

ITEM #: 7  
DATE: 03-12-24  
DEPT: FIRE

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT:** FIRE APPARATUS REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

**BACKGROUND:**

Fire apparatus are essential equipment for firefighting. The replacement program ensures the replacement of fire apparatus at the end of their operational life. Front line apparatus are kept for approximately 15 years, with the goal of then rotating the apparatus to serve as backups for another 10 to 15 years.

The City currently has two frontline engines: Engine 1 and Engine 2. Engine 2 is identified in the City's Capital Improvements Plan as due for replacement in FY 2025/26. Engine 2 was purchased in 2010, and after replacement it will be refurbished and used as a backup. This will provide the department with two backup engines.

The City's Purchasing Policies call for formal bids for purchases over \$50,000. For a vehicle or apparatus purchase, this would involve staff writing a specification describing the desired features and performance characteristics for each purchase based on the needs of the department. In 2022, the Fire Department used this formal bid process to purchase Engine 1. **The engine specification drafted at that time was developed to be used as the standard specification for future engine purchases.**

Now that an ideal specification has been chosen and used in the previous procurement, maintaining compatibility with that specification promotes interoperability and familiarity with existing equipment. This approach minimizes the need for extensive retraining, thereby enhancing overall efficiency in emergency response scenarios.

**Rather than soliciting bids for the upcoming apparatus replacement, staff is proposing the purchase of a compatible apparatus utilizing a cooperative purchasing organization. A cooperative purchasing organization assists local governments by aggregating demand to create a national cooperative of contract purchasing opportunities that results in lower purchasing costs and time spent writing specifications.**

Staff consulted ten other fire departments from across the state that have successfully utilized this process to their benefit, including Des Moines, Ankeny, and Waterloo. Staff has identified that both Sourcewell and the Houston- Galveston Area Council would allow the purchase of the type of apparatus that is being proposed. **Staff is proposing to work with Sourcewell to identify a vendor that can meet the department's apparatus specifications at the best value. A cost review from the most recent vendor used for the City's last engine purchase shows a cost savings of \$10,052 by using Sourcewell over a formal bid process.**

**If Council authorizes staff to proceed, a contract for a purchase would be brought to the City Council in the next few weeks, along with a request to waive the Purchasing Policies and Procedures requirement for competitive bids. The FY 2025/26 Capital Improvements Plan includes \$1,071,499 of G.O. Bond proceeds for this purchase and the refurbishment of current Engine 2. Although this funding is several years from now, staff is bringing this item to Council at**

**this time because payment would not be due until the time of delivery, which is not expected be for another 46-49 months.**

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Authorize staff to negotiate the purchase of Engine 2 through the Sourcewell cooperative.

**Staff will return to the City Council for approval of the purchase contract once negotiations have been concluded.**

2. Direct staff to solicit competitive bids for the purchase of Engine 2.

**This alternative may result in increased costs or apparatus that does not meet the department's desire for standardization.**

**CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Engine 2 is almost 15 years old and is due for replacement in FY 2025/26. Expected build times are 46-49 months, which is why this request is before Council now instead of waiting until July 2025 to start the procurement process. Full payment is not due until the time of delivery.

By approving the ability to use the Sourcewell cooperative, the City will benefit from proven, standardized apparatus specifications, at a cost that is expected to be comparable or better than the previous competitively bid engine replacement order. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as described above.