Council Meeting
May 20, 2008

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

Members of the Council:

SUBJECT: Police - Purchase of .223 caliber secondary weapons and accessories. Expenditure: Not to exceed $222,000.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation of the Police Chief that City Council:

1. Appropriate and allocate $111,735 of asset forfeiture for the purchase of .223 caliber secondary weapons;
2. Authorize a purchase order not to exceed $137,000 to Adamson Police Products of Los Alamitos, CA, for optical sights, magnifiers, spacers, mounts, modified grips, accessory rails and lights for the .223 weapons;
3. Authorize a purchase order not to exceed $65,000 to Phoenix Distributors of Feasterville, PA, for .223 rifles and replacement parts;
4. Authorize an increase of $20,000 to existing Purchase Order number 2008-00001155 to San Diego Police Equipment of San Diego, CA, for two complete duty ammunition loads for the .223 weapons, for a new total not to exceed $75,000.

Funding

Funding is available in U.S. DOJ Unappropriated Asset Forfeiture ($111,735); FEAP500 - 2005 Justice Assistance Grant ($50,265); and FEAP630 - 2006 COPS Grant ($60,000).

BACKGROUND

Since 1998, the Torrance Police Department has used the Heckler and Koch (H&K) MP-5 rifle as a secondary weapon to compliment the .45 caliber handgun. This weapon system was adopted after several incidents occurred where other law enforcement agencies responded to armed encounters only to discover that they were at an extreme disadvantage due to heavy armament used by the suspects.

In 2001, Heckler & Koch notified the Department that they had discontinued manufacturing the MP-5. The Department extended the deployment life of the MP-5 by diligently searching for spare parts; however, the supply of parts has been depleted and the MP-5 rifles can no longer be maintained. The Department has identified a suitable replacement and seeks approval for the procurement.

ANALYSIS

Staff conducted stringent testing of.223 caliber rifle platforms and various accessories (optical sights, lighting devices, etc.). The Colt LE Commando.223 weapon model LE6933, with an 11.5 inch barrel, emerged as the recommended weapons system. This rifle is used by the Redondo Beach, Manhattan Beach, Hermosa Beach, El Segundo, and Inglewood Police Departments and many other agencies with satisfactory results. As other agencies adopt the .223 caliber rifle, there should be long-term availability of weapons, parts, and training. Military use of the weapon also will mean that manufacturers will continue producing these weapons.

Staff studied a straight purchase as well as a trade-in transaction. In the trade-in transaction, Phoenix Distributors would provide 102 Colt LE Commando .223 rifles for half price in exchange for 100 obsolete, HK MP5 rifles. The vendor would remove the receivers from the HK weapons and return them to the Torrance Police Department. According to Department of Justice standards, the receiver is the part of the rifle that makes it a firearm and it is the only traceable, serialized component of the HK weapons. By doing a trade-in, the Department can acquire these weapons at a reduced cost and verify the disablement of the obsolete firearms.

Included in the recommended purchase are optic sights for greater accuracy, lighting systems for low-light applications, and modified grips for proper tactical outfitting. Adamson Police Products of Los Alamitos, CA, presented the best pricing and a capacity for expeditious delivery for these accessories.

The purchase of the weapons and accessories are appropriate as Special Opportunity Purchases per section 22.4.5 of the Torrance Municipal Code. Phoenix Distributors, the rifle vendor, is the only vendor that will complete a trade-in, thus acquiring the new weapons at significant savings.

The transaction with the accessory vendor Adamson Police Products also qualifies as a Special Opportunity Purchase in that their prices are below the current market. Extended pricing for the lighting systems alone were several thousand dollars less than what the lighting systems' manufacturer had quoted. Due to their close proximity comparative to other vendors who are out of state, delivery of these accessories will allow this critical equipment to be deployed more quickly.

TMC SECTION 22.4.5. SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY PURCHASES.

Special opportunity purchases may be made by the City Manager where:

a) The City Manager finds that the proposed purchase that is subject to this Article is either below the current market price and will result in a significant cost savings to the City, or that the proposed purchase is not more than the current market price, and that significant time will be saved in delivery or installation of the equipment by such a purchase; and

b) The City has a current need for the item or items of property to be purchased.

The new .223 rifles will also require the acquisition of adequate .223 caliber ammunition for training and field deployment. Staff recommends increasing existing Purchase Order number 2008-00001155 with San Diego Police Equipment as they are one of the Department's proven and reliable vendors for firearm ammunition.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN J. NEU
Chief of Police

By Lt. Patrick Shortall
Research & Training Division Commander

CONCUR:

John J. Neu
Chief of Police

LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager