

Council Meeting of
February 24, 2009

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

Members of the Council:

SUBJECT: Fire Department - Authorize a change order to a purchase order to provide Globe turnout pants and coats as needed. Expenditure: Not to exceed \$31,000. (Includes sales tax.)

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation of the Fire Chief that City Council authorize a change order to the existing purchase order with L. N. Curtis & Sons in the amount not to exceed \$31,000 to provide Globe turnout pants and coats as needed by the Fire Department. This change order will increase the total purchase order amount to \$70,000.

Funding

Funding is available in the Fire Department Operating Budget for fiscal year 2008-09.

BACKGROUND

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1500 Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Programs, requires that firefighters engaged in structural firefighting be provided with and wear a protective ensemble, which consists of a protective coat, protective trousers, protective hood, helmet, SCBA, gloves, and footwear. The clothing protects the firefighter from heat by providing an outer shell that is highly resistant to ignition from flame contact or radiant heat and by providing insulation through the use of multiple layers of nonflammable insulation material and air between the outer shell and the firefighter's skin. The NFPA 1851, Selection, Care and Maintenance of Structural Firefighting Protective Ensembles, recommends that Personal Protective Equipment be limited to a 10 year lifespan from date of manufacture.

ANALYSIS

The Torrance Fire Department (TFD) provides each firefighter with two sets of turnout gear, which allows them to perform their job safely and effectively. This purchase order was set in September 2008 for a total not to exceed \$39,000 to replace damaged and worn out turnouts throughout the year on an as needed basis.

During the 2008 uniform and equipment inspections, 288 pairs of Globe Firefighting Suits were inspected (with 38 more remaining to be inspected). Of the 288 inspected turnouts, 53 pairs were found to be damaged and in need of replacement. All of these

turnouts were over 15 years old and outside of repair and the new 1851 NFPA recommendation for service life of 10 years. The most common problems found were excessive tearing of the outer shell, which is a sign of a degradation of the Nomex material, holes in vapor barriers, and worn out quilted liners. All of these problems compromise the integrity of the firefighting suits. Based on the inspection findings, staff recommended that 24 pairs of turnout pants and 24 turnout coats were purchased in FY07-08 and the remainder of the damaged turnouts be replaced in subsequent fiscal years.

In addition, the department has ordered turnouts for the new recruit class of sixteen hired in January 2009, which depleted most of the purchase order funds (one standard set of turnout pants and coat costs \$2,122). To pay for this order we need an additional \$10,476.49, the remaining balance of the \$31,000 added funds will be used to replace old and damaged turnouts.

L. N. Curtis & Sons is the exclusive dealer in California representing Globe Firefighters Suits and the only vendor, from which we can purchase (and have always purchased) the Globe turnouts in California. It takes about two months to custom manufacture this protective clothing per TFD specifications on file with L.N. Curtis & Sons. It is the opinion of staff that the purchase of the Globe turnout coats and pants falls within the Sole-Source Purchase Exception of TMC § 22.3.17 (b) that 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,

WILLIAM RACOWSCHI
Fire Chief



By Neli Mileva
Administrative Analyst

CONCUR:



William Racowski
Fire Chief



LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager