

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 05/29/07		Item Number: <u>A-9</u>	
AGENDA ITEM: Authorization of a Contract with Progressive Solutions Inc. (PSI) for the Purchase of Alarm Tracking and Billing Software to Support the Police Department's Alarm Tracking and Billing System.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Michele Williams (IT) Gordon Stephens (PD)		Phone Number: 310.253.5959 310.253.6257	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☒ No ☐	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☒	
Public Notification: Master Notification List on 05/24/07; Progressive Solutions Inc (PSI) on 05/14/07, Crystal Alexander, City Treasurer on 05/09/07.			
Department Approval: John Richo 05/04/07 Hank Davies 05/04/07		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Iker) (05/16/07)	
City Controller Approval: Marlee Chang (05/21/07)		City Manager Approval: Jerry B. Fulwood (05/22/07)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council authorize a contract with Progressive Solutions Inc. (PSI) (Brea, CA) for the purchase of its alarm track software module to support and enhance the City's alarm renewals and false alarms billing. <u>BACKGROUND:</u> Chapter 11.04 of the Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) governs alarm systems intended to summon law enforcement response. This Chapter of the CCMC sets permit requirements, establishes fees, provides for violation penalties, establishes a system of administration, and sets conditions for suspension or revocation of a permit. Any site (residential or commercial) with an alarm system is required to obtain a permit. A service charge is also imposed for each public safety response to a false alarm in excess of three times within a 12 month period. Per the municipal code, the Police Department is responsible for administering the alarm system program which includes (but is not limited to) issuing permits, renewal billings, and false alarm billings. Currently the Police Department uses the False Alarm Analysis Program (FAAP) software to track alarm permits. The FAAP software was developed by the Central Station Alarm Association (a trade association) which distributes the software free of charge to public safety agencies. The software was written to provide tracking of			

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alarms for smaller jurisdictions. While it has served the alarm operations well, there are limitations which result in performing many of the tasks manually. Automation would result in increased efficiencies and relieve police staff to perform other critical operations.

DISCUSSION:

There are approximately 2300 alarm permit accounts. The alarm permit is renewed annually in the same month the permit was issued. The renewal billings are generated each month which totals about 150-180 invoices. Each month a report is created listing the accounts that are up for renewal, the invoices are printed, reviewed, manually folded, stuffed into envelopes and mailed by the alarm administrator. The invoice that is printed from the FAAP software is not formatted in a way that allows for the invoices to be folded using the folding and stuffing machines. The payments are returned to the City Treasurer's Office where the payment is entered into the financial system. Treasury staff bundles the renewal remittances (if returned by the customer) and sends them to the alarm administrator to manually enter the payments into the FAAP system. Once the payments are entered, an alarm permit is printed and mailed to the customer.

False alarm billings are also generated on a monthly basis. A report of false alarm responses is generated from the computer aided dispatch (CAD) system. The alarm administrator reviews and validates the report. The false alarms are manually entered into the FAAP software for tracking the number of incidents per customer. A report is generated for account holders exceeding three false alarms within a twelve month period. The report is then submitted to Accounting (A/R) to generate the invoice statements which are mailed to the customer. A report of payments for false alarm billings is submitted to the alarm administrator however these payments are not entered into the FAAP software.

The alarm renewal and false alarm billings are very time consuming processes for staff. There is no integration between the alarm tracking system and the City's financial system. This has also had an impact on the ability to provide superior customer service because up to date payment information is not readily available to the alarm administrator. Integrating the alarm billing system with the City's financial systems and the computer aided dispatch system would reduce duplicate data entry, centralize the billing for renewals and false alarms within Accounting (A/R), and eliminate manual processing.

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Recommended Solution

Staff learned that Progressive Solutions Inc. (PSI) offered an alarm tracking and billing module during a site visit to the City of Gardena. The alarm module has been used at the Gardena Police Department since December 2004.

On November 27, 2006, City Council approved a request to purchase the cashiering module from PSI. The staff report stated that PSI offered a suite of software (alarm permitting, utility billing, business license tracking) which would be further investigated. At that time, Council was informed that staff may recommend implementing these modules at a later date. Council also approved the purchase of PSI's pet licensing module on February 26, 2007.

PSI provided two demonstrations of the Alarm Track software. Staff was given an opportunity to examine the software and ensure that the functionality would meet the City's requirements for alarm tracking and billing. Additionally, staff contacted the following agencies for reference interviews (Attachment 1) to obtain their experiences using the product. In all cases, the comments and feedback were very positive.

Reference Client Interviews

City of Menlo Park, CA

City of Palmdale, CA

City of San Marcos, CA

Staff recommends purchasing PSI's alarm tracking and billing system to support and enhance the alarm permitting operations. Per the City's purchasing policy, this commodity is less than \$20,000 and does not require competitive bidding. The total cost of the software less the annual maintenance is \$19,600.

Process Enhancements

PSI's alarm tracking and billing software is inherently integrated with their cash receipting system. As a result, when an alarm payment (renewal or false alarm penalty) is made, the alarm permit record is immediately updated giving the alarm administrator instant access to all payment activities. Additionally, since the system is seamlessly integrated with the financial system, all billings can be generated by the Accounting (A/R) division. This would assist with centralized invoicing within Accounting. Currently the alarm administrator generates invoices for the monthly alarm renewals.

The PSI alarm software can also integrate with the computer aided dispatch (CAD) system. This will eliminate the need to manually enter false alarm instances into the billing system. False alarms would be downloaded each day to the alarm tracking module and would be held in a "pending" status until validated by the alarm

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administrator. Customers exceeding the allotted three false alarms would automatically be flagged in the system and queued for invoice processing.

The efficiencies gained from system integration and centralized billing would give the alarm administrator the opportunity to focus on customer support issues that have been neglected such as client site visits to ensure compliance and providing more interaction with those customers who repeatedly exceed three false alarm responses within a 12 month period.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

The authorization to purchase the Alarm Track software from Progressive Solutions Inc. would result in an expenditure not to exceed \$22,100. This amount includes the following line items:

AlarmTrack Software	\$15,100
Custom Interface to CAD	\$4,500
Total Software/Product Purchase	\$19,600
One (1) year of maintenance	\$2,500
Total Expenditure	\$22,100

Sufficient funds have been allocated in the Financial System's Capital Improvement Budget (30700636) for this expenditure. Typically, the annual maintenance costs increase nominally, if any.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Reference Interviews from Agencies using PSI's Alarm Track
2. Alarm Track Product Description and Vendor Quote

MOTION:

That the City Council:

- 1) Authorize a contract with PSI for the purchase of its Alarm Track Software, Custom CAD interface and one (1) year of software maintenance for an expenditure not to exceed \$22,100 plus any applicable taxes; and
- 2) Authorize the City Attorney to prepare/review any necessary contract documents and authorize the City Manager to execute such documents on behalf of the City.