

Request for Qualifications for Special Counsel for Utility Regulatory Work

Orange Village, Ohio

Section I: Overview

Orange Village, an Ohio municipality operating under its charter, ordinances, and state law, seeks qualified legal professionals or firms to provide special legal services for reviewing and, if necessary, negotiating a proposed increase of sanitary sewer rates for sanitary sewer services provided in the Village by a privately owned public utility. Such special counsel may thereafter be engaged by the Village for utility-related matters as the need may arise. The selected special counsel will act as co-counsel with the law director to ensure compliance with all applicable state and federal laws as well as the charter and ordinances of Orange Village.

Orange Village has an existing agreement with Woodbran Realty Corporation (“Woodbran”) for the provision of sanitary sewer services within the corporate limits of Orange Village. A portion of the Village is served by Woodbran system and Woodbran has been providing services and charging rates in accordance with an ordinance adopted by the Village and agreed to by Woodbran in 2011, which amended the rates contained in a Woodbran P.U.C.O tariff (#4) adopted in November of 1994.

The scope of services will include:

- Retaining a utility rate expert (if necessary).
- Reviewing the existing rate structure and Woodbran’s requested increase.
- Preparing for and conducting rate negotiations with Woodbran with Village officials.
- Advising the municipality on legal and strategic matters related to the negotiation process including attending Village Council meetings, as necessary.
- Ensuring compliance with Ohio Revised Code and relevant federal laws.
- Drafting and revising legislation, proposals and final agreements.
- Providing legal insight on issues salient to the negotiation process.
- Coordinating with Woodbran the filing of final rate legislation / agreement with the Public Utilities Commission.

Section II: Qualifications Required

Applicants must demonstrate the following qualifications:

- Extensive experience in Ohio public utilities law, with a particular focus rate cases and municipal regulation of public utilities.
- Familiarity with federal and Ohio environmental law.
- Proven ability to act as co-counsel alongside a municipal Law Director.
- Strong negotiation, communication, and drafting skills.

Section III: Proposal Submission Process

Qualified firms or individuals should submit their Statements of Qualifications (SOQs) on or before 4:00 pm January 30, 2026, electronically to Clerk of Council Anna Girardi at agirardi@orangevillage.com or hard copies may be submitted to 4600 Lander Road, Orange Village, Ohio 44022. Submissions received by the Clerk of Council after 4:00 pm on January 23, 2026 will not be considered.

Submissions must include:

- Cover letter detailing interest and qualifications.
- Documentation of relevant experience and representative matters.
- References from similar projects.
- Resumes of key personnel.
- Fee schedule or cost proposal.
- A typical engagement letter the firm uses for such matters.
- A typical timeline for the negotiation process from initial notice to council approval of final agreement, assuming legal counsel is engaged by the end of March, 2025.

Copies of the existing rate ordinance may be obtained from the Orange Village law director, Steve Byron, by emailing him at SByron@smdklaw.com.

Section IV: Evaluation and Selection Process

The Mayor and Village Council will review all SOQs based on the following criteria:

- Experience in Ohio public utilities law, with a particular focus rate cases and municipal regulation of public utilities.
- Understanding of applicable federal and Ohio laws.
- Professional references.
- Cost-effectiveness of proposed fees.
- Responsiveness and clarity of the submission.

Individuals or firms may be invited for interviews with the Mayor, Council, and Law Director.

Section V: Contract Negotiations

The most qualified firm, as chosen at the sole discretion of the Orange Village Council, will be selected for contract negotiations. If an agreement cannot be reached, Orange Village reserves the right to negotiate with the next most qualified firm, as determined by Orange Village Council in its sole discretion. Orange Village reserves the right to reject all SOQs and choose an alternative method of selecting special counsel.

Section VI: Contract Award

If Council, in its sole discretion, determines a contract shall be awarded to a successful person or firm the Council will pass an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to execute such contract with the successful person or firm. After the contract has been duly executed, work under the contract will commence.