TO:       HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM:   CITY MANAGER   DEPARTMENT:   POLICE

DATE:    DECEMBER 18, 2006     CMR:448:06

SUBJECT: INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITIES OF PALO ALTO, MOUNTAIN VIEW AND LOS ALTOS FOR A VIRTUAL COMPUTER AIDED DISPATCH CONSOLIDATION PROJECT

This is an informational report. No Council action is required at this time.

BACKGROUND

Over the course of the past year, staff in the Police Department and City Manager’s office has been meeting with representatives from Mountain View and Los Altos to discuss what efficiencies might be gained through coordinating or potentially merging various emergency communications operations.

In April 2006, in furtherance of the ongoing discussions, Mountain View approached the Cities of Palo Alto and Los Altos regarding collaboration on various technology replacement projects and exploring the possibility of “virtually consolidating” its public safety emergency communications operations through a joint purchase process to replace each city’s public safety Computer Aided Dispatch and Records Management Systems (CAD/RMS).

DISCUSSION

In early 2006, the City of Mountain View hired Intelligents and Company, Inc. to assist in the preparation of bid specifications to replace Mountain View’s public safety CAD system. Separate from those discussions, Los Altos Police Department was about to embark on replacement or upgrade of its public safety computer system and Palo Alto staff had begun work on a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) for Fiscal Year 2007-08 to hire a consultant to prepare bid specifications and replace its public safety computer systems.

Seeing value in partnering together on the potential replacement of these various systems, staff from the three cities began to define the system requirements to release a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to ascertain the qualifications of public safety technology vendors to meet the needs outlined in the statement of requirements. Staff from Palo Alto and Los Altos worked with Mountain View’s purchasing and legal staff to amend the contract with Intelligents and Company, Inc. to complete the Virtual Computer Aided Dispatch Consolidation project and develop and release bid
proposals for the Multi-Agency Public Safety System. In January 2007, Police Department staff will be bringing a proposed contract award from this bid process.

Through the proposed bid selection process for a Multi-Agency Public Safety System, the cities of Palo Alto, Mountain View, and Los Altos will explore the possibility of jointly purchasing a CAD/RMS. Each of the cities will closely evaluate the potential benefits that might not have otherwise been achieved by purchasing this equipment individually.

These are a number of potential efficiencies or savings. For example, Palo Alto had expected to hire a consultant to conduct a needs analysis and bid specification process at an approximate cost of $150,000. By working together, Palo Alto’s costs are reduced to only $26,000. Other examples of efficiencies include a shared capital expense if the cities elect to move further in the process and jointly purchase the CAD and Records Management Systems (RMS) together. It seems intuitively clear that three cities purchasing a multi-agency system from a single vendor could negotiate a better contract for a reduced price. Savings will also be realized with a reduction in purchasing and legal staff time for Palo Alto by only requiring input on the purchasing process or contract process as opposed to handling the full bid and contract process itself. Other potential savings that will be carefully explored through this collaborative process include:

**Virtual Consolidation of Emergency Communications Operations** – The purchase and/or sharing of a joint CAD/RMS system allows for some level of consolidation of services, but does not require the significant capital investment that a physical consolidation that moving to a single dispatch center would require. The investment in capital from a physical consolidation is significant when one consider a new building, equipment, radio tower/infrastructure, and personnel costs. In virtual consolidation, there is the opportunity to achieve the same benefits at a much lower cost.

As many governmental agencies across the country have experienced, consolidation of emergency communications tends to be cyclical. Santa Clara County, and the three cities involved in this proposed solution have experienced physical consolidation through a North County Emergency Communications Center, and in the 1980’s reestablished their own emergency communications centers. True consolidation is a very difficult task to master. Most cities report that once they physically consolidate, they lose local control and experience an inferior level of service provided to their public safety personnel and communities. Many cities make the move for consolidation because of fiscal concerns, but cost savings are rarely realized from physical consolidation. It is anticipated that virtual consolidation will provide some of the cost benefits of consolidation without the negative impacts of physical consolidation.

**Back Up Emergency Communications Center Capabilities** – Although each of the three cities have back-up operational plans and the ability to transfer 9-1-1 calls to another dispatch center in an emergency, none of the three cities (at the present time), have complete back-up 9-1-1 operation capabilities. If communications go down in any of these cities, public safety services will temporarily stop until a secondary dispatch center can take over. With each city having the same
phone system, when a failure or overflow occurs, there will be the ability to work with telephone vendors to re-route calls to one of the other two agencies. The alternate agency could more easily track police and fire resources and enter a call into the CAD system.

**SHARED STAFFING** – Since the three cities would have the same systems, they could explore the use of sharing personnel resources. Because all dispatchers would be trained on the same phone and computer systems, should there be a localized emergency in any one of the cities; Palo Alto could request mutual aid for dispatchers from the other two cities, a resource that is not readily available now. Because of the increased staffing demands and the high turnover rate that all cities face, all three cities have the potential to benefit through shared personnel resources.

Shared staffing could also include information technology efficiencies crime analysis or statistical gathering of data. Shared IT resources could be another benefit to this proposal. With the purchase of a joint system, staff has the opportunity to look at alternative IT solutions for the maintenance of CAD/RMS hardware and software. Currently, the resources and expertise in specialized systems such as CAD/RMS are limited.

**POTENTIAL INTEROPERABILITY SOLUTIONS/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS** – Another benefit to virtual consolidation is the ability for improved interoperability amongst the three cities. Through a shared CAD/RMS system, and possibly mobile systems, officers in Palo Alto would be able to more seamlessly communicate via their mobile computers to officers in Mountain View and Los Altos and vice versa. This option does not exist today, although a pilot is underway through the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Project to interconnect CAD systems from Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara County Communications. Through this effort, and potentially through the joint purchase of a CAD system, dispatchers in the various cities would be able to share information through the CAD systems without taking the additional time to pick up a phone.

Intelligents & Company will assist in the development of the Request for Qualifications and Request for Proposal processes. It will work with the three cities to analyze the vendor responses, assigning scores and assisting in the selection of qualified vendors. Through this process, the three cities will be able to determine the feasibility, both technically and fiscally, of moving forward with a multi-agency CAD/RMS design.

The participation in this proposed contract does not guarantee that the purchase of a joint CAD/RMS system will occur. However, because of timing and the replacement schedules of CAD/RMS systems for these three cities, it gives staff a unique opportunity to explore alternatives that otherwise would not be an option.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**

An interagency contract between the three cities will set forth the financial obligations from the development and release of the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) through the release of the Request
for Proposal (RFP) and evaluation of responses. A draft of this interagency contract has been prepared (Attachment B), subject to City Manager and City Attorney approval.

The consulting agreement with Intelligents and Company, Inc. is on a time and materials basis with a not to exceed amount of $77,120. The proportionate share of the professional services agreement executed by the City of Mountain View on behalf of the three cities is approximately $25,681. The City of Palo Alto will transfer this amount to the City of Mountain View who will serve as fiscal agent for the joint project. The proportionate amount of any monies not expended through this contract will be returned to Palo Alto. The $25,681 will be paid for with monies in the Police Department’s operating budget. No additional funding approval by Council is required.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A – Intelligents and Company Contract  
Attachment B – Interagency Agreement

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