



GRATIOT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

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September 26th, 2024

TO: Gratiot County Board of Commissioners

FR: Chris Oosterhoff, County Administrator

RE: Contracting Equalization Services With Bengel Assessing

Our current Equalization Department Head, Keegan Bengel, is ready to take his services to Gratiot County private. This has been one of our goals since I have taken over as Administrator. Keegan and I have talked about his goals and future since day 1 and I knew we were not going to be able to keep him for very long. So I enabled him to be as successful as possible in hopes of being one of his first clients.

Bengel Assessing currently serves 2 additional counties in Michigan. Keegan has been able to grow his business through help of family members and by being given a flex schedule to continue working at Gratiot County. A little over a year ago the Equalization Department went 100% remote with workstations set up in Administration available for use. What we learned is that the employees were much more efficient when they did not have a desk to sit at, to the point where we eliminated a position in the department. County phones automatically relay calls to both their cells simultaneously. At first people in the community did not like them not being in the courthouse. But once they realized how easy it was to get ahold of Keegan and that he would go to them, they were very happy.

We have been practicing this model of Equalization being contracted for a year now. It is a better model than what we were practicing. Keegan's current salary and benefits cost the County \$125,598.31. His contracted services will cost the County \$85,000, with a 5% increase each year for 5 years. Each party can exit the agreement with a 90 day notice. The contract has been vetted by two other county attorneys and Keegans attorney. I have not had it reviewed because of this. Reading through it seems very low risk.

Contract numbers:

October 1, 2024 - September 30, 2025	85,000.00
October 1, 2025 - September 30, 2026	89,250.00
October 1, 2026 - September 30, 2027	93,712.50
October 1, 2027 - September 30, 2028	98,398.13
October 1, 2028 - September 30, 2029	103,318.03

I am recommending that the Board does not require us to bid this out. With the price that Bengal Assessing is offering, the expertise of Keegan, and for continuities sake, we would not select another vender.

I recommend that this Board accepts the 5 year contract with Bengal Assessing Services starting at \$85,000 a year with a 5% increase for 5 years effective immediately.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C Oosterhoff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter "C" being a large, distinct capital letter.

Chris Oosterhoff

Gratiot County Administrator