

TO: DDA Board

FROM: Ann Barnette,
Executive Director

SUBJECT: Franco Contract

DATE: 2/8/2022

Meet Me in Milford



FRANCO has requested a contract increase of \$12,000.00 per year. Their monthly retainer would change from \$4000 per month to \$5000 per month.

The DDA first contracted with Franco in 2008 for \$3000 per month to provide PR services to support downtown shopping and dining. In 2009, those services expanded to create social media pages on Facebook and Twitter, where Franco provided content creation, artwork and updates on local events.

In 2018, the DDA expanded Franco's role to add: management and content for a new Instagram page; quarterly or as needed professional photography; and creative and content for a new quarterly newsletter. The additional work items added \$1000 per month to their retainer. Note that this wasn't a rate increase; it was an expansion of their contract. They increased the cadence of that newsletter in 2019 to monthly for no additional cost.

In 2020, Franco's service to the DDA increased by at least double, in my opinion. They quickly acclimated to the challenges of the pandemic and were on weekly zoom calls with me and the merchants, providing assistance with increasing merchants' online presence, helping to create the new Milford DDA Website to make it more interactive with online sales and curbside-to-go and assisting with artwork, signage and messaging for a closed downtown. They did this without asking for any rate increase.

The proposal you're reviewing is the only rate increase Franco has asked for in 14 years.

The CEO of Franco and our Senior Account Executives will be at the February meeting to present their proposal and answer any questions you may have. I believe they would like direct communication with you before or if they would be willing to consider any alternate proposal.

Here are the options before you:

1. **Approve Franco's request (recommended).** You have the ability to approve a rate increase for professional services without going out to bid under the "professional services" section of the ordinance.
2. Consider issuing an RFP for services again. This process will take a few months. I cannot solicit bids individually and must put the process out to the bidding public if that's your preference.
3. You may consider hiring an individual for this work as a Contract Employee, but I would strongly suggest against that. Many times, the shield of a larger firm that can buffer local political decisions, providing a somewhat distant perspective that is informed by a broad range of clients and an industry-wide perspective on PR, Marketing and social media. They also deliver consistency. When an employee leaves the firm, there is institutional history that informs the work for the next account executive. Every transition we've had with Franco over the years is testimony to that.



Downtown Milford Development Authority

Proposed Rate Increase Summary



True Partners

Since our partnership began in 2009, Franco has evolved our client services to reflect the evolving needs of the Milford community and DDA.

Since 2009, we've grown our services from solely media relations to a fully integrated communications program including:

- Social media support including continued content development and maintenance of the Downtown Milford Facebook and Instagram pages.
- Quarterly photography sessions for images to be used for social media, media relations efforts, in the newsletter and other marketing materials.
- Strategic media relations support including crafting messaging to improve awareness surrounding the DDA's goals, efforts and objectives.
- Email marketing including a monthly Downtown Milford Newsletter and special editions, sent to more than 2,700 subscribers.
 - Includes monthly email to merchant requesting for content submission and cross promotion on social media.

History of Partnership

PR

PR & Social

2008

The Village of Milford DDA hired Franco to provide PR services to highlight the downtown shopping and dining district.

2009

Franco advocates for the creation of social media pages and launched Milford's accounts, Facebook and Twitter.

2010 - 2016

Franco focuses on PR and growing Milford's social presence, growing Facebook following by 220% and Twitter by 326%.

2017

Despite growth, reach on Twitter remained limited (1,734 followers). Franco advocates sunsetting Twitter, introducing Instagram and quarterly photography sessions.

\$3K

PR & Social

PR, Social & Newsletter

2018

Franco launches and grows the Downtown Milford Instagram page to more than 900 followers. Franco advocates for a fully integrated communications plan for 2019, including a consistent email newsletter.

2019

Franco launches the Downtown Milford Newsletter for quarterly distribution, quickly increasing its cadence to monthly. In it's first year, the newsletter gains over 2,000 subscribers.

2020

Franco continues focusing on direct communication with audiences via the newsletter and social media to support businesses through pandemic-related shutdowns.

2021

As businesses began to transition "back to normal," Franco continues to focus on providing strategic media counsel and clear communications through the newsletter and social channels.

\$4K



VILLAGE
OF
MILFORD



Update on Franco Rates

The state of communications and media has been evolving at a fast pace! In recent years, Franco has invested in operational and talent resources to support our deliberate move toward data-driven programs.

Based on increased operational expenses and the overall inflation we are all experiencing, Franco increased our rates for new clients as of January 1, 2022. This is the first time we implemented an agency-wide rate increase since 2018 as well as the first time we've requested an hourly rate increase for Milford in the history of our partnership.

However, to thank the Milford DDA for your loyalty and to showcase ours in return, we plan to hold on applying rate increases for you until your next budget planning cycle.

2023 Strategic Investment

Our History

Our ongoing work with the Milford DDA has been incredibly rewarding, allowing our team to develop a valuable partnership beyond simply monetarily, with the Milford community, its merchants and the DDA.

Reflecting our dedication to serving as a **true partner** and to providing strategic, integrated communications that support the goals of the DDA, our account team has regularly delivered work outside our allotted monthly budget. **In 2021 Franco overserviced the DDA by an average of 22% each month.**

While we haven't stipulated any specific discount in our ongoing agreements, Franco has always valued our relationship with the DDA and has routinely absorbed costs associated with overservicing the account.

To bring things into alignment, we are proposing a rate increase from \$4,000 to \$5,000 per month, beginning in your new fiscal year.

Our Future

Since the beginning of our partnership in 2009, Franco has implemented countless new tools and technologies with the goal of **creating more strategic programs for our clients.**

New tools and innovations have allowed us to improve our social listening, media monitoring and integrated reporting to develop a better understanding of Downtown Milford's audience than ever before. These new insights have empowered our team to implement refined initiatives to expand our reach and impact with the Milford audience.

Since 2009, we've also made continual investments in our people, with our team of integrated communicators committed to mastering new skills and refining their areas of expertise. Franco's commitment to cross training and the ongoing development of our team members has empowered our teams implement truly integrated, innovative tactics to maximize our impact and reach.

We are confident that these improvements and investments have and will continue to benefit the quality of our service and take our future work with Milford to new heights.

2023 Scope of Services

- **DDA Engagement:**
 - Facilitate communication surrounding events and programming to help Milford's merchants meet their individual business goals.
- **Strategic Message Development :**
 - Craft messages for use on social media and email marketing to enhance and create awareness surrounding the DDA's efforts and objectives.
- **Social Media Support:**
 - Develop content for and maintaining the Downtown Milford Facebook and Instagram accounts.
- **Email Marketing:**
 - Develop content and distribute monthly email newsletters. Work with business owners to capture their news to share in email newsletters. Create and implement nurturing strategies to increase email subscribers.
- **Quarterly Photography and Annual Videography:**
 - Visit downtown Milford to capture photography and videography for use on social media and in email communications.
- **Media Relations as Needed:**
 - Conduct media outreach for special business stories and general downtown events or news.

\$5,000 ongoing monthly fee / Compared to \$4,000 monthly since 2019

\$60,000 annually / Compared to \$48,000 annually since 2019

Headquartered
in Detroit since

