



Gaston County

Gaston County
Board of Commissioners
www.gastongov.com

County Attorney Board Action

File #: 21-289

Commissioner Fraley - County Attorney - To Approve the Engagement of Fox Rothschild LLP to Represent Gaston County Through Niche Mining and Land Use Issues and to Appropriate the Necessary Funds for the Execution of the Agreement (*Cost Not to Exceed \$75,000*)

STAFF CONTACT

Jonathan L. Sink - County Attorney

BUDGET IMPACT

Appropriates \$75,000 from General Fund fund balance and appropriates it into an expense account in the County Attorney's budget.

BUDGET ORDINANCE IMPACT

Appropriates fund balance and increases expenses in General Fund by \$75,000.

BACKGROUND

Gaston County would like to engage the firm of Fox Rothschild LLP - specifically the specialized legal services of Tom Terrell, Esq. - to guide the County through high-stakes conversations and processes that would prospectively involve niche areas within the mining and land use arenas in the northwestern portion of Gaston County. The Board is asked to appropriate an amount, not to exceed, of \$75,000 for said engagement.

POLICY IMPACT

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

Budget Change Request (BCR) and Engagement Letter

DO NOT TYPE BELOW THIS LINE

I, Donna S. Buff, Clerk to the County Commission, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of action taken by the Board of Commissioners as follows:

NO.	DATE	M1	M2	CBrown	AFraley	BHovis	KJohnson	TKeigher	TPhilbeck	Worley	Vote
2021-219	08/24/2021	CB	RW	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	U

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GASTON COUNTY BUDGET CHANGE REQUEST

TO: Dr. Kim S. Eagle COUNTY MANAGER

FROM: 4150 County Attorney
Dept. # Department Name

Jonathan Sink 8/16/2021
Department Director's Name Date

TYPE OF REQUEST:

<input type="checkbox"/> Line Item Transfer Within Department & Fund	<input type="checkbox"/> Line Item Transfer Between Funds *
<input type="checkbox"/> Project Transfer Within Department & Fund	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional Appropriation of Funds *
<input type="checkbox"/> Line Item Transfer Between Departments*	<i>* Requires resolution by the Board of Commissioners</i>

ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION (As it appears in the budget)	ACCOUNT NUMBER <small>Fund - Function - Dept - Division - Object - Project</small> xxx - xx - xxxx - xxxx - xxxxx - xxxxxx	AMOUNT Whole Dollars Only (See Note Below)
Fund Balance Appropriated	010-99-9900-0000-490000-	(\$75,000)
Prof Svcs: Lithium Counsel	010-01-4150-0000-530010-22025	\$75,000

JUSTIFICATION FOR REQUEST:

The Gaston County Board of Commissioners have engaged the firm of Fox Rothschild LLP, specifically the specialized legal services of Tom Terrell, Esq., to provide legal consultation in the areas of land use and mining. The Board is asked to appropriate a total sum of \$75,000 from the Fund Balance to go into a newly created account in the County Attorney's Department to cover those costs related to outside counsel and Piedmont Lithium.

Note: Decreases in expenditures & increases in revenue accounts require brackets. Increases in expenditures & decreases in revenue do not require brackets. Please note that transfers between funds require interfund transfer accounts.



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TOM TERRELL
Direct No: 336.378.5412
Email: TTerrell@Foxrothschild.com

July 23, 2021

Jonathan Lee Sink
Gaston County Attorney
PO Box 1578
Gastonia, NC 28053-1578

Re: Fox Rothschild LLP Engagement Letter

Dear Mr. Sink:

This letter will confirm that Gaston County, NC (“Client”) has retained Fox Rothschild LLP (“Firm”) to represent Client in connection with the matter described below. The Engagement Letter (“Letter”), along with the attached Standard Terms of Engagement (“Standard Terms”), comprise the Engagement Agreement (“Agreement”) between Client and the Firm and explain the terms under which the Firm will provide legal services to Client in this matter. (The Standard Terms are attached hereto and incorporated by reference as Exhibit 1.)

Scope of Work. Client has engaged the Firm to provide the following services: consultation regarding potential moratorium and amendment to zoning regulations (“Engagement”). Client has not engaged the Firm, nor has the Firm agreed, to represent Client regarding any other matter. If Client requires the Firm’s services in connection with any other matter, please let me know.

