

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: POLICE DEPARTMENT IN-CAR COMPUTER REPLACEMENT

BACKGROUND:

Police patrol vehicles are each outfitted with a ruggedized laptop computer that allows an officer to perform various tasks from the vehicle, including receiving dispatch information, records search, ticket writing, and electronic filing. These laptops are on a four-year replacement cycle. The current laptops are now past their replacement cycle.

For more than 14 years, the Department's in-car computers have been Panasonic Toughbook models. Panasonic is the industry leader in the limited market of fully ruggedized laptops. The experience with Toughbooks has been exceptional, and the Police requests to continue with the Toughbook CF-33 model.

The State of Iowa has a Master Pricing Agreement for Panasonic Laptops and Tablets which includes pricing from Keltek, Inc. This Master Pricing Agreement provides the Department with standardized pricing and allows for negotiated discounts based on quantity and service level. Section 6.06 of the City of Ames Purchasing Policies and Procedures allows the use of State of Iowa cooperative agreements in place of soliciting written bids or verbal quotations for the purchase of commodities and services costing less than \$25,000.

Because some of the computers have been replaced over time, only seven of the cars require replacement Toughbooks at this time. Several additional vehicles require updated modems. **Therefore, City staff obtained a proposal for seven Toughbooks and 11 updated modems, along with other supporting equipment (power supplies, keyboards, etc.) and installation services from Keltek, Inc., of Baxter, IA, in the amount of \$64,342.44.** This pricing includes Department-negotiated discounts, including a 25% discount on the Panasonic Toughbook CF-33, a 10% discount on the modems, and a 20% discount on the modem antennas.

Because the proposal cost exceeds the \$25,000 limit in the City's Purchasing Policies and Procedures for the use of cooperative agreements in lieu of soliciting bids, staff is requesting a waiver of a Purchasing Policy to award this contract. Staff believes this is justified for two key reasons:

- 1) There are limited potential suppliers for these specialized products, and the negotiated discounts result in a reasonable cost that is within the available funding.
- 2) The vendor is capable of placing this critical equipment into service in a timely manner. It is important to make these replacements before equipment failure

occurs.

Funding for this purchase is available through the Police Department's IT depreciation account, which currently has a balance of \$368,000.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Waive the City's Purchasing Policies and Procedures requirement for competitive bids in order to award a contract through the State of Iowa Master Pricing Agreement, and approve a contract with Keltek, Inc., Baxter, IA, in the amount of \$64,342.44 for Panasonic Toughbook CF33s and associated modems.
2. Do not waive the City's Purchasing Policies and Procedures requirement for competitive bids in order to award a contract through the State of Iowa Master Pricing Agreement, and instead direct staff to solicit competitive bids for this equipment.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

In-car computers are a critical piece of equipment in the Police Department's vehicles. The Panasonic Toughbook has a demonstrated history of quality and reliability. The proposal provided by Keltek, Inc., which includes all equipment and installation, is appropriate and reasonable.

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