

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: CONTRACT EXTENSION FOR 800 MEGAHERTZ TRUNKED RADIO EQUIPMENT, PAGERS, AND RELATED EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES

BACKGROUND:

The 800 megahertz (MHz) trunked radio system provides for interactive communication between many City work groups and departments, as well as with the Story County Sheriff's Office, Iowa State University, Mary Greeley Medical Center, and all of Story County's other emergency responders.

On July 17, 2018, City Council awarded a one-year contract extension 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, 2019. That agreement allowed City departments to continue to receive radio services provided locally by Electronic Engineering Co.

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 398 radios leased and 20 radios with only a tower fee previously purchased under this contract. The City also has two pagers for Information Services, and will continue to maintain the pricing and availability of pagers on this contract for unexpected needs. At this time, the Police and Fire Departments are the largest users of the City radio contract. Interactive communication with public safety agencies throughout Story County also occurs on this radio system. The total annual cost for radio equipment and related services is approximately \$215,000 per year.

The Story County 911 Board completed a study of the current radio system in the Fall of 2010. The Board's 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 the Ames, ISU and Story County Communication Centers. In addition, some of the handheld and mobile radios have been updated. These changes allowed the City to extend the life of the current equipment, but have not eliminated concerns about reliability of the core system.

In response to these concerns, under the direction of the Story County 911 Board, a radio consulting firm was retained. They provided a review of the existing radio system and a series of recommendations to address the concerns. In December of 2018, the City joined with Story County, Iowa State University and the Story County 911 Board to form StoryComm for the purpose of purchasing and building a new radio system. In

May of 2019 StoryComm entered into an agreement with RACOM Critical Communications of Marshalltown to acquire and build the new radio system.

It should be emphasized that it will take some time to acquire equipment and construct and implement a new system. Until a new radio system is constructed and implemented, continuation of the current radio contract is in the best interest of the City. City expects this is the final year for the 800 MHz radio system since the City, as part of StoryComm, will transition to the P25 radio system.

The proposed contract extension with Electronic Engineering Co. is for one year beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2020. Prices under the proposed contract reflect a \$6.00 per month per public safety radio and \$4.00 per month per non-public safety radio increase in the tower fee. With 418 radios on the system, the total annual cost increase in the tower fee will be \$23,736 across all City departments. All other equipment prices will remain unchanged from the current contract.

Historically, the Story County 911 Board paid one half of the tower fees of the Police and Fire Departments, the two largest users under this contract. The City expects that the Story County 911 Board will continue this practice for FY19-20. The 911 Board also paid the tower fees for other emergency response agencies in Story County. In the current fiscal year the 911 Board paid approximately \$14,355 as its 50% share of tower fees.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the contract extension with Electronic Engineering Co. to provide 800 MHz trunked radio equipment, pagers, and related equipment and services for City departments from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020.
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 is completed.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The proposed one year contract extension for radio and pager equipment and services will ensure continuation of critical interactive communication between City work groups and departments, as well as with 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 as stated above.