Identity of Client. The Firm’s only client in the Engagement is the party identified as Client in the first paragraph of this Letter. The Engagement is not an agreement to represent any of Client’s affiliates, subsidiaries, parents or related individuals, officers, directors, partners, members, shareholders, employees, independent contractors or agents (collectively, “Affiliates”) unless the Firm has specifically agreed to do so in writing. Client agrees that the Firm’s

A Pennsylvania Limited Liability Partnership

California Colorado Delaware District of Columbia Florida Georgia Illinois Minnesota Nevada
New Jersey New York North Carolina Pennsylvania South Carolina Texas Virginia Washington



representation of Client in the Engagement does not give rise to an attorney-client relationship between the Firm and any of Client's Affiliates. Further, the Firm's representation of Client in the Engagement will not give rise to any conflict of interest in the event other clients of the Firm are adverse to any of Client's Affiliates.

Client has agreed that Jonathan Lee Sink will be the contact person ("Contact") for Client throughout the duration of the Engagement and that all Invoices should be sent to Contact for processing and payment.

Fees and Billing. The Firm's minimum fee will be determined by the amount of time spent on the Engagement multiplied by the applicable hourly billing rates. Each of the Firm's billing professionals and other personnel are assigned an hourly rate that reflects that person's experience, skills, reputation, and ability, as well as prevailing market demand. The Firm's billing rates currently range from \$255 to \$1000 per hour for lawyers and from \$125 to \$445 per hour for paralegals. All dollar amounts reflected in the Agreement are in United States Dollars. The Firm's time will be recorded in increments of rounded tenths of an hour, with one-tenth (0.1) being the minimum for any activity. The following attorneys and, if applicable, paralegals, will be working on the Engagement at the indicated hourly rates:

Tom Terrell (\$450)

Hayes Finley (\$385)

The Firm reserves the right to revise the staffing of the Engagement as it deems efficient. If, at any time, Client has any questions concerning the staffing of the Engagement, please contact me immediately. The Firm's billing rates are adjusted from time to time, generally once a year, usually in June, to reflect then current levels of legal experience, changes in overhead costs, market conditions or other appropriate considerations.

The Firm typically incurs costs in connection with the Engagement. These costs include postage, delivery charges, facsimile and photocopy charges, computerized legal research and related expenses, travel expenses including parking, mileage, meals and hotel costs, and use of outside service providers including printers or experts. In litigation matters, such expenses may also include filing fees, deposition costs, process servers, e-discovery costs and technician time, court reporters and witness fees. Client agrees to reimburse the Firm for any costs and expenses incurred in the course of the Engagement. If the Firm anticipates that substantial expenses will be incurred on Client's behalf, the Firm will advise Client and the Firm may request that Client pay these expenses directly.



The Firm will issue regular Invoices that detail the fees and costs incurred in the Engagement (“Invoices”), usually on a monthly basis. The time charged will include all time the Firm devotes to the Engagement.

Payment is due within thirty (30) days from the date of Invoices. Unpaid Invoices will accrue interest at the maximum rate permitted by applicable laws. If an Invoice is not timely paid, the Firm may withdraw from the Engagement. If necessary, the Firm shall file a motion with the court to withdraw as counsel in the Engagement and Client shall not oppose said motion.

Although the Firm attempts to capture all fees charged and disbursements made on Client’s behalf through the closing date set forth in each Invoice, there may be fees or charges for a particular time period that will not appear on certain Invoices. Any such fees or charges will appear on subsequent Invoices.

No individual except the Firmwide Managing Partner, or his/her designee, has the authority to modify the Invoices submitted to Client.

No Retainer. No retainer is requested at this time. However, the Firm reserves the right to request retainers in the future.

Prospective Waiver. The Firm is a large law firm with many offices and represents many companies and individuals in numerous jurisdictions. It is possible that during the course of the Engagement another client will have a transaction with or a matter adverse to the Client unrelated to the Engagement or any subsequent engagement for the Client. Such matters may include, for example, a real estate transaction or land use matter, a bankruptcy matter, a financing matter, business counseling, corporate matter, a patent or intellectual property matter, or a labor and employment matter. This will confirm that the Client agrees that the Firm may continue to represent or may undertake in the future to represent existing or new clients in such matters not substantially related to the Engagement, even if the interests of such clients in those other matters are directly adverse to the Client. We agree, however, that the Client’s prospective consent to conflicting representations contained in this paragraph will not apply to any litigation matters. Furthermore, the Firm agrees not to use any proprietary or other confidential information of a non-public nature concerning the Client acquired by the Firm as a result of the Engagement, to the Client’s material disadvantage in connection with any matter in which the Firm is adverse to the Client. Client may wish to consult with independent counsel regarding this advance waiver.



