Roll Call Number

_____

Agenda Item Number

51(C)

Date February 28, 2011

Communication from Jeff Firestone, President of Mid-Iowa Solid Waste Equipment Co., Inc., regarding bid for catch basin cleaner trucks.

Moved by _____ to

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
COWNIE				
COLEMAN				
GRIESS				
HENSLEY				
MAHAFFEY				
MEYER				
MOORE				
TOTAL				

MOTION CARRIED APPROVED

_____ Mayor

CERTIFICATE

I, DIANE RAUH, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

_____ City Clerk

SIC

MID-IOWA
SOLID WASTE EQUIPMENT CO, INC.

Mid-Iowa Solid Waste Equipment Co.,Inc.
5105 N.W. Beaver Drive
Johnston, Iowa 50131-1331
515-276-3352 Fax 515-276-2976
www.mid-iowa.com
"Helping you clean your Planet since 1975"

February 24, 2011

Council Members
City of Des Moines
400 Robert D Ray Drive
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Dear Council Member,

Mid-Iowa Solid Waste Equipment Co., Inc. was invited by the City of Des Moines to provide a bid for (3) new catch basin cleaning machines. Our Company in good faith prepared and delivered our bid as specified in the instructions.

At the time of the bid opening, we had no reason to believe that our product would not be viable or acceptable. We did take a number of exceptions to the bid, but it is not uncommon for the City of Des Moines to purchase products that differ from the bid specification. Further, the specifications are proprietary and only Vactor brand machines can meet the specifications.

Since the last Council Meeting on February 14th, we were invited to meet with the Pubic Works & Fleet Personnel to discuss our non-compliance issues. At this meeting, Jay Bennett explained that the only reason he specified the items presented by Mr. Stowe at the last council meeting was so that he could buy the Vactor units.

Our bid is approx $110,000.00 lower than the Vactor bid which Mr. Bennett wants you to accept.

It has been clearly explained to us that our bid is being disqualified due to "non-compliance" with the bid specifications. (see attachment "A")

Clearly since the specifications are proprietary and strictly written so that nobody but Vactor can meet them, this is all a sham and not truly intended to provide a fair bidding practice, but to trick someone into thinking that an honest bidding procedure was followed. As bidders, we have to sign an agreement stating that our bids are not a "sham" and that we have made no attempt to "restrain freedom of competition" (attachment "B") but isn't this what the City is doing?

By accepting the Vactor bid presented by the vendor who stood before you at the last meeting and told you that "anyone can provide the specified water pump" (see attachment "C") and told you that the other bidders could comply if they wanted to, you will become part of this sham.

I urge you to read our attached response to Mr. Stowes "Bid Comparison". I hope you can see by our illustrations that these issues of non-compliance are just as Mr. Bennett admits, a way to justify buying the Vactors.

I ask that you not allow the bias of a few to influence the ethics of the City of Des Moines and that you do the right thing and accept the lowest responsive & responsible bid.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeff Firestone
President
Mid-Iowa Solid Waste Equipment Co., Inc.

JDF/jtb

Green revolution
sustaining: resources, environment, community.

From: McKinley, Allen [AMcKinley@dmgov.org] Sent: Sun 2/13/2011 3:04 PM
To: Jeff Firestone
Cc:
Subject: Re: Catch Basin Cleaner comparison data

Jeff:

The results of the bid review centered primarily around compliance with bid specifications that were developed based on operational needs. There was a review of operating costs and down time for repairs which is part of our normal review. At the end of the day non-compliance was the reason.

Allen McKinley
Deputy City Manager

On Feb 13, 2011, at 12:21 PM, "Jeff Firestone" <Jeff@mid-iowa.com<mailto:Jeff@mid-iowa.com>> wrote:

Allen,

I appreciate your taking the time to reply to my email.

Before I decide how to proceed, I would like to ask one question. Has our Vac-Con bid been disqualified because of High maintenance costs as stated by Jay Bennett, or due to non-compliance with the bid specifications?

