPORATION COUNSEL**

DATE: January 24, 2018

TO: Theodore Lipscomb Sr., Chairman, County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Colleen A. Foley, Deputy Corporation Counsel

SUBJECT: Contract amendment with Buelow Vetter for legal representation in labor relations matters

It is requested that this matter be referred to the Committee on Finance and Audit for approval of a resolution to amend a legal services contract.

The County Board approved a contract with Buelow Vetter Vuikema Olson & Vliet LLC on September 30, 2010 (File No. 10-294) for legal representation of Milwaukee County in labor relations matters. The primary attorneys working on this contract are Mark Olson and Dan Vliet. One of the early reasons for the firm being hired, and the cause of the largest expenditure of funds under the contract, was to represent one of the parties in the furlough days litigation, *Milwaukee County v. WERC and AFSCME*, Case No. 11CV12137. That litigation involved numerous outside counsel for various county parties in dispute with each other and lasted several years. The firm also expended significant time in 2011 and 2012 during its representation of the County in the interest arbitration proceeding with the Firefighters union for the 2009-11 collective bargaining agreement and provided additional follow up assistance with negotiation of the 2012-14 agreement with the Firefighters.

Corporation Counsel does not have an attorney with experience in labor relations matters. Our office does continue to handle many labor relations matters, but needs the expertise of this firm from time to time to assist in labor relations matters that either require more substantial resources or involve more complex legal matters, including some of the prohibited practice complaints and grievance arbitrations which continue to be filed, primarily by the MDSA.

The firm has acquired significant understanding and knowledge of the County unions and the terms of the collective bargaining agreements with the public safety unions and with the County benefit structure. The firm's rates continue to be competitive, with the primary attorneys billing at the rates of \$260 and \$240 per hour.

For the years 2010 to 2017, the authorized funds totaled \$552,796. This amendment will increase the total authorized funds to \$652,796. Therefore, approval of the attached resolution is requested to amend the contract amount by an additional \$100,000 to a total of \$652,796 in order to pay for the continued legal services required.

Sufficient funds exist in the 2018 Litigation Reserve Account, Org Unit 1961, for this request.

c: Raisa Koltun, Kelly Bablitch, Erica Hayden, Janelle Jensen