Similarly, new lawyers frequently join the Firm. These lawyers may have represented parties adverse to Client while employed by other law firms or organizations. The Firm assumes that, consistent with ethical standards, Client has no objection to the Firm's continuing representation of Client notwithstanding our lawyers' prior professional relationships.

Future Representation. If Client asks the Firm to take on an additional assignment in the future, Client and the Firm will reach a separate understanding covering that additional assignment, which understanding will be reflected in a separate writing, which may include e-mails.

Encryption of Electronic Email. We take data privacy very seriously. The Firm will first attempt to transmit all email to Client by means of the Transport Layer Security (TLS) protocol, which encrypts communications between Client's email server and the Firm's email server. Most major email providers support the TLS protocol, and it is considered a best practice in the security industry. If Client's email provider or server is not configured to receive communications sent with the TLS protocol, the Firm automatically will re-send those communications without using the TLS protocol and without any encryption during transmission. The Firm strongly recommends that Client send and receive email containing attorney-client privileged information, Personally Identifiable Information or Protected Health Information only by means of the TLS protocol. If Client is unable to receive email by means of the TLS protocol, please notify the undersigned and the Firm will use a third party service that will allow Client to retrieve its emails in a secure manner.

Conclusion. If Client has any questions about the Agreement, please contact me as soon as possible. Client may consult with separate counsel regarding this Agreement. This Agreement will take effect on the date when the Firm first performs legal services for Client.



Fox Rothschild LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

We appreciate the opportunity and privilege to represent Client in the Engagement.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Terrell Jr.

Tom Terrell
For Fox Rothschild LLP

Enclosure



Standard Terms of Engagement for Legal Services

Overview

These Standard Terms of Engagement ("Standard Terms") along with the Engagement Letter ("Letter") comprise the Engagement Agreement ("Agreement") between Client and Fox Rothschild LLP ("Firm") and explain the terms under which the Firm will provide legal services to Client in the Engagement. Any defined term in the Letter shall have the same definition in the Standard Terms. In the event of a conflict between the provisions in the Standard Terms and the Letter, the provisions in the Letter shall control.

Communications

Client agrees to be candid and cooperative with the Firm and to provide the Firm with full, complete, and truthful information. Client will communicate with the Firm before communicating with any parties, witnesses, or their counsel, or with any experts or consultants, about the Engagement.

Client agrees to inform the Firm, in writing, of any changes in Client's name, address, telephone number, contact person, or email address. The Firm will endeavor to keep Client informed of the status of the Engagement to the extent necessary to enable Client to make informed decisions.

Client acknowledges that any opinion or belief that the Firm expresses from time to time about the Engagement, including various courses of action and the results that might be anticipated, is intended merely to be an expression of opinion based upon information available to the Firm at the time and not a promise or guarantee.

In order to increase the Firm's efficiency and responsiveness, the Firm will use state of the art communication devices (i.e., email, document transfer by computer, wireless telephones, facsimile transfer and other devices which may be developed in the future). The use of such devices may place Client's confidences and privileges at risk. However, the Firm believes that the efficiencies involved in the use of these devices outweigh the risk of accidental disclosure. Client authorizes the Firm to use these electronic communication devices.

Affiliations by Client

Client agrees and acknowledges that, unless specifically stated otherwise in the Letter, the Engagement is not an agreement by the Firm to represent any of Client's affiliates, subsidiaries, constituents, parents or related individuals, officers, directors, partners, members, shareholders, employees, independent contractors or agents (collectively, "Affiliates"). Client agrees that the Firm's representation of Client in the Engagement does not give rise to an attorney-client relationship between the Firm and any of Client's Affiliates. Further, the Firm's representation of Client in the Engagement will not give rise to any conflict of interest in the event other clients of the Firm are adverse to any of Client's Affiliates.

