

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: AWARD CONTRACT FOR 800 MHZ TRUNKED RADIO EQUIPMENT, PAGERS, AND RELATED EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES

BACKGROUND:

The 800 MHz trunked radio system provides for interactive communication between City work groups and departments as well as the Story County Sheriff's Office, Iowa State University, Mary Greeley Medical Center, and all Story County emergency responders. On June 8, 2010, City Council awarded a contract to Electronic Engineering Co. for 800 MHz trunked radio equipment, pagers, and related equipment and services for City departments. The contract provided for lease of general radio equipment, law enforcement equipment, equipment installation and maintenance, and paging equipment and services through June 30, 2013. The agreement allowed City departments to continue to receive radio services provided locally by Electronic Engineering Co. There has been one change order to the contract adding an additional radio option.

Radio equipment furnished under the contract includes portable and vehicle radios, base station radios, and specialized law enforcement communication equipment. The City currently has approximately 387 radios and 14 pagers leased under this contract. At this time, the Police and Fire Departments are the largest users of the City radio contract and interactive communication with public safety agencies throughout the County occurs on this radio system. **The total annual cost for radio and pager equipment and related services is approximately \$190,000 per year.**

The Story County E-911 board completed a study of the current radio system in the Fall of 2010. The consultant recommended that the County begin planning for a new radio system due to the aging equipment and limitations of the current radio technology. Since that time, the radio consoles have been replaced in each of the Communication Centers. In addition, some of handheld and mobile radios have been updated. These changes allowed the City to extend the life of the current system but, have not eliminated the concern about the reliability of the core system.

In response to this concern, the City of Ames convened a Radio Communications Team to evaluate existing communication systems/providers in the area who might offer a viable alternative to the City's existing system. There are changes in technology and new Federal regulations the City will need to consider. It should be emphasized that it will take some time to develop an alternative plan and the implementation of such a plan will require a significant investment. **Therefore, until a feasible plan can be**

established and implemented, the continuation of the radio contract is in the best interest of the City.

The proposed contract with Electronic Engineering Co. is for two years beginning July 1, 2013, and ending June 30, 2015. Prices under the proposed contract reflect no price increase in the tower fee for FY 2013/2014. The tower fees will increase an additional \$1.55 per radio for the second year. Equipment prices are unchanged from the contract awarded in 2003 with the exception of installation costs. The contract also includes an option for a third year with \$0.50 increase in tower fees.

Unfortunately, the increase in tower fees will have an even greater impact on the City's budget. Historically, the tower fees for the two largest users of the contract, the Police and Fire Departments, were paid for by the Story County E911 Board. The Board currently pays approximately \$21,812 annually for Ames tower fees. Because the revenue streams that support the Board are changing and declining, the Board has announced that the tower fee costs will gradually be shifted back to the cities and towns over the next four years. In fiscal 2013-2014, 25% of the tower fee (estimated at \$5,453) for police and fire will be shifted back to the City's budget. An additional 25% will then be shifted each of the following 3 years.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the contract with Electronic Engineering Co. to provide 800 MHz trunked radio equipment, pagers, and related equipment and services for City departments from July 1, 2013, through June 30, 2015.
2. Reject the contract with Electronic Engineering Co. and attempt to purchase radio and pager services on an as-needed basis until the County-wide radio system study is completed and the Story County E-911 board acts on resulting recommendations.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The proposed two-year contract for radio and pager equipment and services will insure continuation of critical interactive communication between City work groups and departments as well as the Story County Sheriff's Office, Iowa State University, Mary Greeley Medical Center, and all Story County emergency responders.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby approving the contract with Electronic Engineering Co. to provide 800 MHz trunked radio equipment, pagers, and related equipment and services for City departments from July 1, 2013, through June 30, 2015.