

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

- MEMORANDUM -

TO: Ms. Pamela J. Leja-Katsaris
Asst. Chief Procurement Officer

DATE: November 5, 2012

FROM: Walt Reed
Fire Chief

SUBJECT: *AFG Grant Sole Source*

As you are aware, the Fire Department was awarded an Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG) through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Grant Program Directorate. The purpose of the AFG is to enhance, through financial assistance, the safety of the public and of firefighters regarding fire and fire-related hazards. More specifically, we were awarded this grant to provide an upgrade to our fire dispatch system. The scope of the project is a Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system that vocalizes the 9-1-1 dispatch in a clear accent-free human-word based neutral voice, while simultaneously providing station alerting and mobile dispatching of emergency crews. The approved project cost totals \$303,790, broken down as follows: the Federal share is 90% (or \$273,411) of the cost, and the City of Coral Gables' share is 10% (or \$30,379).

There are several vendors on the market who offer fire dispatch systems and/or components of a computer-aided fire dispatch system. However to date, we have found only one company who offers a "human-word based" automated voice dispatching system, "***Locution Systems Incorporated.***" Human-word based technology is extremely important, particularly in jurisdictions like Coral Gables, where many of the street name pronunciations are similar but have very distinctive inflection and enunciation. The mispronunciation of a street name could very well yield the unfortunate result of sending emergency response crews to the wrong location.

We have taken the time to have not only fire department personnel but I.T. personnel speak with customers who have the Locution Systems Inc. product in place within their jurisdiction. To date, all of the Locution customers we have spoken to have given us favorable and positive reports on Locution's system functionality within their jurisdiction. On the fire side, customers are reporting few to no mistakes with dispatch, and a dramatic reduction in response times of emergency crews. These jurisdictions further reported that the service received from Locution has not only met but "exceeded expectations". We can also report that Locution's staff appears to be extremely knowledgeable not only with their product but with the needs of fire and emergency medical services agencies.

The FEMA Grant Program Directorate gives us one year from award notification (9/28/12) to complete the entire grant process, which includes complete installation and total system performance. Grant acceptance was approved by the City Commission on October 16, 2012, and as of today, we are just over one month into our grant completion/performance period. Since this project would go over the \$25,000 threshold, we would also need to appear before the City Commission to award the contract for this grant. As you are aware, during the next two months the City Commission will meet only once per month. This is a complex and aggressive project that can be met, but only with minimal delays. Since Locution Systems Inc. has systems in place in various fire departments throughout the country, in agencies similar to ours and even larger agencies, and since they have taken the time to learn and research our agency on their own, we have confidence in their ability to complete this project, as noted within our grant request, on time and accurately.

The delay of putting this project out to a bid process would negatively impact this project and not yield the results necessary since Locution Systems Inc. is the only provider that we are aware of who can provide human-word based automated voice dispatching. In fact, asking other companies to bid a project they cannot fulfill with the specifics we require, would be seen as futile.

Lastly but certainly not least, the Coral Gables Fire Department is one of only a handful of agencies within the U.S. to hold an ISO Class One rating and Accredited Agency status. The system provided by Locution will go a long way in helping us to achieve and maintain Accreditation response time standards. Every agency we have spoken to who has the Locution system in place, have reported a reduction in response times anywhere from 15 seconds to one minute overall.

If you agree that the Locution product is a sole source provider because of the human-word based automated voice dispatch system, we respectfully ask that we be allowed to move forward with Locution Systems Incorporated and not go out to bid on this project. This project is within the best interest of the Department, the City and the community we serve. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at extension 5571 or our project manager, Division Chief Hope Gibbs at extension 5751. Thank you!

Attachment

CC: Deputy Chief Stolzenberg
Division Chief Gibbs
File