Estimates

The fees and costs relating to the Engagement are not predictable. Accordingly, the Firm has made no commitment to Client concerning the maximum amount of fees and costs that will be necessary to complete the Engagement. Any estimate of fees and costs that the Firm and Client may have discussed orally or in writing represents only an estimate of such fees and costs. Client also understands that payment of the Firm's fees and costs is not contingent on the ultimate outcome of the Engagement.

Fees and Billing

The Firm's minimum fee will be determined by the amount of time spent on the Engagement multiplied by the applicable hourly billing rates. Each of the Firm's billing professionals and other personnel is assigned an hourly rate that reflects that person's experience, skills, reputation, and ability, as well as prevailing market demand. The Firm's time will be recorded in increments of rounded tenths of an hour, with one-tenth (0.1) being the minimum for any activity. All dollar amounts reflected in the Agreement are in United States Dollars.

The Firm reserves the right to revise the staffing of the Engagement as it deems efficient. The Firm's billing rates are adjusted from time to time, generally once a year, usually in June, to reflect then current levels of legal experience, changes in overhead costs, market conditions or other appropriate considerations.

The Firm typically incurs costs in connection with the Engagement. These costs include postage, delivery charges, facsimile and photocopy charges, computerized legal research and related expenses, travel expenses including parking, mileage, meals and hotel costs, and use of outside service providers including printers or experts. In litigation matters, such expenses may also include filing fees, deposition costs, process servers, court reporters and witness fees. Client agrees to reimburse the Firm for any costs and expenses incurred in the course of the Engagement. If the Firm anticipates that substantial expenses will be incurred on Client's behalf, the Firm will advise Client and the Firm may request that Client pay these expenses directly.

The Firm will issue regular Invoices that detail the fees and costs incurred in the Engagement, usually on a monthly basis. The time charged will include all time the Firm devotes to the Engagement.

Payment is due within thirty (30) days from the date of Invoices. Unpaid Invoices will accrue interest at the maximum rate permitted by applicable laws. If an Invoice is not timely paid, the Firm may withdraw from the Engagement. If necessary, the Firm shall file a motion with the court to withdraw as counsel in the Engagement and Client shall not oppose said motion.

Although the Firm attempts to capture all fees charged and disbursements made on Client's behalf through the closing date set forth in each Invoice, there may be fees or charges for a particular time period that will not appear on certain Invoices. Any such fees or charges will appear on subsequent Invoices.

No individual except the Firmwide Managing Partner, or his/her designee, has the authority to modify the Invoices submitted to Client.

Third-Party Payor

Unless agreed to in writing between Client and the Firm, even though a third party ("Third Party Payor") may have agreed to pay the Invoices incurred in the Engagement, Client agrees to be ultimately responsible for payment of all Invoices incurred in the Engagement. If Client has advised the Firm that a Third Party Payor will be paying some or all of the Invoices, Client acknowledges that, should Client instruct the Firm to share confidential information with that Third Party Payor, including Invoices, Client may lose any privileges or protections that may apply to that information.

March 2020

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California Colorado Delaware District of Columbia Florida Georgia Illinois Minnesota Nevada New Jersey
New York North Carolina Pennsylvania South Carolina Texas Washington

Exhibit 1

Conflicts of Interest

In the Firm's representation of Client in the Engagement, it may be necessary for the Firm lawyers to analyze or address their professional duties or responsibilities or those of the Firm, and to consult with the Firm's General Counsel, or other lawyers, in doing so. To the extent the Firm is addressing its duties, obligations or responsibilities to Client in those consultations, it is possible that a conflict of interest might be deemed to exist as between Client and the Firm. As a condition of the Engagement, Client waives any conflict of interest that might be deemed to arise out of any such consultations. Client further agrees that these consultations are protected from disclosure by the Firm's attorney-client privilege.

Patent and Intellectual Property Matters

If the Engagement concerns patent prosecution, Client agrees and acknowledges that the Firm will not be responsible for the payment of maintenance fees and/or patent annuities (collectively, "Patent Annuities"). Client further agrees that Client will handle the payment of Patent Annuities either directly or through firms that specialize solely in the payment of annuities for patent portfolios around the world. If Client needs assistance in identifying firms that provide such services, the Firm will provide Client with information upon request.

To the extent that the Engagement relates to the defense of Client's intellectual property rights, Client's comprehensive general liability or other liability insurance carrier may provide some reimbursement for the Invoices.

