



Agenda Item

City Council

Item #: 3.28.

7/13/2021

File #: 21-0382

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THRU: Rick Otto, City Manager

FROM: Sean deMetropolis, Fire Chief

1. SUBJECT

Authorize purchase of fire station alerting system from US Digital Designs, Inc.

2. SUMMARY

The Fire Department is seeking to purchase the Phoenix G2 alerting platform from US Digital Designs, Inc. for the new Fire Headquarters and Station 1. This alerting platform will allow Fire Department personnel to more rapidly and efficiently respond to emergency incidents by providing upgraded alerting options including individualized tones and lighting systems.

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve the purchase of the Phoenix G2 station alerting system in an amount not to exceed \$130,000, from US Digital Designs, Inc.; and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the purchase contract on behalf of the City.

4. FISCAL IMPACT

Goal 1: Provide for a safe community

a: Provide staffing and resources to deliver services that ensure public safety.

Goal 4: Provide outstanding public service

b: Provide facilities and services to meet customer expectations.

5. STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Goal 1: Provide for a safe community

a: Provide staffing and resources to deliver services that ensure public safety.

Goal 4: Provide outstanding public service

b: Provide facilities and services to meet customer expectations.

6. DISCUSSION AND BACKGROUND

The Fire Department is seeking to purchase the Phoenix G2 fire station alerting system for the new Fire Headquarters and Station 1 from US Digital Designs, Inc. (USDD). This system will allow Fire Department personnel to more rapidly and efficiently respond to emergency incidents by providing upgraded alerting options, including individualized tones and lighting options throughout the facility. The USDD fire station alerting system will allow each speaker, room, and light to be individually programmed to allow the firefighters in the station to receive emergency incident notifications at the

earliest opportunity, leading to the best possible reflex time as well as overall response times.

In 2003, the Orange Fire Department (OFD) purchased and installed station alerting equipment from Westnet, Inc. (Westnet), through the Metro Cities Fire Authority. At the time, Westnet was the only vendor providing fire station alerting services to the Metro Net Communications Center (Metro Net), which is responsible for dispatching services to the OFD. As of today, Westnet and USDD are the only two station alerting vendors that Metro Net is using.

While the Westnet platform has proven to be a quality product, there are multiple issues that have caused concern within OFD, primarily the lack of, or significant delays in, customer service. In addition, the proprietary nature of their equipment and programming has made it very costly to service and replace when needed.

OFD reached out to numerous agencies and contacts to determine the best fire station alerting solution for the new Fire Headquarters and Station 1. The consensus was the same as OFD had experienced - Westnet provides a good product but inadequate service. This is magnified by the cost of the required annual service agreements of upwards of \$80,000 based upon the complexity of the design and the number of stations and apparatus. OFD currently does not have a service agreement, preferring to have programming issues addressed by staff when possible.

The Newport Beach Fire Department (NBFD) provided the most valuable information in our decision to use USDD in place of Westnet for this project. The NBFD is similar in size to OFD with eight fire stations, and they utilize Metro Net for dispatch services. Prior to the replacement of an antiquated facility, the Command Staff of NBFD elected to move away from Westnet as a vendor and have the USDD Phoenix 2 system installed. Their decision was based on many of the same issues OFD has experienced, including the inability to program the system internally, lack of responsiveness, and increases in annual maintenance costs. NBFD noted USDD offered a mostly non-proprietary solution that could be serviced in-house and without authorization from USDD. Upon completion of the fire facility and finalized programming of the Phoenix G2 alerting system, NBFD management decided to implement a system-wide replacement of the remaining seven Westnet alerting systems.

Based upon information gained during OFD's research, we believe the USDD Phoenix G2 system will provide the best overall value for the OFD. Some of the items offered by USDD that Westnet could not compete with are: end user application, end user programmability, end user ability to add or delete system components, and component purchasing from internet vendors. Westnet will also provide certification training to staff for internal programming, minimizing future maintenance costs.

7. ATTACHMENTS

- USDD Fire Station Alerting System Purchasing Contract
- USDD New System Warranty