Council Meeting of
August 7, 2007

Honorable Mayor and Members
of the City Council
City Hall
Torrance, California

Members of the Council:

SUBJECT: Community Services – Authorize a purchase order for the renewal of a contract to provide periodicals for the Torrance Public Library System for 2008. Expenditure: $52,500

RECOMMENDATION

The Acting Community Services Director recommends that the City Council authorize a purchase order to W.T. Cox Subscriptions of Shallotte, North Carolina for an amount not to exceed $52,500 to renew the contract (Bid B2005-45) for the annual requirement of periodicals for the Torrance Public Library System for 2008.

Funding

Funding is available in the Community Services Library Division's FY2007-2008 operating budget.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

On October 4, 2005, the City Council authorized a purchase order to W.T Cox Subscriptions as a result of Bid B2005-45 to furnish the annual requirement of periodicals for the Torrance Public Library for the year 2006. The bid included a Renewal Option for second, third and fourth years with terms and conditions unchanged. W. T. Cox agreed "to a third year with terms and conditions unchanged, and will honor the same discount with updated pricing."

The company has provided good service during the contract period. Cox was able to furnish 807 periodical subscriptions to the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library and the five branch libraries. The periodicals include most of the major magazines for each location. This enabled the Library to avoid the less efficient direct-order subscription method in the vast majority of cases. Problems with duplicate issues, missing issues, and cancellations, which are quite common among magazine publishers and jobbers, were resolved in a timely manner.

Respectfully submitted,

Norm Reeder
Acting Community Services Director

CONCUR:

Mary Giordano
LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager
for

Attachment: A. Agenda item 7A from 10/4/05

ATTACHMENT A

Council Meeting of
October 4, 2005

Honorable Mayor and Members
of the City Council
City Hall
Torrance, California

Members of the Council:

SUBJECT: Council Authorization of a Purchase Order to Furnish the Annual Requirement of Periodicals for the Torrance Public Library System for the Calendar Year 2006

Ref: Bid #B2005-45
Expenditure Not to Exceed: $58,000

RECOMMENDATION

A recommendation of the City Librarian and Community Services Director that the City Council authorize a purchase order in an amount not to exceed $58,000 to W.T. Cox Subscriptions, Inc. of Shallotte, North Carolina, for the purchase of the annual requirement of periodicals for the Torrance Library System for Calendar Year 2006.

Funding

Funding is available in the Community Services/Library 2005-06 operating budget.

BACKGROUND

The Torrance Public Library provides magazines and periodicals to patrons at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library and the five branch libraries. The use of one vendor to furnish the required 900-plus subscriptions eliminates the need to issue individual purchase orders for each subscription. Magazines are the most up to date hard-copy material each library offers, as some subscriptions are received weekly. These periodicals are a major resource for student assignments, as well as one of the most popular browsing collections the library maintains.

ANALYSIS

Formal bids were opened on September 8, 2005. Bids were received from five vendors: Avanti Enterprises, EBSCO, Magazine Subscription Service, Popular Subscription Service, and W.T. Cox Subscriptions. Magazine Subscription Service was disqualified for not providing the signed affidavit.

Of the vendors submitting bids, Library staff is familiar with and has used the previous services of Popular Subscription Service and EBSCO. As Library personnel were not familiar with Avanti Enterprises, a reference check was conducted based on information provided by Avanti. Primarily a book supplier, only academic and school libraries were among its clients listed, and the references queried use Avanti to supply only a small percentage of their total subscriptions, not the large number of journals required for Torrance Public Library users. The unproven ability of the company to provide more than 900 disparate magazines with uninterrupted service is of serious concern for Library patrons and staff. In addition, Avanti's price for their spine label program is $1.29/copy as compared to $0.69 and $0.65 respectively for both EBSCO and W.T. Cox. Avanti's bid also specified their discount of 11.5% requires *advance* payment for subscriptions, a practice not supported by the City's Finance Department.

Another vendor, Popular Subscription Service, was chosen in the past, but the Library experienced many problems with unfilled orders during the term of their contract. It is very important that any vendor chosen have the capacity to provide missing issues in a timely manner when a magazine does not arrive as expected.

The Library has been very satisfied with service from EBSCO for the past six years. EBSCO maintains a library of back issues and has been able to replace any missing issues promptly and efficiently. As previously mentioned, EBSCO has quoted a low cost for spine labels, however do not offer as great a discount as several of the other firms.

W. T. Cox submitted a detailed and thorough proposal. While they specified they were unable to provide 27 of the titles required by the Library, they provided information that the magazines listed had ceased publication or were suspended, and thus were not able to be supplied by any of the other vendors as well. References for this vendor (both public libraries and a school district) were positive and the company's discount is slightly more favorable than EBSCO. W.T. Cox also maintains a bank of back issues and features electronic claiming, two highly desired features the Library is seeking in its chosen vendor. While staff is concerned with Cox's ability to provide magazine issues without interruption at the start of the calendar year, the district manager of the firm has assured staff they have the capability to assume the subscription load.

It is the recommendation of the City Librarian and Community Services Director that based on the greater discount offered and the lower price per spine label, that W.T. Cox be awarded the bid for supplying the periodicals to the Torrance Public Library for Calendar Year 2006.

Vendor	Number of titles unable to furnish	% discount	Spine label cost
Avanti	None stated	11.5%	$1.29/copy
EBSCO	None stated	8.5%	$0.69/copy
Popular	None stated	8.5%	$5.50 per thousand
W. T. Cox	27	9.5% with exceptions	$0.65/copy

Respectfully submitted,

PAULA J. WEINER
CITY LIBRARIAN

By _____
Patrice Deleget
Support Services Supervisor

CONCUR:

_____
Paula J. Weiner
City Librarian

_____
Gene Barnett
Community Services Director

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LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager