

ITEM #: 20  
DATE: 04-25-23  
DEPT: P&H

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: AWARD OF CONTRACT TO COMMUNITY PLAYTHINGS FOR OUTDOOR PLAY EQUIPMENT FOR UNIVERSITY CHILDCARE CENTER (UCC) IN CONNECTION WITH CARES ROUND 2 (COVID-19) FUNDING**

**BACKGROUND:**

In May 2020, the City received a second round of CARES (CDBG-CV) funding from the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) in the amount of \$604,386. The funds are being used to assist MICA with the purchase of a van to deliver groceries and other supplies to low-income clientele; to assist University Childcare Center (UCC) with the purchase of outdoor playground equipment and a freezer; and to assist Ames Community Preschool Center (ACPC) with the remodeling of an existing room into infant daycare space and the purchase of furniture (cribs) and storage units. The grant award amount to UCC is \$250,932, which initially included an upgrade to their HVAC system and to their kitchen area. However, these two items were unable to be completed and were removed from the project budget.

UCC's request for outdoor play equipment includes: outdoor kitchen, modular climbing equipment, water tables, building blocks, tables and benches, and arbors. Since the CARES funding has been directed to the City, the purchase of outdoor play equipment must follow City Purchasing Policies, along with the applicable federal requirements for the use of the funds.

On March 29, 2023, a Request for Quotes (RFQ) was posted to AmesBids, the City's electronic bidding system. Seven potential bidders viewed the RFQ, and on April 7, 2023, two bids were received as follows:

<b>Bidder</b>	<b>Base Bid</b>
Lakeshore Learning Materials LLC, Carson, CA (Alternate)	\$34,797.40
Community Playthings (Community Products LLC), Ulster Park, NY	\$60,080.00

**Lakeshore Learning Materials provided a lower bid using alternate products compared to those solicited in the RFQ. Staff reviewed these items and has determined that the items do not have the same level of durability and suitability for their intended use.** The alternate products from Lakeshore Learning Materials did not meet the specifications provided to prospective bidders in the following areas:

1. Outdoor play equipment was specified to be made of wood or composite materials.

Lakeshore items were made of HDPE (high-density polyethylene) plastic.

2. The kitchens and water table are not safety rated for children under 3 years of age.
3. Table and benches do not comply with the best practices for Care Centers and Preschools licensing standards for seat height in a childcare setting.
4. Assembly is required upon delivery.
5. The provided warranties on the outdoor play equipment ranges from one to five years, whereas Community Playthings includes a 10-year warranty.

**Based on this evaluation, the bid from Community Playthings best meets the functional need and long-term goal for UCC for the outdoor play equipment.**

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Award a contract to Community Playthings, Ulster Park, NY, Outdoor Play Equipment for UCC in connection with the City's Round 2 CARES (COVID-19) Grant through the Iowa Economic Development Authority, in the amount not to exceed \$60,080.
2. Award a contract to the other bidder.
3. Do not approve this purchase.

**CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

By awarding a contract to Community Playthings LLC, Ulster Park, NY, UCC will have the safe and engaging space necessary to provide much-needed outdoor play space for the center, therefore fulfilling the needs of the grant request.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as described above.