Thanks in advance for your reply,

Jeff Firestone
Mid-Iowa Solid Waste Equipment Co.,Inc.
5105 NW Beaver Drive | Johnston | IA | 50131
800-733-8731 (toll free) | 515-276-3352 (local) | 515-276-2976 (fax) | <http://www.mid-iowa.com>
www.mid-iowa.com<http://www.mid-iowa.com>
"Helping you clean up your Planet since 1975"

Attachment "A"

ATTACHMENT 1
NON-COLLUSION AFFIDAVIT

The Proposer hereby certifies:

1. That this proposal is not affected by, contingent on, or dependent on any other proposal submitted for any improvement in the City of Des Moines, Iowa; and

2. That no individual employed by the Proposer was paid or will be paid by any person, corporation, firm, association, or other organization for soliciting the bid, other than the payment of their normal compensation to persons regularly employed by the Proposer whose services in connection with the making of this proposal were in the regular course of their duties for the Proposer; and

3. That no part of the compensation to be received by the Proposer was paid or will be paid to any person, corporation , firm, association, or other organization for soliciting the bid, other than the payment of their normal compensation to persons regularly employed by the Proposer whose services in connection with the making of this proposal were in the regular course of their duties for the Proposer; and

4. That this proposal is genuine and not collusive or sham; that the Proposer has not colluded, conspired, connived or agreed, directly or indirectly, with any other proposer or person, to put in a sham proposal or to refrain from making a proposal, and has not in any manner, directly or indirectly, sought, by agreement or collusion, or communication or conference, with any person, to fix the proposal price of Proposer or of any other Proposer, or to otherwise restrain freedom of competition, and that all statements in this proposal are true; and

5. That the individual(s) executing this proposal have the authority to execute this proposal on behalf of the Proposer.

_____
Proposer

_____
Signature

By _____
Name (Print/Type)

_____
Title

_____
Street Address

_____
City, State, Zip Code

5/C

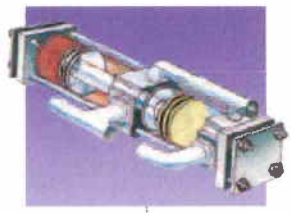
Copied from Vactor Literature

The World's Most Powerful Cleaning System

2100 Series machines offer Vactor's proprietary system of integrated components, specifically designed for sewer cleaning applications. These components work together to deliver maximum cleaning power and efficiency where it counts, at the nozzle.

Exclusive Jet Rodder® Water Pump

- Jack Hammer® action drives the nozzle through obstructions and scours pipes clean
- Single-piston, slow-stroke design and hydraulic drive for longer life and less maintenance
- Located 100% below the water supply for greater power and no cavitation



Telescoping, Rotating Hose Reel & Hydraulic Boom

- Boom and reel work together to create outstanding maneuverability and productivity
- Allows cleaning of multiple inlets without relocating truck

Positive Displacement Sewer Cleaner

Attachment "C"

On Friday February 18th, 2011 we were invited to meet with the following City personnel to discuss the issue of non-compliance with our bid for a new "Catch Basin Cleaner". The following personnel were present from the City of Des Moines:

Brian Bennett
Jay Bennett
Bill Voitel
Bob Craft
Adam Smith

During the meeting, we addressed all of the items that we took exception to in our bid response. At this meeting, it was stated that the items listed below from the list that Mr. Stowe presented to Council were the only significant issues of compliance.

In discussion of the issues below, we attempted to address the intent of the specifications and explain that our design, although different will actually exceed the operational requirements.

The following pages address each specific compliance issue in detail and address the reason that Vac-Con chooses to build their product different than Vactor.

We believe and the following pages prove that we actually exceed the below specifications and we urge you to purchase these trucks from the lowest "responsive" & "responsible" bidder. In good faith we are of the opinion that we have supplied the City of Des Moines with a competitive, responsive and responsible bid and urge you to give us due consideration to our response.

