

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Canal Boat Operations



RFP Submittals due December 11, 2020 by 3:00 PM

Submit One Electronic Copy to:
William Rouse
Finance Director
City of Canal Fulton
155 Market St. E.
Canal Fulton, OH 44614
330-854-6761

Electronic copies by flash drive or email to: financedir@cityofcanalfulton-oh.gov

November 20, 2020

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I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Canal Fulton (“City”) hereby issues this Request for Proposal (“RFP”), inviting the submission of proposals from individuals and/or businesses with the qualifications and expertise necessary to operate the St. Helena III Canal Boat beginning May 2021, or when permitted by the COVID pandemic. Operations is defined as providing horses and staff to run the Canal Boat between May (or when permitted by Covid) and October, 2021. Only individuals that have existing resources in the region may respond to this RFP. The City will vote and award the RFP to the most qualified bidder in early 2021. The Canal Boat Operations Agreement is expected to be signed prior to the 2021 season to ensure a seamless transition for the upcoming year.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE CITY

Located in the Northwest corner of Stark County, Ohio, Canal Fulton offers the advantages of living in a small historic city nestled alongside the Ohio & Erie Canal and the Tuscarawas River with the convenience of being just a short drive to the bigger metropolitan areas of Stark, Summit, and Cuyahoga counties. Canal Fulton is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has over eighty (80) sites including buildings and homes and has received national attention due to some of the paranormal phenomenon witnessed in some of the older buildings. Canal Fulton serves the surrounding rural area as an education, retail, and transportation center. In the 1990’s, communities along the Ohio-Erie Canalway began working together to reconstruct the old canal towpath into a multi-use trail. Now with most of this trail completed in Cuyahoga, Summit, and Stark Counties, Canal Fulton has become a destination for cyclists, hikers, equestrian, and bird watchers throughout the region. St. Helena Park and the Canal Fulton Canalway Center serve as a major trailhead for the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail and the Old Muskingum Hiking/Biking/Equestrian Trail. Tourism has become a major factor in Canal Fulton’s commercial life, with its many quaint shops lining Canal Street. Rides on the St. Helena III, one (1) of only four (4) working canal boats in Ohio, also draws tourists from across the state.

III. BACKGROUND OF THE ST. HELENA III

The St. Helena III, who had her maiden voyage in 1992 is a replica of an original canal boat that ran along the Ohio and Erie Canal over 100 years ago. She was constructed at the renovated McLaughlin Dry Dock, primarily by volunteers and was funded through private donations and a grant from the state of Ohio. The St. Helena III was originally owned and operated by the Canal Fulton Heritage Society. In 2009, the City partnered with the Heritage Society to assist with operations and in early 2015 they transferred the ownership of the boat and assets to the City entirely.

The St. Helena III Canal Boat is pulled by two draft horses, and departs from the Port of Canal Fulton in St. Helena Heritage Park for a one-hour ride down the Ohio & Erie Canal. Boat crew members are dressed in clothing similar to that of the original canal boat era and a historian on board provides information on the history of the canal, the boat and the area. During the trip, the canal boat passes the McLaughlin Dry Dock where the St. Helena III was originally built and is

stored for the winter. At the far end of the cruise the boat reaches the Lock IV turning basin which is one of the few remaining, intact locks along the Ohio & Erie Canal. Visitors are invited to view a thirty-minute video of "Our Canal Heritage" in the Canalway Center prior to their ride. In addition to regular passenger rides, the St. Helena III offers private charters, theme cruises, and dinner cruises.

IV. CANAL BOAT OPERATIONS

A. Ticket Sales

2017 Actual Sales:

	Sales	Ticket Qty	# of Events/ Boat Runs
Standby Boat Sales: (\$5 - \$9 per ticket)			
Sunday	\$5,820	852	44
Monday	n/a	n/a	n/a
Tuesday	\$4,130	675	24
Wednesday	\$3,557	576	24
Thursday	\$3,565	557	15
Friday	\$2,755	443	25
Saturday	\$7,198	1,051	48
Total Standby Operations	\$27,025	4,153	180
Charter Sales:			
Comm. Charters	\$3,165	n/a	15
Education Charters	\$3,145	n/a	16
Charter Totals	\$6,310	n/a	31
Theme Cruises:			
Andy Griffith	\$1,554	42	1
Addams Family	\$1,406	38	1
Pirate Cruise	\$1,776	48	4
Hey Mavis	\$1,386	77	2
Spirits & Spirits	\$6,255	139	4
Theme Cruise Totals	\$12,377	344	12

