



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT



December 7, 2021

ITEM TITLE

Purchase Award: Accept Proposal from Forensic Technology Inc. for Forensic Ballistics and Firearms Identification Technology

Report Number: 21-0238

Location: No specific geographic location

Department: Police

Environmental Notice: The activity is not a “Project” as defined under Section 15378 of the California Environmental Quality Act State Guidelines; therefore, pursuant to State Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3) no environmental review is required.

Recommended Action

Adopt a resolution waiving the competitive bidding requirements and accepting a proposal from Forensic Technology Inc. for Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS).

SUMMARY

The Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS) enables the Police Department’s Crime Laboratory to identify local, national, and international linkages that may exist amongst firearms cases submitted for examination. Forensic Technology Inc. pioneered automated ballistics identification and analysis, and is the exclusive manufacturer of the Integrated Ballistics Identification System. The acquisition of the Integrated Ballistics Identification System will enhance the ability of investigators to solve crimes.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Director of Development Services has reviewed the proposed activity for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has determined that the activity is not a “Project” as defined under Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines because it will not result in a physical change in the environment; therefore, pursuant to Section 15060(c)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, the activity is not subject to CEQA. Thus, no environmental review is required.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Not applicable.

DISCUSSION

Background

When a gun is fired, it leaves unique marks on ammunition casings. Like a person's fingerprints, no two firearms leave the same markings. With today's technology, 3D images of ballistic evidence can be captured to identify possible matches to evidence from other gun crime scenes, allowing law enforcement to connect separate shooting incidents.

In 1997, ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives) established the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) to provide local, state, tribal and federal law enforcement partners with an automated ballistic imaging network. This technology is vital to any violent crime reduction strategy because it enables investigators to match ballistics evidence with other cases across the nation. NIBIN is the only national network that allows for the capture and comparison of ballistic evidence to aid in solving and preventing violent crimes involving firearms.

Discussion

Over the course of the pandemic, the use of ghost guns has risen significantly, creating issues tracking these weapons and tying them to specific individuals. A ghost gun is a term for a homemade firearm that lacks commercial serial numbers. Because home-manufacturing of firearms for personal use does not fall under the federal government's authority to regulate interstate commerce, individuals making their own firearms are not subject to federal or state commercial background check regulations. These weapons are difficult to track and can be easily purchased.

Throughout the pandemic, the rise in ghost guns across the country has been startling, and so prevalent it has garnered the attention of the President of the United States. The combination of the inability to interact in-person, cheaper costs, rise in violence, and ability to arm yourself without a background check, has made ghost guns an attractive option. Once limited to gun enthusiasts and hobbyists, ghost guns have now become a common staple in violent crimes. In Chula Vista, the percentage of recovered weapons classified as ghost guns has risen significantly, now accounting for 1 in every 5 guns impounded. Impounds of ghost guns more than doubled in 2020, and the Police Department is on pace to double those numbers in 2021.

Currently, the Police Department utilizes the San Diego County Crime Laboratory to provide forensic ballistic analysis of impounded guns. Although the Police Department appreciates the service provided by the county, it presents some challenges. Due to the large influx of firearms impounded into the County's property room, restrictions are placed upon agencies regarding the number of guns that can be submitted at a given time. This has created a significant backlog of guns in our agency that have not been entered into the NIBIN system, having a direct impact on our agency's ability to solve crimes. This issue has been exacerbated by COVID, as the courts have been out of session and evidence is stacking up in property rooms, waiting for trials to occur. Currently, the Police Department has 148 cases waiting for NIBIN results, and an additional 8-10 guns are received per week. This is unsustainable and continues to push receipt of our analytical results farther and farther from the date of the crime.

To address this concern, the Police Department is proposing to acquire an Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS), which will enhance the ability of investigators to solve crimes. The Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS) enables the Police Department's Crime Laboratory to identify local, national, and international linkages that may exist amongst firearms cases submitted for examination.

Police Department staff is requesting to waive competitive bidding requirements and accept a proposal with Forensic Technology Inc. to provide the Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS). Forensic Technology Inc. pioneered automated ballistics identification and analysis, and is the exclusive manufacturer of IBIS. A sole source letter outlining IBIS as a proprietary product of Forensic Technology Inc. is included in the proposal.

The IBIS system would be acquired on a subscription program, fully maintained and updated by the manufacturer. Training and implementation would be provided by both the vendor and ATF. Forensic Technology Inc. is offering a 7-year subscription, as outlined below:

| Item | IBIS ACCESS Subscription | Total Price (USD) |
|------|--|-------------------|
| 1. | NIBIN Cartridge Cases Acquisition, Analysis and Triage Managed Service, comprising: One (1) BRASSTRAX Acquisition Station with 400 acquisitions One (1) MATCHPOINT Analysis Station for Cartridge Cases One (1) PAG800 Stereo Zoom Microscope One (1) color printer | \$42,500 |
| 2. | Setup fee, including: Shipping and handling charges DDP Customer Premises (Incoterms 2020), unloaded, installation and commissioning, on-site training for up to two (2) trainees and travel and living expenses for Forensic Technology's Installer and Instructor. | \$6,500 |
| 3. | 2nd Year subscription | \$43,775 |
| 4. | 3rd Year subscription | \$45,088 |
| 5. | 4th Year subscription | \$46,441 |
| 6. | 5th Year subscription | \$47,834 |
| 7. | 6th Year subscription | \$49,269 |
| 8. | 7th Year subscription | \$50,747 |

7-YEAR TOTAL \$332,154

The Police Foundation has offered to pay Year 1 costs of the subscription (Items 1 and 2), which totals \$49,000. Police Department staff is requesting the City General Fund to pick up the costs for Years 2-7 of the subscription. At the end of the 7-year subscription, the Police Department may purchase the equipment by paying the remaining balance, or re-enter into a new subscription.

DECISION-MAKER CONFLICT

Staff has reviewed the decision contemplated by this action and has determined that it is not site-specific and consequently, the 500-foot rule found in California Code of Regulations Title 2, section 18702.2(a)(11), is not

applicable to this decision for purposes of determining a disqualifying real property-related financial conflict of interest under the Political Reform Act (Cal. Gov't Code § 87100, et seq.).

Staff is not independently aware, and has not been informed by any City Council member, of any other fact that may constitute a basis for a decision maker conflict of interest in this matter.

CURRENT-YEAR FISCAL IMPACT

Because the Police Foundation is paying for Year 1 of the 7-year subscription, there is no current-year fiscal impact by accepting the proposal from Forensic Technology Inc.

ONGOING FISCAL IMPACT

The ongoing fiscal impact of the acquiring the Integrated Ballistics Identification System is outlined below.

| Description | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | FY 2025 | FY 2026 | FY 2027 | FY 2028 |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| IBIS ACCESS Subscription | \$43,775 | \$45,088 | \$46,441 | \$47,834 | \$49,269 | \$50,747 |

The Police Department will coordinate with the Finance Department to include this cost into the City Manager proposed budget for City Council consideration as part of the annual budget process.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Proposal from Forensic Technology Inc. for Integrated Ballistics Identification System

Staff Contact: Eric Thunberg, Police Department