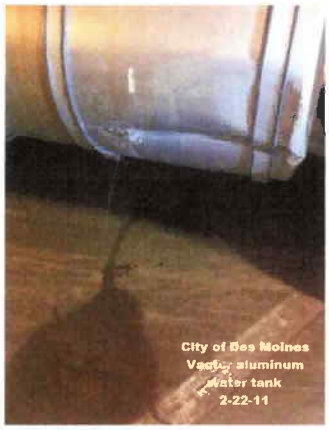
Catch Basin Cleaner Bid Response Comparison

		Equipment Company/Brand			
Component	Specification	Elliott/Camel	Trans Ia/Vactor	Mid Ia Solid Waste/Vaccon	
Capacity	12 Cubic Yards	10.8	12	12	
Water Tanks	Aluminum	Plastic	Aluminum	Plastic	Page 2
Vacuum Pump Drive	Direct drive from transfer case	Belt drive	Direct Drive	Hydraulic	Page 3
Vacuum Boom	Operate Horizontal and Vertical	Horizontal	Horizontal and Vertical	Horizontal	Page 4
Hose Reel Operation	270 degrees in front of truck	180 in front of truck	270 in front of truck	180 to street side of truck	Page 5
Hose Reel Controls	Access from front and rear of reel	side	front and rear	front	Page 6
Dumping Height	60 inches	48	60	48	Page 7

MID-IOWA
SOLID WASTE EQUIPMENT CO., INC.

5IC

VAC-CON
MORE POWER TO YOU



Water Tanks

Specification:

20. Water tanks shall be constructed of 1/8" aluminum with baffled compartments maximum 150 gallons each.

Vac-Con uses plastic tanks for our fresh water system. These tanks are 3/8" thick crosslinked polyethylene and have proven to be very durable and reliable.
In 2005, Vac-Con experienced issues with the tanks and determined that better materials and processes were needed. These issues caused failures with the tanks on the 2002 & 2003 Vac-Con trucks at the City of Des Moines.

Vac-Con changed the materials and design of these tanks in 2005 and since then we have eliminated all issues. Vac-Con has replaced all of the City of Des Moines water tanks with these new tanks and there have been zero failures of the new tanks.

These tanks were replace at no cost to the City of Des Moines.

With an understanding of your skepticism, we have offered a lifetime warranty on the tanks for the trucks offered in our bid.

Reasons to use plastic water tanks:

1...They can be shaped to make maximum use of available space, allowing us to utilize otherwise waste space.

2...It allows us to locate the tanks beside the frame rails and under the body to maintain a lower center of gravity than any other manufacturer. This feature plus our low-mounted debris body means we have the lowest center of gravity of any of our competition making the Vac-Con the safest machine to operate in the event of emergency driving situations.

3...Aluminum is subject to corrosion. Plastic is not.

The city uses plastic tanks in many current applications other than sewer trucks. All of the Cities refuse containers a plastic. All automobile fuel tanks are plastic. All street sweeper water tanks are plastic, even the ones built by Vactors sister company Elgin which the City of Des Moines uses exclusively.

Vacuum Pump Drive

Specification:

1. Vacuum shall be provided by a positive displacement rotary lobe type blower driven via chassis engine and heavy duty split transfer case directing the blower.

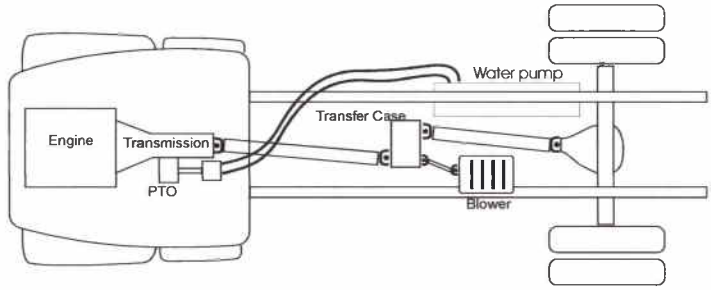
Transfer case made in Italy.

We comply with everything here except the "split transfer case drive".

This "transfer case" is an additional transmission that is mounted up under th truck chassis. It requires the chassis drive shaft to be "split" into two separat pieces and when engaged it transfers the trucks engine power either to the rear axle or to the blower.

