DATE: May 25, 2021

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Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) for Corpus Christi Public Libraries

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CAPTION:

Motion authorizing a five-year service agreement with Invengo American Corp., dba FE Technologies, of Southlake, Texas for a total amount not to exceed $352,159 to implement Radio Frequency Identification technology for the Public Libraries, effective upon issuance of notice to proceed, with FY 2021 funding in an amount of $57,900 available through the Libraries Grant Fund.

SUMMARY:

This motion authorizes the purchase and installation of Radio Frequency Identification technology to improve functions related to circulation (checking material in and out), inventory management and security measures at each of the City's six library locations.

BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS:

The City's Library Department strives to meet current demands by modernizing and improving Library functions. Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) have been in use by libraries for over 20 years and are efficient in improving functions related to circulation (checking material in and out), inventory management, and security measures. This agreement also will provide for the purchase of software, equipment, supplies necessary to implement and support RFID technology at each of the City's six locations. Over a nine-month period, beginning in August of FY 2021, City staff will place RFID tags on over 400,000 Library items. Once RFID tagging is complete, installation of self-checkout stations and theft detection security gates will begin. This phase will take approximately eight weeks to complete. All six City libraries will simultaneously be switched over to RFID.

Currently, barcodes on library materials link the library record and the library patron record during the checkout process. Barcode scanners are line-of-sight and require each barcode to be read one at a time during the checkout and check-in process. These processes will become more efficient as RFID allows for multiple items to be processed simultaneously. Reducing the performance of repetitive tasks not only reduces the time spent performing the task but studies also show that repetitive stress injuries are reduced, thereby contributing to the wellbeing of our staff.

An additional benefit of RFID is the reduction of staff, equipment, and time needed to inventory the collections. Inventory takes up to four months per library location but would be reduced to a few weeks for the entire library system with RFID technology. Further, implementation of RFID will allow for library patrons to checkout material, pay fines, and place holds on library material at self-checkout stations that will be installed once the RFID tagging project is completed. The self-checkout stations also will serve to advertise Library and other City services.

Finally, transitioning to RFID will improve security measures for library material. The current theft detection security gates use electromagnetic (EM) technology activated with tattle tape security strips, which are placed inside library material. The use of tattle tape security strips requires staff and equipment to sensitize and desensitize the material. If library material is not desensitized, due to staff error or because patrons do not go through the checkout process, the alarm on the theft detection security gate sounds off.

As more libraries move towards RFID technology, replacing or repairing EM gates becomes more difficult and expensive. Due to age, none of the Library's EM gates qualify for a service agreement (some EM gates over 30 years old). Gates at two Library locations are not functioning, and at other Library locations gates are regularly malfunctioning. If the City does not transition to RFID, the two non-functioning gates will have to be replaced at an approximate combined cost of $30,000. All gates in all the City's libraries will need to be replaced within the next two years.

PROCUREMENT DETAIL:

Contracts and Procurement conducted a competitive Request for Bids (RFB) process to obtain bids. The City received three bids. Staff is recommending award to the lowest, responsible bidder Invengo American Corp., dba FE Technologies.

ALTERNATIVES:

The alternative to not approve the three-year agreement which would prevent the City's libraries from increasing efficiency, security, and accessibility for both staff and patrons.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The fiscal impact for FY 2021 would be an estimated $57,900 using the Libraries Grant Fund. For the remaining years, this agreement will be funded primarily with funds from the Libraries Grant Fund ($212,084) and Friends of Corpus Christi Public Libraries ($71,695). Maintenance and support will start in year two and will be in the amount of $17,095, which will come from the Library's operating budget.

FUNDING DETAIL:

Fund: 1068 Libraries Grant Fund
Organization/Activity: 12800 Central Library
Mission Element: 114 Digital Services
Project # **(CIP Only):** N/A
Account: 520100 Minor Computer
Amount: $57,900

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends City Council approve this motion for a five-year service agreement with Invengo American Corp., dba FE Technologies, as presented.

LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Service Agreement
Bid Tabulation