



CITY OF URBANA, ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
PUBLIC FACILITIES DIVISION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Bruce Walden
William Gray
FROM: N. Patrick Pioletti
DATE: September 5, 2001
RE: Sole Source for Electronic Meters

Issue

At the last Committee of the Whole meeting, the City Council voted to increase certain parking meter rates and fines in the system. A component of the staff presentation on this subject was to installation of a specific debit system allowing pre-payment for time. This specific system would also allow a further customer service convenience of using the debit mechanism on meters in other locations and jurisdictions. However, since this particular system is available from only one manufacturer, I am requesting that the competitive bidding requirements be waived.

Background

During the staff presentation, a sample meter mechanism was passed around to council members that demonstrated the debit feature of the "Cash Key" system, offered exclusively by Duncan Industries. A point made during the presentation is that, if all three agencies (City of Urbana, City of Champaign, and the University of Illinois) install the same system, a customer may purchase a single "key", but at the same time, purchase time from all of the three entities. The advantage to the customer is that the need to carry a large amount of change is virtually eliminated. A single key can be used at any meter that has the cash key port.

The University of Illinois began the process by investigating the various debit systems available on the market today, and settling on this particular one. They have since begun converting their entire meter supply to this particular mechanism. They were able to negotiate a favorable price, based upon their purchasing volume, and that same price will be extended to the City of Champaign and us. The price quoted is set below the retail price and the priced charged to other parking agencies, too. This step protects us from any price gouging that otherwise may be encountered.

The overall need to convert to electronic meter mechanisms is clear. However, since the University of Illinois has several hundred of these mechanisms in place already, this is a good opportunity to offer an additional level of service to our customers.

Alternatives

- 1. Pass an ordinance waiving the requirement for competitive bidding for the purchase of electronic mechanisms in favor of purchasing the Cash Key system from Duncan Industries.**
- 2. Pursue the usual and customary competitive bidding process to achieve the best possible price for electronic meter mechanisms with debit systems other than Cash Key.**

Recommendation

It is the staff recommendation to pass an ordinance that eliminates the need for competitive bidding in this purchase in favor of purchasing the Cash Key system from Duncan Industries.