

## **Procurement Appeals and Oversight: *Procurement Protests and Debarment Proceedings***

### **Protest Officer—**

The “Protest Officer” for the District is \_\_\_\_\_, or another person designated by the Board of Education, or such other person as is designated by rule of the Procurement Policy Board.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-103(37) (2014)*

### **Parties Who May Protest—**

A protest may be filed with the Protest Officer by (a) an actual or prospective bidder or offeror who is aggrieved in connection with a procurement or (b) by a prospective contractor who is aggrieved in connection with and award of a contract.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-1602(1) (2014)*

### **Filing Protest—**

#### *Timing*

A protest with respect to an invitation for bids or a request for proposals must be filed either before the opening of bids or the closing date for proposals, or, if the person filing the protest did not know and should not have known of the facts giving rise to the protest before the bid opening or the closing date for proposals, within seven days after the day on which the person knows or should have known of the facts giving rise to the protest.

Protests which do not relate to an invitation for bids or request for proposals but which involve a deadline for the submission of a price or response must be filed before that deadline, or, if the person filing the protest did not know and reasonably should not have known of the facts giving rise to the protest before the deadline, within seven days after the day on which the person knows or reasonably should have known of the facts giving rise to the protest.

Protests which do not fall under either of the preceding two paragraphs must be filed within seven days after the day on which the person filing the protest knows or should have known of the facts giving rise to the protest.

A person who fails to timely file a protest under this section may not protest to the Protest Officer a solicitation or award of a contract, or file an action or appeal challenging a solicitation or award of a contract before an appeals panel, a court, or any other forum.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-1602(1), (3) (2014)*

## *Contents*

A person who files a protest under this section shall include in the filing document the person's address of record and email address of record and a concise statement of the grounds upon which the protest is made.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-1602(2) (2014)*

## *Dismissal for non-conforming protest.*

The Protest Officer may dismiss a protest that is not filed in accordance with the requirements of this policy.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-1604 (2012)*

## *Effect of timely protest and continuation despite protest or appeal*

The District may not proceed further with the solicitation or with the award of the contract while there is a pending protest and until all administrative and judicial remedies relating to the protest are exhausted (such as appeals to the Procurement Policy Board or further appeal to a court). However, the District may proceed with solicitation or award despite a pending protest or further proceeding if the District, after consulting with the District's attorney, determines in writing that award of the contract without delay is in the best interest of the District.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-1903 (2014)*

## **Determination on Protest—**

### *Authority to resolve*

A Protest Officer, or the Board of Education or its designee, may enter into a settlement agreement to resolve a protest.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-1602(4) (2014)*

### *Process for determining the protest*

After a protest is filed, the protest officer shall first determine whether the protest is timely and fully complies with the content requirements set forth above. The protest officer shall dismiss any protests which are not timely or which do not fully comply with the content requirements.

If the protest is timely and compliant, then the protest officer shall:

- dismiss the protest if the protest officer determines that it alleges facts that, if true, do not provide an adequate basis for the protest; or

- uphold the protest without holding a hearing if the protest officer determines that the undisputed facts of the protest indicate that it should be upheld; or
- hold a hearing on the protest, following the procedures below, if there is a genuine issue of material fact that needs to be resolved in order to determine whether it should be upheld.

Whether other parties may intervene in the protest shall be determined by rules issued by the Procurement Policy Board. The fact that a Protest Officer holds a hearing, considers a protest, or issues a written decision does not affect a person's right to, at a later date, question or challenge the Protest Officer's jurisdiction to hold the hearing, consider the protest, or render the decision. A Protest Officer's determination of facts relating to a protest is final and conclusive on appeal unless shown to be arbitrary and capricious or clearly erroneous.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-1603(1), (2), (3), (4)(e), (10) (2014)*

#### Protest records

The Protest Officer shall record each protest hearing. Regardless of whether a hearing is held, the Protest Officer shall preserve all records and other evidence relied upon in reaching the written decision. Such records may not be destroyed until the decision, and any appeal of the decision, becomes final. The Protest Officer shall submit a copy of the written decision and all records and other evidence relied upon in reaching a decision within seven days after (a) notice of an appeal of the decision or (b) a request from the chair of the Procurement Policy Board.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-1603(4)(d) (2014)*

#### Hearing process

For purposes of a protest hearing, the Protest Officer may subpoena witnesses and compel their attendance, may subpoena documents for production at the hearing, may obtain additional factual information, and may obtain testimony from experts, the person filing the protest, representatives of the District, or others. The Rules of Evidence do not apply to a protest hearing. The deliberations of the Protest Officer may be held in private.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-1603(4), (5)(a) (2014)*

#### Written determination

A Protest Officer, or the Protest Officer's designee, shall promptly issue a written decision regarding any protest that is not settled by mutual agreement. The decision shall state the reasons for the action taken, inform the protestor of the right to judicial or administrative review as provided in the District's procurement policies and the Procurement Code, and state the amount of the security deposit or bond required for a further appeal. The person issuing the decision shall mail, email, or

otherwise immediately furnish a copy of the decision to the protestor. If the Protest Officer does not issue the written decision regarding a protest or a contract controversy within 30 calendar days after the day on which a written request for a final decision is filed with the Protest Officer, or within a longer period as may be agreed upon by the parties, the protester, prospective contractor, or contractor may proceed as if an adverse decision had been received.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-1603(6), (9) (2014)*

