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Bellevue looking for delinquents

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Bellevue Council is expected to vote next month to enter into a contract with a local company that promises to help identify delinquent taxpayers.

The matter was set to be decided at the regular council meeting on Tuesday, but solicitor Matt Racunas said he had concerns about the contract that was presented to the borough.

The company, turnKey Taxes, Inc., approached the borough earlier this year to consider its services. The company provides data integration, analysis and organization directed at identifying potential taxpayers who may have been overlooked by the borough. Company owner Mark Schuster said that data is obtained from a number of sources, including current tax records and even utility accounts.

The analysis will search for people who have failed to pay any of the borough-imposed taxes, including earned income, local services, business privilege and mercantile.

“We’re looking for taxpayers, you don’t know who they are,” Schuster said. “They’re not on any delinquent list you have.”

The analysis will be performed at no cost to the borough. turnKey will take 25 percent of any tax revenue actually collected by the borough or its tax collectors. The company will only identify the taxpayers and delinquent accounts, which will have to be turned over to the borough’s appointed collectors. Council member Linda Woshner said the borough will have to pay the tax collectors an additional 10 percent on delinquent accounts, but that the expenditure was worth it to identify people who should be paying taxes in the future.

Director of administrative services Ron Borczyk said that he had checked references provided by the company and received positive feedback. The only stumbling block to the project was the wording of the contract presented by turnKey. Racunas said the contract needed to better clarify what and how turnKey would be paid, and also define a period of time for the services, with a contract termination clause added.

The solicitor planned to draft changes to the contract for consideration by both council and turnKey. The issue could be voted on at the pre-council meeting on March 10.