

**CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION 97-530
NOVEMBER 3, 1997 AGENDA**

SUBJECT:

**1997-98 OPERATING BUDGET
AUTHORIZATION TO PROCEED WITH
ACQUISITION OF FIRE DEPARTMENT
EQUIPMENT**

SUBMITTED BY:

**JAMES HUNT
FIRE CHIEF**

SYNOPSIS –

On July 22, 1997, the Purchasing Division, on behalf of the Fire Department, sent out to bid for a 1997 Ford XLT 350 modular ambulance. Two bids were received. Council authorization to proceed with the higher bid is requested at this time.

FISCAL IMPACT –

Total cost of this acquisition is \$93,365.

RECOMMENDATION –

Authorization for the Fire Department to proceed with the purchase of an ambulance from Emergency Vehicle Sales & Service.

BACKGROUND –

On August 28, 1997, the Purchasing Division received two bids for a 1997 Ford XLT 350 modular ambulance. The bidders were Emergency Vehicle Sales & Service located in Alexander, Iowa, and Taylor Made Ambulances located in Newport, Arkansas. The bids were \$93,365 and \$83,342, respectively. In the past, the Fire Department has purchased from Emergency Vehicle Sales & Service and their product has proven to be a reliable and durable product. Presently, the Fire Department has all six front line ambulances built by Lifeline.

The appropriate code section dealing with rejection of bids, Section 2-96 of the Municipal Code,

is set out below for your reference.

2-96. Rejection of bids.

“ Any and all bids received in response to an advertisement may be rejected by the city manager or his or her designee if the bidder is not deemed responsible, or the character or quality of the services, supplies, materials or equipment does not conform to requirements, or if the specifications or requirements submitted by the city to the bidder are determined to be faulty or incorrect, or if the public interest may otherwise be served thereby. If the lowest bid after formal advertisement is rejected because it is not the lowest responsible bid, the person or body rejecting it shall immediately state in writing the precise reasons for rejection and file the same with the City Clerk.”

The Fire Department is requesting rejection of the low bidder, Taylor Made Industries, for the following reasons:

1. Of the references supplied by Taylor, we were able to contact 13. Of these, five were dissatisfied with Taylor’ s workmanship or service policy.
2. The Fire Department received a list of 10 references regarding Taylor from a third-party ambulance distributor located in Taylor’ s market area. These references had all purchased Taylor ambulances in the past and have since purchased from other vendors. Of these 10, we were able to contact seven. All seven suggested we not buy Taylor for reasons of poor quality workmanship, shoddy loaner ambulances, inaccessible parts, and units not meeting specifications upon arrival.
3. The warranty varies greatly between Emergency Vehicle Sales & Service and Taylor Made Ambulance. Emergency Vehicle provides a lifetime warranty on their modules, compared to 20 years by Taylor. Taylor does not warranty items fabricated by their company nor do they warranty the paint.
4. To keep our fleet running, Emergency Vehicle Sales & Service provides an in-state distributor, dealer, overnight part delivery, and free dependable loaner vehicles. Taylor does not have an in-state distributor, presently no Iowa service center, and the quality of their loaners is questionable. The Fire Department would also have to budget for stocked parts or tolerate an extra day downtime for shipment.
5. The City has promised the citizens of Des Moines a quality paramedic service. Our citizens expect a medic squad to arrive at their home within a certain time frame; transport to the hospital while performing CPR or other advanced procedures in a well lit, dependable module; and arrive at that hospital in the shortest amount of time safety permits.
6. Due to our high visibility, excellent public relations opportunity, and precious human cargo, I believe it is in the best public interest in this case to award this bid to the tested reliable vendor of Emergency Vehicle Sales & Service.

