

**ITEM #:** 12  
**DATE:** 01-14-25  
**DEPT:** FIRE

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT:** **FIRE SAFETY TRAILER PURCHASE**

**BACKGROUND:**

The Fire Department is excited to announce that it has been awarded a Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) grant from FEMA to purchase a new fire safety trailer, designed to enhance public safety education. The federal grant will pay 95% of the cost of the new Safety Trailer, with the City and Iowa State University sharing the remaining 5% cost.

This new, state-of-the-art trailer will replace an older, homebuilt model from the early 1990s, bringing updated features and interactive educational props such as a smoke-filled room escape, home fire safety demonstrations, and simulations for industrial, gas, electrical fire safety, and weather-related emergencies.

Ames is proud to be one of only three recipients in Iowa to receive this prestigious grant in 2024. In partnership with Iowa State University, the Fire Department plans to use the trailer at events across the City and on the ISU campus, expanding its reach and impact. The trailer will require approximately nine months to construct, with a tentative goal of unveiling it during Fire Safety Week in October 2025. This project represents a significant step forward in equipping the Ames community with essential safety knowledge and skills.

On December 5, 2024, staff issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to prospective vendor. The RFP closed on December 20, 2024. Responses were received from the following four vendors:

<b>Company:</b>	Chef Units, LLC	Legacy Brothers, Inc.	JHB Group, Inc.	Dinges Fire Company
<b>Purchase Price:</b>	\$173,126.98	\$188,290.00	\$193,495.43	\$224,574.00

An evaluation team consisting of Fire Department staff assessed the proposals. Staff evaluated each vendor based on several factors including the following:

1. Experience and Technical Ability
2. Design and Ease of Operation
3. Versatility of the Unit
4. General Understanding of the Project
5. References
6. Overall Cost

The maximum possible score was 2,000 with 70% allocated to product and experience-related criteria and 30% to cost. The scoring of the proposals resulted in the following rankings:

Company	Merits of Proposal Score	Rank	Fee Proposal
JHB Group, Inc., Richmond, IL	1150	1	\$193,495.43
Dinges Fire Family, Amboy, IL	860	2	\$224,574.00
Legacy Brothers, Inc.	635	3	\$188,290.00
Chef Units, LLC, Houston, TX	N/A - Non-Responsive	4	\$173,126.98

During the evaluation, the team determined that the proposal from Chef Units, LLC was **non-responsive**, as it did not include any of the fire safety training props required by the RFP specifications. The proposal from Legacy Brothers, Inc. received low evaluation scores due to the lack of trailer drawings, few details about the fire safety props that would be included, and little prior experience with the specific type of trailer proposed. The proposal from Dinges Fire Company received generally favorable scores from the evaluation team; however, their cost was significantly higher than the other vendors. Additionally, some required features were offered only as optional add-ons, further increasing their cost.

**The evaluation team concluded that JHB Group, Inc.'s proposal represents the best value to the City. Their unit meets all RFP requirements and is within the proposed budget.**

The evaluation team also reviewed optional items proposed by JHB Group, Inc. and identified the FiAR Augmented Reality Fire Extinguisher Training System as a valuable enhancement to the base unit.

This system offers a state-of-the-art training experience by combining augmented reality technology with a responsive prop fire extinguisher. Trainees use the prop extinguisher to extinguish a simulated fire displayed on an iPad screen. The system replicates realistic fire scenarios, teaching participants how to effectively use a fire extinguisher while reinforcing best practices for fire safety.

The cost for the optional FiAR system is \$15,309.25. **With this addition, the total cost for the unit, including the optional system, will be \$208,804.68.**

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Award a contract in the amount of \$208,804.68 to JHB Group, Inc. for the purchase of a Fire Safety Trailer.
2. Award a contract to one of the other vendors.
3. Reject all proposals.

**CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**The proposed contract will result in a state of the art, interactive fire safety trailer, greatly enhancing the effectiveness of the Fire Department's prevention efforts. It will replace an older trailer that does not contain the same interactive features and versatility. In partnership with ISU, this purchase will be primarily funded by a grant award.** Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as stated above.