



**CITY OF NOVI CITY COUNCIL  
DECEMBER 16, 2024**

**SUBJECT:** Approval of a three-year contract, with the option of two one-year renewals, between the City of Novi and Shifman Fournier Attorneys at Law to provide legal services for Labor and Employment Law.

**SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT:** Human Resources

**KEY HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Of nine (9) proposals received, Shifman Fournier was ranked highest by a staff review team
- Shifman Fournier has provided Employment and Labor Law services to the City for the last six (6) years and has been well-regarded by staff
- This existing relationship means that Shifman Fournier has knowledge of the City's Collective Bargaining Agreements and the City's Budget.
- Staff's recommendation was sent to the Consultant Review Committee (CRC), who recommended the contract be put before City Council for approval.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

City Council retains the services of attorneys for three specific areas: General Legal support, Prosecution, and Employment and Labor Law. Since January 1, 2018, the City has contracted with Shifman Law (now Shifman Fournier) for Employment and Labor law services. Their most recent contract, entered into back in 2022, expires on December 31, 2024. The services which are included in the scope of work under this contract include, but are not limited to:

- Employment Disputes
- Assistance with union contractual matters, including unfair labor practice complaints, and representation at grievance hearings
- Act 312 Binding Arbitration Hearings

The Department of Human Resources requested formal bids for these services and received nine (9) proposals. A review team consisting of Human Resources (HR) Director Tia Gronlund-Fox, Deputy HR Director Elise Marra, and Director of Public Safety Erick Zinser reviewed the proposals.

The criteria for these ratings were as follows:

1. Relevant experience
2. Relevant qualifications
3. Understanding city related issues and familiarity with the city
4. Unique resources
5. Professional reputation in employment and labor law.

The panel unanimously ranked Shifman Fournier with the highest rating for these services.

	Dickinson Wright	Foster Swift	Garan Lucow Miller	Giarmarco Mullins & Horton	Kerr Russell	McGraw Morris	Shifman Fournier	The Allen Law Group	The Kelly Firm	Total
Evaluator 1	430	380	465	470	135	870	930	395	425	4500
Evaluator 2	490	560	345	390	550	480	830	335	520	4500
Evaluator 3	430	390	450	580	50	850	960	340	450	4500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1350</b>	<b>1330</b>	<b>1260</b>	<b>1440</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>2200</b>	<b>2720</b>	<b>1070</b>	<b>1395</b>	13500
<b>RANK</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	

From the nine proposals, hourly rates ranged from \$160/hour to \$740/hour. Shifman Fournier currently charges \$175/hour and will hold that rate through 12/31/25. Effective 1/1/2026 through 12/31/2027 that hourly rate will increase to \$185/hour. As a point of reference, the City Attorney's hourly rate is \$160/hour.

City staff have been very pleased with the services provided by Shifman Fournier for the last six years, including responsiveness, ability to resolve matters, and extensive expertise in this area of the law.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Approval of a three-year contract, with the option of two one-year renewals, between the City of Novi and Shifman Fournier Attorneys at Law to provide legal services for Labor and Employment Law.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**RE: LABOR RELATIONS & EMPLOYMENT LAW LEGAL SERVICES**

The City of Novi, herein called "City," and Shifman Fournier, herein called "Attorneys", agree as follows:

1. The City Council of the City of Novi employs the Attorneys as special counsel to represent the City in the area of labor relations and employment law.
2. The Attorneys shall comply with the insurance provisions described in the attached Exhibit A - Insurance Requirements.
3. The Attorneys shall perform the services described in the attached Exhibit B - Scope of Services.
4. For the services described in Section 2 above, the Attorneys shall be paid as described in the attached Exhibit C – Fee proposal from the Attorneys dated November 20, 2024.
5. Fees for services as outlined above may be adjusted in accordance with revised schedules as may be approved by both parties in conjunction with adoption of the City's budget.
6. Howard L. Shifman shall be primarily responsible for the provision of the services listed, and he shall attest to the accuracy of all invoices submitted pursuant to this agreement. Attorneys agree that a sufficient number of attorneys shall be assigned to the City's work to assure timely delivery of services.
7. Invoices will be provided on a monthly basis for the previous month's activities. The invoice will identify the attorney performing the work, the matter the attorney worked on, a description of the work performed, and the time spent on the task.
8. This Agreement shall continue and remain in effect for a period of three (3) years, with the option of two (2) one-year renewals through mutual consent, or until a notice of termination is earlier provided by either the City Council or the Attorneys. Either party may terminate this agreement at any time upon sixty (60) days written notice to the other for any reason. In the event of termination, the parties agree to cooperate in the transition to successor legal counsel in conformance with State Bar of Michigan ethical guidelines to protect the public interests of the City.
9. This agreement will be effective January 1, 2025.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereunto have executed this agreement on the date below stated.

