

**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

ITEM _____

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

00-218

SYNOPSIS -

AGENDA:

MAY 15, 2000

The Fire Department has researched, written specifications, and bid a new outdoor warning system for the City of Des Moines. The present system provides less than adequate coverage, is aging with parts becoming unavailable, and is at times unreliable.

SUBJECT:

**OUTDOOR
WARNING SIRENS**

FISCAL IMPACT -

The proposed project cost is \$444,532.31. Cost savings reflected by this project will be the charges on the leased lines used to signal the sirens: \$1,105 per month, an annualized savings of \$13,260.

TYPE:

**RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE**

RECOMMENDATION -

SUBMITTED BY:

**RON WAKEHAM
FIRE CHIEF**

The Fire Department requests Council to authorize the City Manager to proceed with the award of this contract with the accompanying change order to the compliant (AC/battery backup) second low bidder, Brown Bros. Inc. Electrical Contractors, 107 East 5th, Des Moines, IA, Kimberly K. Constable, President.

BACKGROUND -

The City presently has only 19 outdoor warning sirens which leave many gaps in coverage of the city. Placed originally as Civil Defense sirens, they are 1960 vintage and parts are becoming unavailable.

These sirens are activated by the Public Safety Dispatch Center and tested once a month for the Fire Department. They run for approximately three minutes and are then shut off. During notification of an impending tornado, the sirens may run

continuously until the dispatch center receives information that the warning has passed. The lines are wired above ground and the power to the sirens is susceptible to being knocked out by the same high winds to which they are intended to alert residents.

The sirens are activated through lines which we traditionally leased from U.S. West at a cost of \$485 per month; these rates rose last year to \$1,105 per month for the system. As of July 1, 2000, these telephone lines will no longer be available due to the cost to upgrade their older system.

The Fire Department specified a siren system with the following components:

Radio Controlled - To eliminate the requirement and cost of the leased lines.

Two-way Monitored - To allow the Dispatch Center to not only activate the sirens, but also be alerted to any siren malfunction.

AC Powered with Battery Backup - AC power to provide a continuous source of energy for a long lasting alert, or multiple alerts that may drain a siren powered only by batteries. A battery backup is provided as a supplemental source of power in those instances where a fallen tree limb or high wind might make an AC power source unavailable.

This project was originally funded through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget for a six-year period at a total cost of \$360,000. This was an approximate total based on a cost of \$15,000 per pole. It was not clear how many sites would be required.

The Fire Department and the Engineering Department agree that placing just a percentage of the sirens each year would result in a duplication of efforts, along with the possibility of a malfunctioning system composed of mix and match equipment from various bidders. With the approval of the City Manager and the support of the Finance Department, the Fire Department has made every effort to find the funds necessary to complete this project in a one-year term. The bids received were as follows:

1. \$430,170 - Dickinson Co. Inc., Marloe C. Dickinson, President (Non-Compliant)

2. 1616 D. Av. West, Oskaloosa, IA (Non-Compliant)
3. \$545,000 - Brown Bros. Inc. Electrical Contractors, Kimberly K. Constable, President, 107 East 5th , Des Moines, IA (Compliant).
4. \$999,290 - Industrial Refrigeration Services, d/b/a Innovative Mechanical Services, Rod Heston, President, 1118 SE Lorenz Drive, Ankeny, IA/Burns Electric, Harold Burns, President, 6529 NW 6th Drive, Des Moines, IA (Compliant).

The low bidder, Dickinson Co. Inc., with 26 sirens at \$430,170, was found to be non-compliant in that they offered a strictly battery operated system with no type of back up power source.

The second low bidder, Brown Bros. Inc., Electrical Contractors, with 35 sirens at \$545,000, though compliant, placed many overlapping siren sites to compensate for ambient noise in areas of heavy traffic. As of this date, we have reduced the necessary number of sirens to 28 while retaining adequate coverage of the city. Having obtained prior agreement with Brown Bros. Inc., we are herewith providing the change order reflecting the reduction in the number of sirens along with a reduction in the corresponding contract cost to a total of \$444,532.31.

In an effort to fund this project with completion in a single CIP term, the Fire Department has worked closely with the Finance Department. Our intent is to transfer funds from existing Fire Department CIP accounts and delay other projects as necessary until such time as the original siren funding can be transferred back to compensate for these intra-department account balance reductions. Barring any unexpected expenditure or change of present timelines, the Fire Department anticipates little difficulty with this arrangement.

The following accounts will be reduced as noted to complete the outdoor warning siren project:

CPO41-FIR990000		
1)	Apparatus Acquisition-FIR013	\$242,000.00
2)	Tornado Siren Replacement-FIR037	58,000.00
3)	Fire Station Remodeling-FIR016	70,000.00

4)	Building Reroofing-FIR018	74,532.31
	Total	\$444,532.31

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