Protected Health Information

Federal and state laws impose duties on both clients and law firms to ensure the privacy and security of "protected health information" (PHI), which broadly includes identifiable health and personal information of individuals. Client should not send or transmit to the Firm any PHI in any format, whether by hard copy, email, facsimile or other medium, unless and until: (i) Client and the Firm have a current, signed Business Associate Agreement in place; (ii) the attorney with whom Client is working at the Firm has determined that the PHI is needed in connection with the Engagement; (iii) Client has notified the attorney in advance of the transmission of the PHI; and (iv) the attorney has approved the manner by which such PHI will be received by the Firm. Client must let the Firm know if Client anticipates that the Engagement will involve PHI, so that the Firm can take the necessary steps to allow its transmission to the Firm.

Use of Personal Information

The Firm gathers and processes personal data pursuant to all applicable law. The Firm will use personal information that we receive in connection with providing legal services to Client, marketing our services to Client, and to comply with applicable law. During and after the Engagement, the Firm may disclose personal information to parties involved in the work the Firm is performing, opposing parties, arbitration panels and courts, and any other reasonably foreseeable entity. Additionally, the Firm may use third parties, wherever located, to store and process personal data received from Client or its agents or other sources.

No Tax Advice

Unless specifically stated in the Letter, or in a subsequent written communication between the Firm and Client, the Engagement will not include providing Client with legal advice pertaining to any federal, state, foreign, or local tax matter or issue, whether or not directly related to or affected by the legal matters that are part of the Engagement.

Client's Obligation to Place Insurance Carrier on Notice

If Client has not already done so, Client should put any insurer on notice of any claims that have been or could be made in connection with the Engagement, so that the insurer cannot take the position that notice was given late or that insurer was prejudiced by delay in providing such notice.

Conclusion of Engagement and Client Files

Unless previously terminated, the attorney-client relationship between Client and the Firm, related to the Engagement, will terminate when the Firm sends to Client the Firm's final invoice for services rendered in the Engagement or when the Firm advises Client that it will no longer represent Client in the Engagement.

Client may terminate the Engagement at any time. The Firm may terminate the Engagement subject to applicable ethical and legal requirements. If permission for withdrawal is required by a court or arbitration panel, the Firm will promptly request such permission and Client agrees not to oppose such request. Client will remain obligated for any Invoices through the effective date of the termination.

Once Client's matter is concluded, the Firm will notify Client, offer to return any original material Client provided to the Firm, and close the matter. Client can request that the entire file be sent to Client at this time. If Client does not request the return of the entire file, it may be sent to storage off-site, and thereafter an administrative cost may be charged to Client for retrieving it from storage. Client is responsible for complying with any records retention obligations that may be applicable to any record.

Under the Firm's Records Retention Policy, as may be modified from time-to-time, the Firm may dispose of files as early as seven (7) years after a matter is closed. The Firm will send written notice to Client at the last address in the Firm's records before disposing of any of Client's files. It is Client's responsibility to notify the Firm of any changes in Client's mailing address so that the Firm can properly notify Client. If Client's mailing address is out of date in the Firm's records at the time of the foregoing notice, Client agrees that the Firm may destroy files that Client has not previously requested be returned to Client.

The Firm and Client agree that all original Client-supplied materials and all lawyer end-product (referred to generally as "client material") are the property of the Client. Lawyer end-product includes, for example, final contracts, pleadings, and trust documents. The Firm and Client agree that lawyer work product, and copies of any electronic discovery documents or data, are the property of the Firm. Lawyer work product includes, for example, drafts, notes, internal memoranda, and electronic files, and lawyer representation and administration materials, including related lawyer-client correspondence and conflicts materials. The Firm will assume that Client has a copy of all electronic documents provided to the Firm by Client or on Client's behalf, and that Client retains in Client's records all electronic and physical materials provided to Client in the course of the Engagement. All nonpublic information that Client has supplied to the Firm and that the Firm retains will be kept confidential in accordance with applicable rules of professional responsibility.

Future Changes in the Law

Client acknowledges that, after the Engagement has terminated, the Firm has no continuing obligation to advise Client of future legal developments, unless Client subsequently engages the Firm to do so.

Severability in Event of Partial Invalidity

If any provision of the Agreement is held in whole or in part to be unenforceable for any reason, the remainder of that provision and of the entire Agreement will be severable and will remain in effect. If the Agreement has been provided to Client in a language other than English, the provisions contained in the English version shall control.

March 2020