#### Effect of determination

A determination is effective until stayed or reversed on appeal, except as provided above. The determination is final and conclusive unless the protestor files an appeal with the Procurement Policy Board.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-1603(7), (8)(a) (2014)*

#### Finding of a violation before the contract is awarded

If, before award of a contract, it is determined at any level of review that a procurement or proposed award of a contract is in violation of law, the procurement or proposed award shall be cancelled or revised to comply with the law.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-1909 (2012)*

#### Finding of a violation after the contract is awarded

If after award of a contract it is determined at any level of review that a procurement or award of a contract is in violation of law, the following actions shall be taken:

1. if the person awarded the contract did not act fraudulently or in bad faith, then
  - a. the contract either may be ratified and affirmed, if it is in the best interests of the District, or may be terminated, and
  - b. the person awarded the contract shall be compensated for the actual expenses reasonably incurred under the contract before the termination, plus a reasonable profit.
2. if the person awarded the contract acted fraudulently or in bad faith, then the contract either may be declared null and void or may be ratified and affirmed if it is in the best interests of the District, without prejudice to the District's rights to any appropriate damages.

Under no circumstances is a person entitled to consequential damages in relation to a solicitation or award of a contract under the procurement process, including consequential damages for lost profits, loss of business opportunities, or damage to reputation.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-1907 (2014)*

*Costs to or against protestor*

When a protest is sustained at any level of review and the protesting bidder or offeror should have been awarded the contract under the solicitation but is not, the protestor shall be entitled to the reasonable costs incurred in connection with the solicitation, including bid preparation and appeal costs and any equitable relief determined to be appropriate by the Procurement Policy Board appeals panel or court.

When a protest is not sustained by the appeals panel, the protestor shall reimburse the District for the expenses incurred in defending the appeal, including personnel costs, attorney fees, other legal costs, expenses incurred by the attorney general's office, the per diem and expenses paid by the District to witnesses or appeals panel members, and any additional expenses incurred by the staff of the District who have provided materials and administrative services to the appeals panel for that case.

The notice of claims provisions of the Utah Governmental Immunity Act (Title 63G, Chapter 7, Part 4, Utah Code) and the undertaking provision of Utah Code § 63G-7-601 do not apply to actions brought under this chapter by an aggrieved party for equitable relief or reasonable costs incurred in preparing or appealing an unsuccessful bid or offer

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-1904 (2014)*

**Debarment or Suspension Proceedings—**

A person may be debarred or suspended for the causes set forth in Policy CBA. Before a person may be debarred or suspended, the Board of Education or its designee must consult with the procurement unit involved in the matter for which debarment or suspension is sought (if that unit is not the District), consult with the District's attorney, give notice as set forth below, and hold a hearing as set forth below.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-904(1)(a), (b) (2014)*

**Notice of Debarment or Suspension—**

An individual to be debarred or suspended must be given written notice of the reasons for which debarment or suspension is being considered and of the hearing at which debarment or suspension will be considered. This notice must be given at least 10 days before the date of the hearing.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-904(1)(b)(ii) (2014)*

## **Hearing on Debarment or Suspension—**

### *Hearing process*

The hearing shall be conducted by the Board of Education or its designee. For purposes of the hearing, the Board or its designee may subpoena witnesses and compel their attendance, subpoena documents for production, obtain additional factual information, and obtain testimony from experts, the person who is the subject of the proposed debarment or suspension, representatives of the District, or others who may be of assistance in making the determination. The Rules of Evidence do not apply in this hearing. The fact that a hearing is held on debarment or suspension or that a decision is issued does not prevent a person from later questioning or challenging the authority of the Board of Education or its designee to hold the hearing or issue the decision.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-904(1)(c)(i), (ii), (iv) (2014)*

### *Written decision*

The Board of Education or its designee shall promptly issue a written decision regarding any proposed debarment or suspension that is not settled by mutual agreement. If debarment or suspension is ordered, the decision shall state the reasons for that action, inform the person of the right to judicial or administrative review as provided in the District's procurement policies and the Procurement Code, and state the amount of the security deposit or bond required for a further appeal and how that amount was calculated. The person issuing the decision shall mail, email, or otherwise immediately furnish a copy of the decision to the person subject to the decision.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-904(1)(c)(v), (vi) (2014)*

### *Hearing record*

The Board of Education or its designee shall preserve all records and other evidence relied upon in reaching the decision. Such records may not be destroyed until the decision, and any appeal of the decision, becomes final. A copy of the written decision and all records and other evidence relied upon in reaching a decision within shall be submitted to the chair of the Procurement Policy Board within seven days after (a) notice of an appeal of the decision or (b) a request from the chair of the Procurement Policy Board.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-904(1)(c)(iii) (2014)*

## **Effect of Order of Suspension or Debarment—**

A decision of debarment or suspension is final unless it is appealed to the Procurement Policy Board as provided for in Policy CDB.

*Utah Code § 63G-6a-904(1)(c)(vii)(A) (2014)*