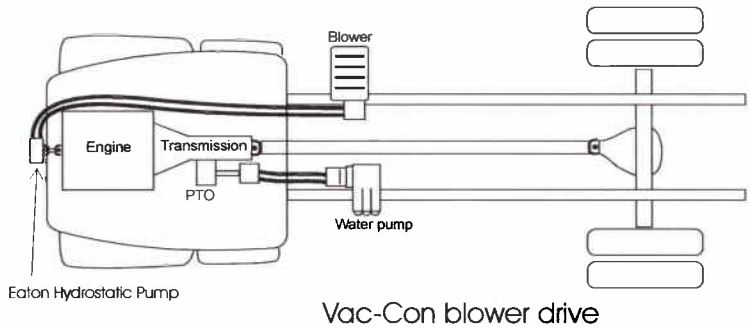
This system is not "direct drive" and if anything, it changes the chassis from being direct drive to indirect drive. Below is an illustration of how this is done.

To operate the blower with this system, *the transmission is placed in drive* and the transfer case is shifted to send the engine power thru the transmission, thru the transfer case and to the blower. Since the transmission is in drive, the odometer accumulates miles and the transmission is subject to wear.



Vactor blower drive

Vac-Con utilizes a Hydrostatic pump system made in USA by Eaton. The pump is direct connected to the front of the engine. 2 hoses carry oil to a hydrostatic motor which is direct mounted to the blower.



Vac-Con blower drive

Vac-Con feels that asking your operator to stand in front of a 390HP engine while the transmission is in drive is an unacceptable safety risk. VAC-CON TRUCKS OPERATE WITH THE TRANSMISSION IN NEUTRAL. The odometer does not accumulate milage since the transmission is in Neutral.

Vactor & Vac-Con use a hydraulic drive to power the water pump. We use this same technology (hydraulic) to power the vacuum pump. This system has proven to be much safer, more efficient and require less maintenance.

Vacuum Boom

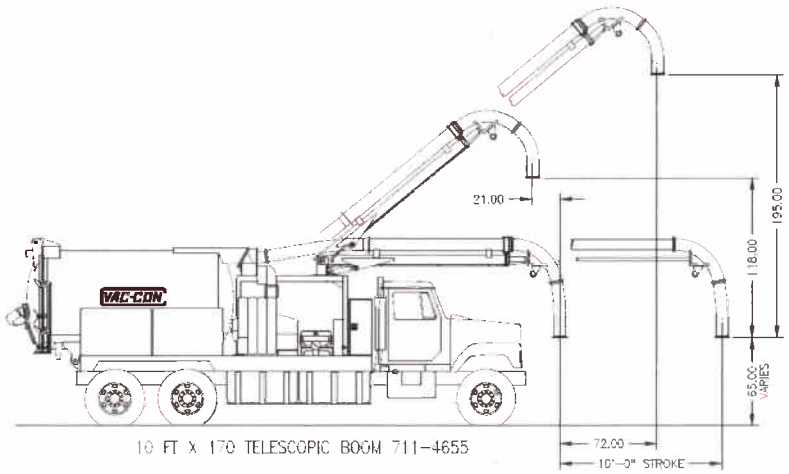
Specification:

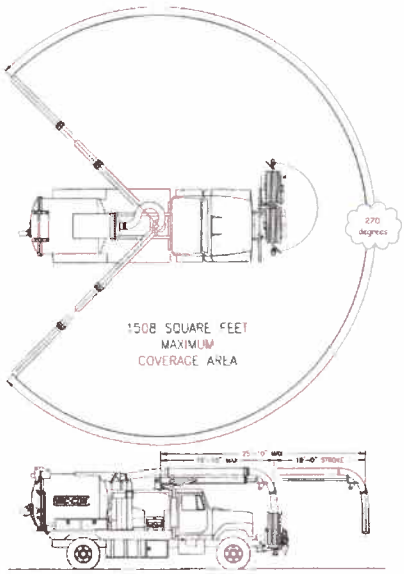
14. The 5x5 style hydraulic telescopic boom with 180 degree rotation shall be located at the front work station in its retracted position, providing 282" minimum reach off the longitudinal axis of unit, providing a boom work area will be 1643 cubic feet. The moving boom hose shall be 8" x 200" with red gum liner for durability. The boom hose shall hydraulically telescope a minimum of 5 feet forward from operator's station and shall have the ability to telescope 5 feet forward from the operator's station and shall have the ability to telescope 5 feet vertically along any point of the