**City of Novi**

\_\_\_\_\_  
By: Justin Fischer  
Its: Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
By: Cortney Hanson  
Its: City Clerk

**Shifman Fournier**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
By: Howard L. Shifman

**EXHIBIT A**  
**INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS**

1. The Attorneys shall maintain at its expense during the term of this Agreement, the following insurance:
  - a. **Worker's Compensation** insurance with the Michigan statutory limits and Employer's Liability insurance with minimum limits of **\$100,000** (One Hundred Thousand Dollars) each accident.
  - b. **Commercial General Liability Insurance** - The Attorneys shall procure and maintain during the life of this Agreement, Commercial General Liability Insurance, Personal Injury, Bodily Injury and Property Damage on an "Occurrence Basis" with limits of liability not less than **\$3,000,000** (Three Million Dollars) per occurrence combined single limit.
  - c. **Automobile Liability** insurance covering all owned, hired and non-owned vehicles with Personal Protection insurance to comply with the provisions of the Michigan No Fault Insurance Law including Residual Liability insurance with minimum bodily injury limits of **\$3,000,000** (Three Million Dollars) each person and **\$3,000,000** (Three Million Dollars) each occurrence and/or aggregate minimum property damage limits of **\$3,000,000** (Three Million Dollars) each occurrence and/or aggregate.
  - d. The Attorneys shall provide proof of **Professional Liability** coverage in the amount of not less than **\$3,000,000** (Three Million Dollars) per occurrence and/or aggregate.
2. The Attorneys shall be responsible for payment of all deductibles contained in any insurance required hereunder.
3. If during the term of this Agreement changed conditions or other pertinent factors should in the reasonable judgment of the City render inadequate insurance limits, the Attorneys will furnish on demand such additional coverage as may reasonably be required under the circumstances. All such insurance shall be effected at the Attorneys' expense, under valid and enforceable policies, issued by the insurers of recognized responsibility which are well-rated by national rating organizations and are acceptable to the City.
4. All policies shall name the Attorneys as the insured and shall be accompanied by a commitment from the insurer that such policies shall not be canceled or reduced without at least thirty (30) days prior notice date to the City.

All policies except Professional Liability insurance shall name the City of Novi, its officers, agents and employees as additional insured. Certificates of Insurance evidencing such coverage shall be submitted to the City Purchasing Manager, City of Novi, 45175 West Ten Mile Road, Novi, Michigan, 48375-3024.
5. If any work is sublet in connection with this Agreement, the Attorneys shall require each Attorney to effect and maintain at least the same types and limits of insurance as fixed for the Attorneys.
6. The provisions requiring the Attorneys to carry said insurance shall not be construed in any manner as waiving or restricting the liability of the Attorneys under this Agreement.

7. The City has the authority to vary from the specified limits as deemed necessary.

**EXHIBIT B**  
**SCOPE OF SERVICES**

The Attorneys shall perform and/or represent the City regarding the following services:

- Municipal employment discrimination charges and lawsuits, as well as investigation of allegations of discrimination and harassment.
- Defense against allegations of wrongful discharge, breach of employment contract.
- Represent City with Labor Relations Board, including unfair labor practice complaints.
- Collective bargaining negotiations and arbitration including Act 312 Binding Arbitration procedures and processes.
- Public employer proceedings before state regulatory agencies.
- Worker's compensation and unemployment compensation matters, ERISA, retirement, employee benefits and compensation matters and litigation in conjunction with our employee benefits.
- Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) matters.
- Preparation and enforcement of employment agreements, including employee confidentiality agreements and related litigation.
- Wage and salary administration, including counsel on federal and state wage-hour laws.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) issues and development of compliance plans.
- Family and Medical Leave Act compliance (federal and state).
- Immigration law and related matters.
- Updates and advice concerning current issues facing employers, such as workplace violence, leased and temporary employees, and AIDS, drug, alcohol and genetic testing.
- Counsel on affirmative action requirements, including preparation and review of federal, state and municipal affirmative action plans; assistance in dealing with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) and state and local contracting agencies during compliance audits and in litigation.
- Labor law audits, including legal analyses of hiring and termination practices, employment applications, employee handbooks and policy and procedure manuals.
- In-service training programs for employers and their supervisory personnel on such topics as (1) preventing and investigating claims of harassment, (2) employee evaluation and discipline, and (3) proper handling of discrimination claims before State and Federal agencies.
- Provide information addressing timely labor topics.

**EXHIBIT C  
FEE PROPOSAL**

**PRICING**

The following is a complete Cost Proposal including hourly rates for all personnel. Clearly define all relative direct and indirect costs and hourly minimums. Cost proposal shall be inclusive of three (3) years.

<b>Hourly Rate for Principal/Lead Attorney:</b>	<b>1/1/2025</b>	<b>\$ 175.00/hour</b>
	<b>1/1/2026</b>	<b>\$ 185.00/hour</b>
	<b>1/1/2027</b>	<b>\$ 185.00/hour</b>

Subcontracted Category: Expert Witnesses      \$\_\_\_\_/hr.

Not all Expert Witnesses have the same rate. Approval will be requested in advance.

Travel time is billed as attorney time with no more than 20 minutes back and forth to City Offices.

**Reimbursable Expenses:**

Postage	\$ <u>N/C</u>
Overnight mail charges	\$ <u>Will be charged at the rate at the time</u>
Transportation expenses	\$ <u>Will be charge at the rate at the time</u>
Copies	\$ <u>0.08 – black &amp; white/0.13 color</u>
Facsimiles	\$ <u>N/C</u>

Should the agreement be extended, we would be happy to discuss terms.

FIRM NAME: SHIFMAN FOURNIER

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
HOWARD L. SHIFMAN

November 20, 2024