



Agenda Item # _____

Staff Report

City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Aldinger and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Geoff Dolan, City Manager

FROM: Bruce Moe, Finance Director
Rod Uyeda, Police Chief
Tony DiGenova, Police Lieutenant
Gwen Eng, General Services Manager

DATE: December 4, 2007

SUBJECT: Consideration of the Purchase of a Budgeted Digital Voice Recording System from Versatile Information Products, Inc. for the Police Department in the Amount of \$47,712.99 using Asset Forfeiture Funds

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council: a) waive formal bidding per Municipal Code Section 2.36.140 (waivers), b) appropriate \$47,713 from available Asset Forfeiture Funds, and c) authorize the purchase of a digital voice recording system from Versatile Information Products, Inc. in the amount of \$47,712.99.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

Asset Forfeiture Funds totaling \$58,080 were included in the Police Department's 2006-2007 budget for the purchase of this equipment. However, while the funds were allocated, the equipment was not purchased during FY 06-07 because the manufacturer was upgrading the equipment, and the Police Department wanted to wait until those upgrades became available. The necessary funds were inadvertently not re-budgeted in FY 2007-2008. As a result, in order to complete this purchase, the funds, which are available in the Asset Forfeiture account, need to be appropriated.

The City receives Asset Forfeiture funds after law enforcement has seized monies/assets from suspects involved in the sales, purchase, and/or manufacturing of illicit drugs. Based on cause, a civil court can forfeit these monies to local, state, and federal law enforcement. Asset Forfeiture funds received by the Manhattan Beach Police Department are the result of police department investigations, joint investigations with other agencies, and our participation in task force operations. A permissible use of these funds is the purchase of law enforcement equipment. Future costs include software maintenance support and replacements which will be budgeted in subsequent years.

BACKGROUND:

During the FY 2006-2007 Budget process, Council authorized the purchase of a digital recording system, which includes 80 digital voice recorders along with software, licenses, and a server. These recorders will be issued to Department personnel to record suspect statements, witness interviews and noteworthy encounters with members of the public during law enforcement activities. The ability to record official encounters has a significant impact on successful criminal prosecutions and can reduce the amount of time necessary to investigate frivolous personnel complaints. Currently, the Police Department uses the In-Car Mobile Video System (MVS) to record official encounters with the public; however, the recording capability is limited by distance and virtually no reception once an officer enters a dwelling.

When researching the various systems available, it became apparent that several features would be required in any product chosen. The first requirement being that the recorder does not allow editing, which ensures that the recordings cannot be appended should they be needed as evidence in future court proceedings or for personnel investigations. It needs to be housed in a rugged case to eliminate accidental erasures when dropped or impacted. In addition, it requires a centralized software system for the management and cataloging of the recordings that are downloaded to the server. Thus, downloaded files are automatically marked with the recorder's date and time. Each digital recording is electronically assigned to each officer via an electronic serial number embedded within the recorded file.

Below is a comparison of products:

	Puma	Phillips	Dictaphone	Sony
Rugged recorder case	Yes	No	No	No
Secure and non-editable	Yes	No	No	No
Available recording hours	32		20	10.5
Central file management software	Yes	No	Yes	No

DISCUSSION:

The only product that met all specifications is the Puma. This equipment is only available from the authorized dealer for the State of California, as a result, competitive bidding is not possible. The purchase includes 80 digital recorders, software, licenses, training and installation, as well as a one-year service contract and the same pricing is given to all public agencies regardless of quantity purchased. Consequently, staff recommends that Council waive formal bidding and award an order to Versatile Information Products, Inc. the purchase of a digital recording system in the amount of \$47,712.99. If this purchase is approved, the new equipment will arrive in 60-90 days and deployment is to occur immediately, in conjunction with the training on the operational use of the recorder.