



City of Culver City

Staff Report

File #: 18-0277, Version: 1

Item #: C-4.

Approval of a Three-Year Agreement with Ron Smith & Associates, Inc., for Quality Management Services for the City's Forensic Laboratory in an Amount Not-to-Exceed \$135,000.

Meeting Date: September 25, 2017

Contact Person/Dept: Lt. Heidi Hattrup/Police Department

Phone Number: (310) 253-6109

Fiscal Impact: Yes No

General Fund: Yes No

Public Hearing: **Action Item:** **Attachments:**

Commission Action Required: Yes No **Date:**

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (09/20/17);

Department Approval: Assistant Chief Ron Iizuka (09/13/17)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council approve a three-year agreement with Ron Smith & Associates, Inc., for Quality Management Services for the City's Forensic Laboratory in an amount not-to-exceed \$135,000.00.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

On December 7, 2015, the Justice Department announced new accreditation policies to advance forensic science. These policies seek to ensure that forensic science is practiced in a reliable and scientific manner during the process of solving crimes. As a result, the Justice Department is requiring department-run forensic labs to obtain and maintain accreditation by 2020.

The Culver City Police Department Forensic Section intends to pursue accreditation according to the International Standardization Organization/International Electrotechnical Commission, or ISO/IEC 17020 standards (scope includes crime scene processing and latent print comparisons/processing).

Having an experienced quality manager is key to achieving and maintaining accreditation. Quality Management Services are needed to assist the Culver City Police Department become accredited to the ISO/IEC 17020 standards in the forensic disciplines of crime scene analysis and latent print examinations (comparisons and processing).

Per Culver City Municipal Code 3.07.085.A, contracts for professional services are exempt from the formal competitive bidding procedures, provided they are based upon competitive quotations, whenever practical, as determined by the City Manager. For the reasons discussed below, the City Manager has determined that competitive quotations are not practical in this case.

Ron Smith & Associates has been identified as the only known source of Quality Management Services reasonably available to provide service to the Culver City Police Department. Factors considered in selecting Ron Smith & Associates also include:

- Urgency - department prosecutors will be required to use accredited forensic laboratories by 2020. It is fully expected that accreditation will become mandatory in all publicly funded forensic laboratories, as it has on the federal level. There are already at least nine states which have passed legislation requiring ISO accreditation.
- Unique qualifications - Ron Smith & Associates is the only service provider with two full time quality managers working together to provide ISO Mentoring services. Ron Smith & Associates is the only company that has immediate access to technical assessors with an unparalleled level of competency in their forensic discipline. The technical professionals are trained assessors in both 17020 and 17025 accreditation, they are nationally recognized in their forensic discipline, and are certified by recognized forensic organizations such as the International Association for Identification, the American Board of Criminalistics and the American Board of Forensic Toxicology.
- Experience - Ron Smith & Associates is the only forensic service provider that has the range and depth of experience required to properly mentor the Forensic Unit of the Culver City Police Department through the ISO/IEC 17020 accreditation process. The quality manager that provides ISO Mentoring services has 27 years of experience as a forensic scientist working in the analytical disciplines of toxicology, and 11 years of experience working directly in quality management. Each of the technical assessors on staff is a veteran analyst with several years of experience performing forensic casework.
- Public interest - communities are best served when forensic services are provided by an agency that can demonstrate compliance with internationally accepted standards

Ron Smith & Associates has the needed experience to provide Quality Management Services to the

Culver City Police Department Forensic Section. RSA understands accreditation requirements and will prepare our agency for an accreditation assessment by providing an experienced quality manager to perform the necessary duties.

ACHIEVING ACCREDITATION

Ron Smith & Associates will assist the Culver City Police Department develop policies and procedures that address the requirements of the ISO/IEC 17020 standards, and establish all required documents including a quality manual. Ron Smith & Associates will then perform a gap analysis to determine where our lab stands in regards to meeting standards. The quality manager will work with staff to take actions necessary to close any existing gaps.

During implementation, Ron Smith & Associates will make an on-site visit and schedule an internal audit of the Culver City Police Department forensic laboratory to determine effectiveness of the quality management system. The audit will be performed by the quality manager and a technical assessor with experience in crime scene analysis and latent print examinations. The quality manager will report detailed findings and suggestions, and coordinate any corrective actions that arise from the audit.

The Culver City Police Department will then be ready to submit an application for accreditation. The quality manager will prepare all required documents, and handle all communication with the accrediting body.

MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION

With quality management services, the Culver City Police Department has the benefit of an experienced quality manager without the cost of a full-time employee. The quality manager is available to the Culver City Police Department on a daily basis to assist with any and all functions of the position including:

- Assist with review and approval of standard operating procedures
- Develop policies and procedures concerning laboratory quality, to include maintaining and updating the quality manual
- Coordinate and conduct regular internal audits
- Maintain all quality records according to established policies and procedures
- Coordinate corrective actions and conduct effectiveness reviews
- Administer the proficiency testing program according to accreditation criteria
- Ensure the initiation of preventive actions to reduce risk

- Select internal auditors and ensure they are properly trained
- Ensure new methods and equipment are properly validated, records maintained
- Provide guidance with quality issues
- Assist with annual management reviews
- Maintain responsibility for all communication with the accrediting body
- Ensure that the management and technical operations conform to the ISO/IEC 17020 standards, as well as the supplemental requirements of accrediting body
- Ensure the courtroom testimony provided by all staff members is monitored
- Create and maintain a detailed conformance file or checklist that demonstrates how the laboratory has determined compliance with accreditation requirements

FISCAL ANALYSIS

The City Council Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2017/2018 includes \$45,000 for the Agreement with Ron Smith & Associates, Inc., for Quality Management Services for the City's Forensic Laboratory. Funding for future fiscal years will be requested during the annual budget process.

MOTION

That the City Council:

1. Approve a three-year agreement with Ron Smith & Associates, Inc., for Quality Management Services in an amount not-to-exceed \$135,000.00; and
2. Authorize the City Attorney to review/prepare the necessary documents; and
3. Authorize the City Manager to execute such documents on behalf of the City.