



CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE CITY COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

TO: Melissa Santistevan, City of Albuquerque Inspector General

FROM: Dan Lewis, City Councilor *DL for DC*

SUBJECT: City at the Crossroads Book

DATE: November 9, 2022

The City of Albuquerque recently procured a book that purports to document the impact of approximately the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic on City Government – “City at the Crossroads.” It appears that the book was procured at a total cost to the City of approximately \$116,400 through two separate contracts, each with supplements to add additional funds after their initial execution.

Specifically, the contract with the author was supplemented up to a total amount of \$66,000. In addition, a separate \$50,400 contract (as supplemented) was executed with an apparent “marketing, publicity, and persuasive writing” specialist who was tasked with, among other things, “communications regarding the project,” and with being the “developmental and copy editor.” This appears to have been a split purchase.

I am requesting an investigation of whether this public purchase was consistent with the City’s procurement rules. In general, contracts for professional services in excess of \$100,000 are required to go out for bid, and the purchasing rules appear to prohibit “purchase splitting” as a way to evade this requirement.

In addition, I request an evaluation of whether the finished product satisfies any requirements that the use of public funds be limited to public purposes consistent with legitimate needs of the City, as opposed to any other potentially non-City, or personal purposes. Finally, are there adequate controls in place to help ensure that the public benefit is outweighed by any other personal or private benefits that might be gained from the content of this type of book?