



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR

October 28, 2014

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From:  Christine Daniel, City Manager

Submitted by: Michael K. Meehan, Chief of Police

Subject: Contract: Public Safety Corporation for False Alarm Management Services

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a contract and any amendments with Public Safety Corporation (PSC) to perform false alarm management services for the Police Department, for a revenue amount not to exceed \$850,000 for the period of November 1, 2014 through December 31, 2017, with the option to extend for two additional one-year terms.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Revenue collected from false alarm related fines is shared between the City and the vendor; therefore, initial funding for this contract is not required. PSC will distribute collected revenue to the City based on a graduated revenue sharing percentage plan. Collected revenue will be deposited to General Fund 010-7104-342.10-01.

Range of Collections Based on Annual Collections Periods	% of Revenue Collection for the City	% of Revenue Collection for the PSC
0 - \$75,000	74%	26%
\$75,001 - \$150,000	78%	22%
\$150,001 and above	81%	19%

The Contract Management System number is CMS No. T2QNB.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Berkeley Police Department received on average approximately 5,000 audible commercial and residential burglar alarms and silent duress and robbery alarms each year over the last three years. Of these alarms each year some 1,700 were cancelled before officers arrived on scene, while in 3,300 cases officers arrived on scene and investigated the alarm (See chart below). A recent analysis of the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system's 2012 data revealed only 1.5%, or about 53 of the 3,400 alarm

calls responded to, proved to be actual “in-progress” burglaries, robberies, or vandalism cases.

Year	AUDIBLE ALARMS	SILENT ALARMS	TOTAL ALARMS	CANCELLED AUDIBLE ALARMS	CANCELLED SILENT ALARMS	TOTAL CANCELLED ALARMS	TOTAL ALARMS RESPONDED
2010	4826	332	5158	1607	74	1681	3477
2011	4765	364	5129	1699	67	1766	3363
2012	4630	342	4972	1662	58	1720	3252

The disparity between the number of actual in-progress crime incidents and total alarm calls dispatched suggests officers’ time is inefficiently used, and that review of alarm response strategies could yield significant benefits for the community. Audible and silent alarms are dispatched as a two-officer assignment. The national average for time spent on an alarm is 20 minutes. A 2013 International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) study found a single false alarm takes 40 total minutes of officer time.¹

The City of Berkeley’s 1981 Alarm Ordinance is no longer consistent with current best practices. The Ordinance provides for fines for verified false alarms; however, there is no registration component or education component. A registration approach could help offset the costs of administering a program and ensuring alarm systems are properly installed, administered, and maintained. An education component could help residents and businesses use their alarm systems properly. The existing ordinance contains no call verification protocols, which many best practices models use to reduce false alarms.

BACKGROUND

According to the U.S. Department of Justice in 2011 there were 32 million security alarm systems in the United States, with the industry adding 3 million new systems per year.²

Nationwide there has been community and law enforcement concern over the large number of false residential and commercial burglar alarms and the associated costs to municipalities. Some agencies no longer respond to calls and others use a “verified response” approach, where officers are only dispatched when there is additional information (aside from the alarm activation) that indicates a crime is in progress.

However, there is value in an informed public’s use of a properly functioning alarm system, combined with a police response to legitimate alarm calls. In a well-advertised and attended community meeting on this topic in June of 2012, Berkeley community members clearly indicated there was little community support for a “no response” or

¹ IACP, “*Alarm Management: Determining the Best Approach for Your Community*”. October 2013.

² U.S. Department of Justice, Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, *False Burglar Alarms* 2nd Edition. August 2011. Page 8.

“verified response only” approach. It was clear the community was committed to the need to reduce the number of false alarms, while wanting to ensure the Berkeley Police Department would continue to respond to alarms, to the benefit of all involved.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Public Safety Corporation’s false alarm administration technology, CryWolf, will offer community partners the option to pay invoices online, requiring less paper and printing supplies to generate invoices. Additionally, less paper will be used by transferring false alarm data using a fully automated interface between CryWolf and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), instead of the False Alarm Administrator downloading and printing false alarm reports daily from (CAD).

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

In response to a group Berkeley community members’ voicing their concerns and support of the Berkeley Police Department’s efforts to efficiently direct its resources to make crime reduction a priority, the department released the “False Alarm Management Services” RFP on April 30, 2014. Two vendors, PM AM and Public Safety Corporation submitted proposals in May 2014. After an extensive vendor selection process, including the review and input of the City’s Finance and Information Technology departments, the department selected Public Safety Corporation.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

The Police Department maintained the false alarm program for several years, and upon further review, determined it was more efficient to have an outside vendor maintain the program.

CONTACT PERSON

Erik Upson, Captain, Police Department 510-981-5800

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

CONTRACT: PUBLIC SAFETY CORPORATION (CRYWOLF) FOR FALSE ALARM
MANAGEMENT SERVICES

WHEREAS, on February 25, 2014, the Police Department apprised community partners of its plan to reduce false alarms and direct officers' focus on the department's mission to reduce crime, traffic collisions, and provide quality and professional services for the Berkeley community; and

WHEREAS, on April 30, 2014 ; the City of Berkeley released a Request For Proposal (RFP), Specification No. 13-10859-C, for false alarm management services, and only two vendors out of fourteen responded to the RFP; and

WHEREAS, only PM AM Corporation and Public Safety Corporation submitted proposal by the May 15 deadline; and

WHEREAS, after extensive review and ratings by the City's Information Technology, Finance and Police departments, Public Safety Corporation (CryWolf) was selected as the vendor by majority vote; and

WHEREAS, collected revenue will be deposited to General Fund 010-7104-342.10-01, CMS No. T2QNB.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager is authorized to execute a contract and any amendments with Public Safety Corporation (CryWolf) to maintain the Police Department's false alarm program for an amount not to exceed \$850,000 for the period November 1, 2014 through December 31, 2017 with the option to extend for two additional one-year terms.