



Legislation Text

File #: 13-303, **Version:** 1

Staff Report for Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Services Agreement with AVI-SPL for \$395,381.97 to Design, Construct and Implement a Turn-key Audiovisual Technology Enhancement to the City Council Chamber to Enable Video Broadcast of City Council Meetings

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council approve the Services Agreement with AVI-SPL in the amount of \$395,381.97 for the necessary upgrades to the audio system, design and installation of video cameras, and upgrades to the voting system and speaker timer hardware components. This project is funded from public, educational and government (PEG) funds, which must be used on capital projects that provide greater public access to government

BACKGROUND

One of the goals of the City Council includes expanding community involvement and “transforming San Leandro into a center for innovation”. This project is to update the audio system and install video cameras in the City Council Chamber to support the goal. An analysis of the Council Chamber revealed an audio system with hardware that is over two decades old. The loudspeakers have lost their fidelity, the Council Chamber’s acoustics are poor and the audio signal that is broadcast over the web contains too much background noise that makes listening difficult. Visual presentations by staff or the public can only be seen on a projection screen that is positioned at an odd angle to the audience seats. Many of the seats on the east side (near the main door) of the Council Chamber provide poor sight lines to the screen. There are no current options available to capture presentations for later viewing and archiving.

Analysis

The City of San Leandro is the only city in Alameda County that does not video broadcast its City Council meetings. With today’s busy lifestyles, community members cannot always attend a meeting in the Council Chamber. By videotaping, broadcasting and hosting recorded City Council meetings the City will provide the community the ability to watch City Council meetings live or when it’s more convenient. Video capturing the City Council meetings will provide greater public access to government and support government transparency. The upgrades will provide a system that is built on current state-of-the-art equipment that will last for years and provide a base for upgrading in the future.

The City Council’s request to install video cameras in the Council Chamber provided an opportunity for staff to evaluate the current physical configuration and audiovisual equipment installed. The physical configuration of the Chamber does not provide the minimum electrical and data cable to add digital and audio equipment to the dais. The audio equipment currently in use is a system that is over two decades old. Its components are antiquated and replacement parts are extremely difficult to

obtain. The poor quality of the audio signal is a result of this old equipment. As part of the audio upgrade, new microphones will also be installed. The voting system and speaker timer used in the Chamber are older than the audio system and spare parts are difficult to locate for them as well; the voting system and speaker timer will be replaced.

The location of the existing video projection screen provides for optimal viewing from the dais, but not from the rest of the seats in the Chamber. Audience members struggle to see the screen from many of the seats, especially those on the east side of the Chamber. Due to the configuration of the Chamber, it is not possible to re-locate the projection screen without a major redesign of the Council Chamber, which is not in the scope of this project. The solution proposed will install additional flat panel monitors on the walls adjacent to the seating that will provide an unobstructed view of the presentations for audience members. The projector used for presentations between the City Clerk's desk and the speaker podium is not optimally placed. Its location is determined by the screen location and impedes the use of the room lighting remote control interface. The current portable projector will be replaced with a wall mounted projector, which will be affixed to the wall behind the City Council members when they are seated at the dais.

High definition video cameras were chosen instead of standard definition cameras. While standard definition video is currently being used for cable and web broadcasting of government proceedings, the trend to high definition is well underway and will most likely be the standard in a couple of years. By installing high definition cameras now, the cameras will not have to be upgraded when this transition happens. The video processor will handle the conversion between the two formats.

In addition to the changes outlined above, a document camera will also be installed on the speaker podium. This will provide for viewing of hardcopy documents brought to meetings. There will also be a monitor and new speakers installed in the Sister Cities Gallery for overflow audience seating. Finally, a "press plate" will be installed in the Chamber by the press seating area to allow the capture of a "clean video feed."

The analysis revealed that there are many systems in the Council Chamber in use today that are either outdated or poorly designed. The audiovisual systems on the market today provide a more integrated environment for controlling the functions of running local government. With a touch pad interface, microphone functionality can be controlled, speaker timer options set, request to speak lists managed and vote taking and tallying accomplished. This upgrade will provide better viewing for those present, better sound quality for those listening and a simpler interface for those participating. For citizens not able to attend meetings, there will be a professional product for cable TV or web viewing. Video of meetings will be available on the City's website for up to a year and older meetings will be archived.

The request for proposals (RFP) for this project was released to bidders on March 15, 2013. This was followed by a Mandatory Bidders' Conference on March 28, 2013 with two (2) vendors in attendance. There was an additional meeting held on April 8, 2013 to discuss the cable and physical changes within the Council Chamber, Sister Cities Gallery and the new control room. All questions during the Conference along with those that the bidders submitted up until April 4, 2013 were accepted and staff responses to those questions were posted on April 12, 2013. The bid deadline was April 23, 2013 which was extended by one week due to the need for the additional meeting for the cabling and physical changes. Bids were received from both vendors and were opened on April 24, 2013. The two vendors that provided bids were AVI-SPL and CompView.

The bid evaluation team consisted of representatives from the City Clerk, Public Works, Facilities Division and Information Technology Division. The award determination criteria were provided in the RFP, which included functionality, cost, service and technical compatibility. Of the two companies, AVI-SPL provided the bid that was most advantageous to the City according to the criteria. AVI-SPL designed a system that accomplishes the goals of the RFP, provided a response that detailed the costs, and AVI-SPL received high marks for its references. AVI-SPL was selected as the preferred vendor by all raters.

Previous City Council Action(s)

At the December 3, 2012 City Council meeting, the City Council had a discussion after receiving an "Update on Public Education and Government (PEG) Funding and Discussions Regarding Video Broadcasting of City Council Meetings".

Fiscal Impact

The estimated cost of the Audiovisual Technology Enhancement project for the City Council Chamber including equipment purchase, installation, labor, system warranties and contingencies is \$395,381.97 in fiscal year 2013-2014. This project will be funded from two sources: PEG funds, which are restricted funds that can be used for specific government access projects; and an inter-fund loan from the Information Technology fund. The City began to collect PEG funds in 2010, when the Council adopted Ordinance 2010-003 pursuant to the Digital Infrastructure and Video Competition Act of 2006 (DIVCA).

Budget Authority

Budget is funded from approved funds in 180-11-035-7410 (\$73,000.00)

Budget is funded from existing fund balance of fund 180 (\$172,381.97)

Inter-fund loan from Information Technology fund 688 (\$150,000.00)

ATTACHMENTS

None

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