The 5x5 boom is a Vactor system that touts traveling down the road with metal extension tubes still attached to the vacuum boom. This is a very dangerous practice. There is a youtube video showing how dangerous this procedure is. Note the boom in picture shown at right is approx 5' above the top of the body. Vac-Con is committed to the safety of their operators and does not advocate traveling or moving the vehicle with the boom elevated.

Our boom will rotate 270 degrees "horizontally" and can raise vertically approx 20'.

Vac-Con provides vertical & horizontal movement of the Vacuum Boom.





Hose Reel Operation

Specification:

8. Entire reel assembly shall rotate 270 degrees on a large diameter ball bearing.

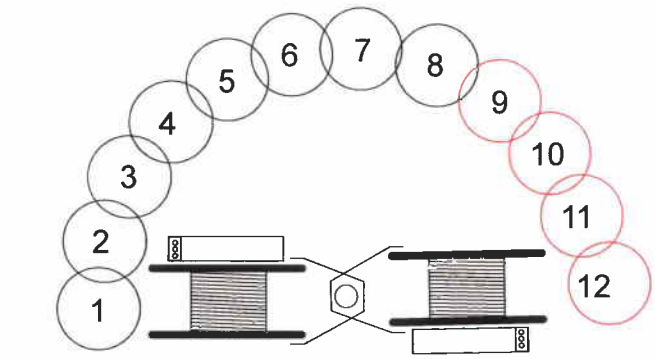
10. The hose reel shall rotate about the reel assembly centerline so the reel shall never extend beyond the truck width. Reel coverage diagram shall be submitted with bid.

As illustrated below, Vac-Con actually covers more useable area with 8 of 12 positions being unique and in front of the chassis and out of traffic.

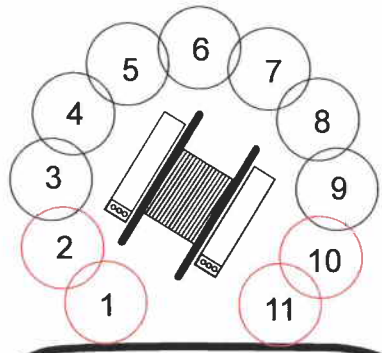
Vactor with 270 degrees of travel offers 11 possible unique positions, but 4 of them are dangerous and place the operator in a "trapped" position. These positions are somewhat redundant and could more safely be reached by proper positioning of the chassis in relation to the manhole.

The 4 positions that Vac-Con covers outside the width of the chassis are very beneficial when working a manhole that is over the curbline.

Vac-Con can provide a no-cost "travel limit" stop which will stop the reel from traveling to positions 9-12. There is a manual over-ride for the stop that would allow the operator to access positions 9-12 by manually actuating the stop bypass.



Vac-Con
Hose reel
Travel
180°
(Less is more)



