

Council Meeting
January 8, 2008

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

Members of the Council:

SUBJECT: Police - Appropriate and allocate asset forfeiture funds and authorize a purchase order for digital audio recorders. Expenditure: \$91,760.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation of the Police Chief that City Council:

- 1) Appropriate and allocate \$63,174 of asset forfeiture funds;
- 2) Authorize a purchase order in the amount of \$87,390.23 to Versatile Information Products, Inc., of Riverside, California, for digital audio recorders and accessories; and
- 3) Authorize a 5% project contingency of \$4,369.77 for the purchase of spare batteries, USB cables, and related equipment.

Funding

Funding of \$63,174 is available in the U.S. Department of Justice Unappropriated Asset Forfeiture account. Additional funds of \$28,586 are available from the 2006 Justice Assistance Grant (FEAP 542), for a project total of \$91,760.

BACKGROUND

The Police Department issues personal audio recorders to its field personnel and investigators. The micro-cassette recorders currently in use are obsolete technology that is no longer supported by the manufacturer. Digital recording has become the technology standard. The Police Department will need to purchase digital audio recorders, batteries, cables, and related accessories to replace the old micro-cassette recorders.

Asset forfeiture is an appropriate funding source for the purchase of digital audio recorders. Additionally, on February 28, 2006, Council accepted an award of \$28,586 under the 2006 Justice Assistance Grant, and appropriated and allocated the grant funds for the purchase of digital audio recorders for the Police Department (item 7I).

ANALYSIS

The micro-cassette recorders currently in use are expensive to maintain and are obsolete technology. Manufacturers are phasing out micro-cassette recorders and moving solely toward digital format. The most advantageous reason to consider an upgrade to digital is that it enables in-field audio recordings to be centrally managed and organized electronically, rather than cassettes being stored by individual employees where there is increased risk of losing crucial statements and audio evidence.

The Police Department field-tested three brands of digital recorders. Of the three, the PUMA II, manufactured by Olympus for Versatile Information Products, Inc., was the clear selection. The Olympus PUMA II digital recorder is designed exclusively for law enforcement and is used by numerous agencies throughout California. The PUMA II is compacted (3.75" x 1.48" x .63") and has all-metal construction. Officers noted the PUMA II's ease of use and durability. Additional features include:

- Recessed rubberized navigation buttons
- Over 66 hours of recording time and internal storage
- Battery life indicator
- Large LCD display
- 5 folders that can store up to 199 messages per folder
- Up to 32 hours of continuous recording time on a set of batteries

The PUMA II recorder was tested with the new Public Safety Information System (Spillman CAD/RMS). It was verified that Police personnel will be able to upload recordings and attach them to Spillman incident numbers. This simple process allows for secure digital storage of audio evidence, as well as field contacts between law enforcement personnel and potential complainants.

The PUMA II package includes a recorder, lapel microphone, leather or nylon holster, USB download kit, two AAA batteries, DSS management and replay software, noise cancellation, and one-year warranty. The cost per package is \$299. The total purchase price for 270 Olympus PUMA II packages is \$87,390.23 including 8.25% sales tax and free delivery. In addition to the recorders, the Department will purchase a quantity of batteries, spare cables, replacement holsters (if needed), and related equipment. The requested 5% contingency will cover the purchases of these items. Funding in the amount of \$28,586 is available from the 2006 Justice Assistance Grant, with the remaining cost of \$63,174 coming from asset forfeiture.

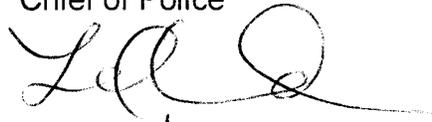
The PUMA II is a proprietary product available only from Versatile Information Products, Inc., and therefore, meets the criteria for a sole-source purchase.

Torrance Municipal Code 22.3.17 b) creates a purchasing exception for sole-source purchases:

b) For purposes of this Section, "sole-source purchases" means those purchases where it would be undesirable or impossible for the City to advertise for bids for particular work or for patented items, or experimental or unique services or products, or where competitive purchases would be unavailable or would not prove advantageous for the City. No sole-source purchases may be made where to do so would show favoritism, improvidence, extravagance, fraud or corruption, or result in the waste of public funds, but may be used only to obtain the best economic result for the public.

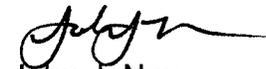
Respectfully submitted,

JOHN J. NEU
Chief of Police



By Laurie Anderson
Business Manager

CONCUR:



John J. Neu
Chief of Police



LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager