

**City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report**

Meeting Date: <u>05/13/13</u>		Item Number: <u>C-10</u>	
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM: Authorization to Release a Request for Proposal (RFP) to Outsource Audio Visual Production Services for Broadcasting City Meetings from the Mike Balkman Council Chambers			
Contact Person/Dept.: Shelly Wolfberg/ City Manager's Office		Phone Numbers: (310) 253-6008	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☐	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☐ Attachments: ☐	
Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒		Date: <u>N/A</u>	
Public Notification: Meetings and Agendas – City Council (05/07/13).			
Department Approval: Martin Cole (05/01/13) Charles Herbertson (05/01/13) Michele Williams (05/01/13)		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Baker) (05/07/13)	
Chief Financial Officer Approval: Jeff Muir (05/07/13)		City Manager Approval: John M. Nachbar (05/07/13)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council authorize the release of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to outsource audio-visual production services for broadcasting City meetings that are held in City Council Chambers. <u>BACKGROUND:</u> The construction of City Hall in 1995 included equipping the Mike Balkman Council Chambers (Chambers) with audio-visual equipment. Various components were installed to control the voting system, microphones, speaker volume, projector screen up/down, chimes, document camera, room lighting, and rear projection screen viewing. By 1997, additional equipment was procured and integrated with the system to facilitate broadcast capability. This included the installation of additional cameras and production equipment which enabled televising City meetings held in the Chambers. In 2005, with the assistance of an external audio-visual consultant, a capital improvement project was initiated to repair and replace many of the audio-visual components that had reached end of life and were deemed unreliable. Additional enhancements were also completed to improve the Chamber's sound quality making the room more conducive to televising city meetings. A contract was initially executed with the vendor which performed the improvements to provide equipment repair/maintenance and support. The company was subsequently acquired by Anderson Audio Visual who currently maintains the equipment.			

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DISCUSSION:

Anderson Audio Visual informed staff that given the age of the equipment and mix of various disparate components, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to maintain the equipment. Staff (and the City Council) has observed increased component failure and a decline in audio-visual broadcast quality due to these failures.

In an effort to remedy this situation, a project team was formed consisting of staff from the City Manager's Office, City Clerk's Office, Information Technology Department, and Public Works Department. The team's initial analysis revealed the following:

- The audio-visual room has vintage 1995 components and 2006 update components integrated into a hybrid system with no one manufacturer as its base
- There is a collection of components that are not in use which were not removed when the system was updated in 2006. This equipment is still wired and removal is complex and risky given possible integration with the current system
- Some power strips are non-functional and cannot be easily removed from the racks making managing power in the racks difficult
- Most of the quality issues are related to three recurring problem areas within the system:
 - o Playback services
 - o Meeting operations of the Council Chamber components (voting system, lighting, document camera, and backlit screen)
 - o Microphone and sound issues
- The City does not have internal staff skilled in the operation and technical support of the audio-visual systems and related components
- Anderson Audio Visual (current maintenance provider) does not recommend:
 - o Removing not-in-use components from the racks
 - o Performing selected upgrades of the existing system
- Informal estimate to replace the audio-visual equipment could potentially exceed \$500,000

Addressing the issues outlined above by replacing the audio-visual equipment would require a significant capital outlay. Staff researched more cost effective alternatives and was informed about the option of outsourcing broadcast and production services.

If the City decided to pursue the outsourcing option, a vendor would be identified to be responsible for installing their audio-visual equipment which would be leased by the City. The vendor would be responsible for broadcasting City meetings and ensuring signal feeds to the cable and Internet providers (Time Warner, Verizon, and AT&T). Additionally, the vendor would also be responsible for recommending or installing a simplified voting system to address recurring problems with the existing system.

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In speaking with other municipalities who have already implemented this option, outsourcing costs are much more affordable given the advancement of technology. Rather than broadcasting meetings from traditional “on-site” control rooms, these vendors are able to remotely provide broadcast services. Technicians are physically located off-site and able to control the production of the meetings from the vendor’s centralized facility. All services are managed remotely and do not require on-site staff.

RFP – Outsource Broadcast Production Services

The project team drafted a RFP which details all the requirements and specifications related to broadcasting Culver City meetings. The objective of the RFP is to identify vendors who are skilled and have extensive experience with providing outsourced broadcast services in the local government arena. Releasing the RFP in no way obligates the City to contract with any of the responding vendors. The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

Staff recommends the outsourcing option because even if the City decided to replace all of the audio-visual equipment, there would still be a remaining issue in that there are no in-house staff skilled to support the equipment. While there is a maintenance contract, the City is placed at an operational disadvantage by not being able to quickly respond and resolve issues. When component failures occur and they impact the quality of the meeting, nothing can usually be done until the next business day when the maintenance vendor is contacted to provide technical support.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

Releasing the RFP does not create a financial obligation. However, after the vendor proposals have been reviewed by staff, this may result in a recommendation to select one of the vendors to provide broadcast production services. Currently, funding for the contemplated services has not been identified. Based upon the responses to the RFP, staff will also recommend various funding source(s) for consideration by the City Council for the proposed services.

MOTION:

That the City Council

Authorize the release of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to Outsource Audio Visual Production Services for Broadcasting City Meetings in the Mike Balkman Council Chambers.