2018 Actual Sales:

	Sales	Ticket Qty	# of Events/ Boat Runs
Standby Boat Sales: (\$5 - \$9 per ticket)			
Sunday	\$3,558	505	36
Monday	n/a	n/a	n/a
Tuesday	\$2,314	391	22
Wednesday	\$2,085	354	19
Thursday	\$2,935	500	24
Friday	\$2,329	380	22
Saturday	\$5,575	836	44
Total Standby Operations	\$18,796	2,965	167
Charter Sales:			
Comm. Charters	\$2,766	n/a	15
Education Charters	\$5,035	n/a	17
Charter Totals	\$7,801	n/a	32
Theme Cruises:			
Andy Griffith (\$37 per ticket)	\$1,295	35	1
Cannoli Caper (\$37 per ticket)	\$1,147	31	1
Murder Mystery (\$37 per ticket)	\$1,295	35	1
Hey Mavis (\$18 per ticket)	\$702	39	2
Spirits & Spirits (\$45 per ticket)	\$5,535	123	4
Theme Cruise Totals	\$8,679	263	8

B. Staffing: The City typically operated the Canal Boat with 3-4 employees for each ride and two draft horses.

C. Operations: The sales volume in the tables above were based on operating the boat for standby service Tuesday thru Sunday from June thru August, with two runs per day at 1:00 pm and 2:30 pm. In May, September and a portion of October, the City operated the boat on Saturdays and Sundays, usually twice per day at 1:00 pm and 2:30 pm. We also completed approximately 30 school field trips and community charters, and varying amounts of special cruises.

V. SCOPE OF SERVICES REQUESTED

A. City will provide:

- i. Administration oversight through City Council and Parks & Recreation Board
- ii. Canal boat (St. Helena III) and equipment
- iii. Access to Canalway Center and dry dock
- iv. Canal boat maintenance and repairs

B. Respondent will provide:

- i. A currently registered business in the State of Ohio with documentation and an Employer Identification Number
- ii. The registered business purpose shall be associated with equine services
- iii. The business shall have a minimum general liability coverage of \$1,000,000
- iv. A supplemental event(s) liability coverage rider policy is mandatory
- v. A listing of previous operational equine team pulling experiences
- vi. Must possess a minimum of three (3) serviceable driving trained equines

VI. RESPONSE CONTENTS

The Offeror, in its proposal, shall, at a minimum, include the following:

1. Professional Experience. The Offeror should describe its experience, including history and experience with equine services.
2. The Offeror should describe the qualifications of staffing/oversight to be assigned to City events. Descriptions should include:
 - i. Background and prior experience of the individual(s) with respect to the required experience listed above.
3. Rent Structure. The Offeror will pay the City rent for the use of the Canal Boat. This rent can be structured as a fixed amount per year, a fixed amount per ticket sold, or a percentage of sales. The Offeror's proposal should state their preferred rent structure and amount.
4. The Offeror's proposal should include a high-level business plan that addresses proposed dates of operation and types of operation (standby, theme cruises, charters, etc). The sales tables (Section IV) from above provides a general background of how the City structured operations in the past. The Offeror can deviate from the prior model, but the City needs to see the general plan.
5. The Offeror's proposal should include three business and/or personal references.

VII. RESPONSE SUBMISSION

Responses to this RFP shall be submitted with one (1) complete electronic copy in PDF format. All costs incurred in the preparation of the response shall be the responsibility of the Offeror and will not be reimbursed by the City of Canal Fulton.

It is the responsibility of the Offeror to ensure that the response is received by the City of Canal Fulton, by the date and time in this RFP. Late responses will not be considered. RFP Submittals Due December 11, 2020 by 3:00 PM.

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William Rouse

Finance Director

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330-854-6761

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VIII. RIGHT TO REJECT

The City of Canal Fulton reserves the right to reject any and all responses, or parts thereof received in response to this RFP; waive formalities, technical deficiencies and irregularities; or otherwise solicit new responses if some other manner of negotiation better serves its interests, and to award an agreement in a manner that best serves the interest of the City. An agreement for the accepted response will be drafted based upon the factors described in this RFP.

IX. NOTIFICATION OF AWARD

It is expected that a decision will be made within approximately 30 days of the closing date for the receipt of responses. Upon conclusion of final negotiations, all Offerors submitting responses to this RFP will be informed, in writing, of the name of the successful firm, if any. It is expected that the contract will be for twenty-four (24) months and subject to termination upon delivery of written notice of no less than 60 days.

X. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Following review and selection of top firms, the City will request personal interviews with those selected. Responses will be reviewed in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Experience of the firm in providing similar types of services
2. Resources available immediately to meet the City's needs
3. Experience of the individual identified to serve as main manager
4. Response from references
5. Interview results, if conducted
6. Demonstrated communication skills including accurate and effective listening, speaking and writing abilities
7. Other relevant professional experience, skills and proficiencies

XI. QUESTIONS

All questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail to financedir@cityofcanalfulton-oh.gov no less than five (5) business days prior to the scheduled due date of the response.