

Council Meeting of
August 12, 2008

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

Members of the Council:

SUBJECT: Public Works – Authorize Purchase Order to furnish one Neptune Automated Meter Reading Laptop Receiver. Expenditure: \$24,898.00 including sales tax.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation of the Public Works Director that the City Council authorize the issuance of a purchase order for one Neptune automated meter reading laptop receiver from Measurement Control Systems, Inc. of Santa Ana, California, in the amount of \$24,898.00 including sales tax.

Funding

Funding is available in the Conversion of Large Meters to Automated Meter Reading System (AMR) and Large Meter Retrofit Program (FEAP 548).

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Automated Meter Reading refers to the technology used to automate the collection of water consumption data for billing purposes and consumption analysis. The AMR system gathers real-time data and transfers the gathered information to the central database through networking technology. AMR has a number of advantages in comparison to traditional meter reading practices including a 90 percent reduction in traditional meter reading time, improved meter reading accuracy/accountability, fewer callbacks for re-reads, detection of possible leaks at the customer's premises, possible future conversion to monthly billing for all accounts without incurring additional meter reading costs, and a reduction of risk of personal injury to employees by eliminating the need to lift meter covers to obtain meter reads.

Torrance Municipal Water currently has 26,000 meters in service, of which 3,000 meters are AMR. Our standard plans for new construction include the installation of AMR meters and Water Operation Staff has recently completed a large meter change-out program. Over the next 5 years, as residential water meters reach the end of their useful life, they will be replaced on a phased basis with AMR units. Currently, any detected malfunctioning meters are being replaced with an AMR. This process does

not impact the existing meter routes; however, the AMR replacement eliminates the need of a manual read. With this change-out, we expect to convert an additional 16,000 meters to AMR, which will bring total AMR units to approximately 75 percent of total meters in the system.

The Neptune automated meter reading laptop receiver is a computer capable of reading a water meter equipped with a radio frequency transmitter. Torrance Municipal Water routes are currently read using a handheld meter reading device for walk-by meter reading, have a reception range of ¼ mile, and can receive 500 reads per hour with a clear line of site. The proposed laptop receiver is a high volume meter reading tool which is capable of receiving 5,000 reads per hour and has a reception range of one mile plus and is not affected by line of site. The receiver is designed for in-vehicle use and eliminates the need to drive down alleys and dead-end streets and can read multiple routes simultaneously.

Since Measurement Control Systems Inc. is the sole authorized Southern California distributor of Neptune meters, competitive purchasing is unavailable. The purchase therefore falls within the Sole-Source Purchase Exception of TMC § 22.3.17 (b), states:

“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,

ROBERT J. BESTE
Public Works Director



By Pamela Lewis
Senior Administrative Analyst

CONCUR:



Robert J. Beste
Public Works Director



LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager