

Staff Report

To: Board of Directors
From: Olga Kreimer, Communications Specialist
Date: March 26, 2026

Agenda Item: 5.5 Six Pony Hitch Contract Graphic Design and Marketing Contract Update

Attachments:

- 5.5.1 6PH Contract Amendment

Recommendation:

Authorize the chief executive officer and general manager to execute a contract amendment with its current marketing vendor, Six Pony Hitch, increasing the FY26 contract by \$15,000 and adding \$40,000 as an amendment to contract extension options.

Discussion:

Six Pony Hitch has been the agency's marketing and design contractor since fall 2024, with the second contract year ending in June 2026. Currently, the contract has a limit of \$90,000 per year. Due to the volume of work delivered so far and anticipated in the remaining months of FY26, the staff requests a \$15,000 increase in the contract budget to be used during the remaining contract period.

In reviewing the average volume of design work needed from the contract so far, it has become clear that Mountain Line's graphic design and marketing needs are higher than previously estimated. Therefore, the staff also requests an increase of \$40,000 to the annual contract limit for available extension options. (Three one-year extensions to the current contract are available, beginning in July 2026 and ending in June 2029.)

Specific projects requiring design support in the remaining months of FY26 include:

- New service launch: July 5
- System map redesign
- Individual route map designs
- Bus stop signage updates (system and route blades, info placards)
- Marshall Mountain Line: May 2

- Market Trolley: May 2

Each of these projects has firm deadlines ahead of the new fiscal year and are closely tied to planned operations and maintenance improvements.

During heavier-volume months of the contract so far, 6PH has billed between \$10 and 12 thousand, reducing capacity during other months to stay within contract limits. Adding \$15,000 to this fiscal year will provide a monthly average for the remaining months sufficient to complete the materials needed for successful service and facility improvement communications. Adding \$40,000 to future contract extension options will increase the monthly average for FY2027 to better support anticipated agency needs and enterprise projects, including:

- 50th anniversary campaign (Fall 2026 through calendar year 2027)
- New facility updates
- Airport signage
- Map and wayfinding signage launch campaign
- Production and launch of new “How Missoula Rolls” video series, along with corresponding partnership assets, events, and promotion
- Continuing updates to print, digital, and vehicle materials

Design and marketing needs from the past contract year have all been within scope of the original contract but at times were more complex or required shorter timelines than could have been anticipated originally, leading to the contractor requiring more hours. For example, the agency needed an updated system map upon changing Routes 3 and 11 in the fall, ahead of the larger map redesign project planned for this spring. This interim design was necessary to keep riders and community members informed but added to the volume of work for this year. Similarly, in preparing the planned system map redesign, it became clear that individual route maps would better serve Mountain Line riders, adding a significant layer of additional work to that project. Each of these expanded or added materials has benefited other projects by introducing new design language, improving the rider experience, and strengthening the agency’s visibility in the community.

Projects delivered and drafted in this contract year include:

- Marshall Mountain Line print and digital campaign
- Marshall Mountain Line video production support
- Internal and external brand refresh templates (social media, documents, print goods)
- Operational branding (e.g. new facility signage, simulator graphics, uniform designs)
- Drafts of bus stop blades and info placards
- Drafts of individual route maps
- Video graphics

- Public document designs and illustrations
- Digital assets for community partners
- How Missoula Rolls video series development and pre-production
- Service and paratransit vehicle designs
- Website design updates, individual stop landing page design draft
- Updated route colors, brand palette, agency style guide

Additionally, a clause is added to the contract extension that if additional agency needs become known outside the contract limit, they may be added after a written estimate is reviewed and approved by MUTD. This clause is now included as standard in agency service contracts.

Financial Impact and Funding Source:

Additional funding is available in the communications department budget. These funds can be shifted from other areas of the department budget, so no additional funds are requested for FY2026. While this amendment creates contract authority for future years, the board retains budgetary authority for future years, as always.

DBE Certified:

Yes.

Six Pony Hitch Contract Amendment

This Contract Amendment is entered into by and between Missoula Urban Transportation District (“MUTD”) and Six Pony Hitch (“6PH”) (collectively, the “Parties”).

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the Parties entered into a Contracted Agreement dated November 7, 2024 (the “Agreement”); and

WHEREAS, the Parties desire to expand and modify certain terms of the Agreement;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants and agreements contained herein, the Parties agree as follows:

1. Effective Date

This Option shall be effective as of March 16, 2025.

2. Increase to Current Contract Term Value

The remainder of the current contract term ending June 30, 2026, shall have an additional Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000) added to the not-to-exceed amount identified in Section 4 of the Agreement.

Accordingly, the total not-to-exceed amount for the current contract term is hereby increased to One Hundred Five Thousand Dollars (\$105,000).

3. Pricing for Optional Extension Terms

In the event MUTD elects to exercise any of the three (3) one-year extension options provided under the Agreement, the not-to-exceed amount for each such extension term shall be increased to One Hundred Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$130,000) per contract year.

4. Amendment to Section 4 – Compensation

Section 4 of the Agreement is hereby amended and restated in its entirety as follows:

MUTD agrees to pay Consultant an hourly principal rate of Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) and an hourly agency rate of One Hundred Seventy-Five Dollars (\$175.00) for services performed pursuant to the Scope of Services. The total value of hourly labor shall not exceed One Hundred Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$130,000) per contract year.

In the event Contractor anticipates that the cost of the described work will exceed \$130,000 per contract year, Contractor shall provide MUTD with a written estimate detailing:

- the nature and scope of the additional work,
- the estimated number of hours required, and
- the applicable hourly rate(s) for such work.

No additional work shall be performed, and no additional charges shall be incurred, unless and until MUTD has reviewed and approved such estimate in writing.

Any alteration or deviation from the described work that results in additional costs shall be performed only upon written authorization from MUTD. All such additional work shall constitute an extra charge above the contract amount and must be agreed to in writing by both Parties prior to performance.

5. Ratification

Except as expressly modified by this Amendment, all terms and conditions of the Agreement shall remain in full force and effect and are hereby ratified and confirmed.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have executed this Amendment as of the dates set forth below.

MISSOULA URBAN TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT (MUTD)

By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

SIX PONY HITCH (6PH)

By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____