Vactor
Hose reel
Travel
270°

Hose Reel Controls

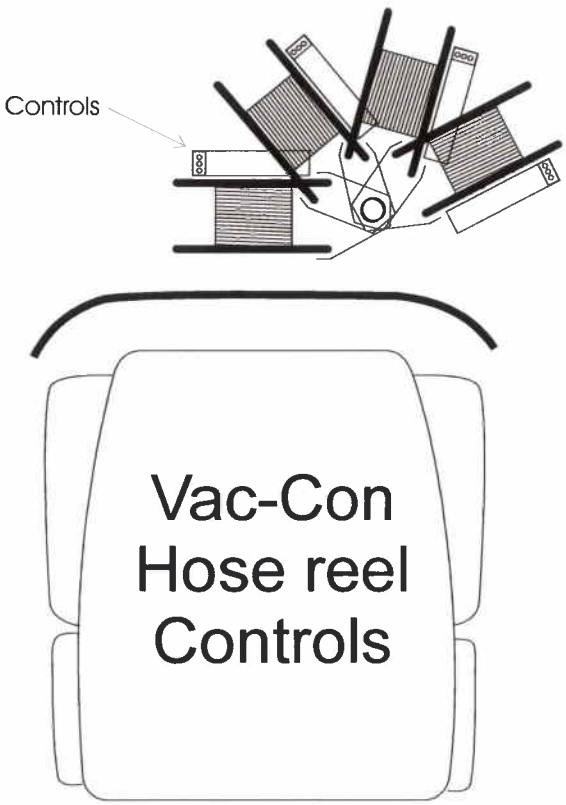
Specification:

11. Controls shall accessible on both sides of the hose reel, allowing operator to work at either side of unit for safety purposes.

As illustrated below, the Vac-Con control station is accessible no matter what the position of the reel is.

Our articulating reel design does not require dual controls making it easier and safer for the operator because the controls are always familiar and consistent.

No matter where the reel is positioned, the controls are always easy to access and right where you left them.



Dump Height

Specification:

4. 1500 gallon water capacity additional on 12 yard units, 6X4 chassis required and will have 60" dump height depending on chassis frame height.

The specification (above) does not call for a minimum dump height.

Vactor mounts their body exceptionally high which raises the center of gravity and can contribute to roll-over situations during emergency maneuvers.

Vac-Con chooses to mount our body as low to the chassis frame as possible to keep the center of gravity low to increase safety for the operator and those around them.

Vac-Con does offer a hydraulically lifting body which raises the body to 60" only for dumping and then lowers the body back down for safe travel.

Your existing Vac-Con units dump at 48" and we have never been told of an issue with dump height.

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VAC-CON MORE POWER TO YOU

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Summary

Water Tanks: Plastic is non-corosive, accepted and used in multiple industrial applications. You currently have 4 trucks with Vac-Cons new generation water tanks and they have had zero problems.

Vacuum Drive: Our system operates with the chassis transmission in neutral. Will you stand in from of a 390 horsepower truck running 2000 RPM with the transmission in drive? How is driving the blower thru the truck transmission and a imported Italian transfer case direct drive. Your 4 existing Vac-Con trucks have our Hydrostatic Vacuum drive and according to Brian Bennett & Jay Bennett, they have noted no issues with the Hydrostatic drive system. When I asked Jay what prompted him to specify transfer cases when he has no units with transfer cases currently and has 4 units with hydrostatic drive which have performed without any issues, he said that "it makes it easier for me to buy Vactors".

Vacuum Boom: The 5x5 boom specified is dangerous and has less rotation and less boom reach than our boom. If operated as suggested by Vactor, this will result in an over height issue that could easily result in damage to power lines or serious injury. Search youtube for Vactor 5x5 and watch the video. This is a video produced by Vactor showing the truck being driven with the catch basin tube attached and the boom 4-5' above the top of the body. This is a very hazardous condition.

Hose reel Operation: We have illustrated on page 5 that our hose reel offers more unique positions for operation. We have offered a travel limit to address Mr. Stowes concerns about the operators inadvertently swinging the reel into traffic. While 270 degrees of rotation as specified might seem better, I think our explanation and illustration proves that our reel is actually safer and more effective.

Hose reel Controls: As clearly seen in the illustration on page 6, dual controls are not needed with our hose reel design. One set of controls is safer and less maintenance.

Dump Height: The 60" dump height was not specified as a minimum and there is no existing need for it. The lower the debris tank is located, the less chance of tipping the truck over either in an emergency traffic manuver or when offloading and dumping the tank. Vac-Con feels that elevating the debris tank an additional 12" as specified is a significant safety risk and will not build a truck to this specification.