

Agenda Report

July 31, 2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Fire Department

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH HEATHER WILLIAMS DBA PREMIER FIRST RESPONDER PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES TO PROVIDE COUNSELING SERVICES FOR FIRE PERSONNEL AS REQUIRED FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$150,000

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 21065 of CEQA and Sections 15060 (c)(2), 15060 (c)(3), and 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines and, as such, no environmental document pursuant to CEQA is required for the project; and
2. Authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract for an amount not to exceed \$150,000 or five years, whichever comes first, as the result of a competitive selection process as specified by Section 4.08.047 of the Pasadena Municipal Code (P.M.C.), with Heather Williams dba Premier First Responder Psychological Services to provide first responder psychological counseling services. Competitive Bidding is not required pursuant to City Charter Section 1002 (F), contracts for professional or unique services.

BACKGROUND:

Fire and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) responders are routinely exposed to incidents involving devastating injuries and tragic loss of life and property. The cumulative effects of these exposures can have a psychological impact. According to a survey performed by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, 85% of first responders report mental health symptoms, with one-third reporting clinical diagnoses of depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Research studies suggest the rate of PTSD among first responders may be between 15% and 30%, with about 20% of all individuals with the diagnosis of PTSD having a co-occurring substance use disorder.

Additionally, according to the Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance, more firefighters die from suicide each year than in the line of duty, and many additional suicides are likely unreported. The impact of behavioral health on the fire service is also being recognized nationally. Behavioral health was 1 of 6 critical issues identified at the recent U.S. Fire Administrator's Summit on Fire Prevention and Control for action by the federal government.

The Pasadena Fire Department prioritizes employee mental health and helps promote optimal mental wellness for its first responders through peer support and advocacy. In September 2020, the Department created a Mental Health and Wellness Program which provides resources for crisis management, annual training courses, certification training programs, mental health evaluations, one-on-one contact with a counselor with every sworn personnel, and extended-routine therapies. Historically, the Department has opened annual purchase orders for counseling services. However, as the number of mental health trained and certified Department personnel increase, and as the significance of these services are being increasingly utilized, based upon annual expenditures and the unique requirements for the psychological services, the Department would like to initiate a multi-year contract.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) for first responder psychological counseling services was issued on April 6, 2023. The RFP was advertised for over three weeks on the City's procurement website through the Purchasing Department. 121 vendors were notified and seven (7) prospective vendors downloaded the RFP document. Of the seven (7), none are local to Pasadena. The Department received two (2) proposals from vendors on April 21, 2023. An evaluation panel consisting of two independent evaluators from the Fire Department was assembled. Proposals received were scored based on pre-established criteria listed in the RFP, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: RFP Scoring Criteria

| <u>Scoring Criteria</u> | <u>Maximum Points</u> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Proposed Solution | 35 points |
| Experience and References | 35 points |
| Cost Proposal | 20 points |
| Local Pasadena Business Preference | 5 points |
| Small / Micro-Businesses Preference | 5 points |

Table 2 summarizes the average scores of the proposals by the two (2) evaluators:

Table 2: Proposal Evaluations

| <u>Proposer</u> | <u>Average Total Points (Out of 100)</u> |
|---|--|
| Premier First Responder Psychological Services, Yorba Linda, CA | 70 |

| | |
|---|----|
| The Counseling Team International, LLC, San Bernadino, CA | 61 |
|---|----|

Following thorough evaluations, Premier First Responder Psychological Services has been selected to provide psychological counseling services for the Fire Department. Premier's proposal presented the highest qualifications for meeting project understanding and the scope of work indicated in the RFP, professional experiences of key staff, prior experiences with similar municipal agencies, and pricing of services. Premier has also provided strong references across the public safety industry, has included an emergency 24-hour answering service to respond to psychological crisis, critical incidents, or high stress events, will provide services 365 days a year, and has a positive track record with the City of Pasadena.

Based on actual expenditures from prior years, staff estimates the need for contract authorization of \$150,000 over five years.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The proposed contract furthers the City Council's strategic planning goals to ensure public safety.

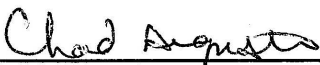
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This project is exempt from CEQA review pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 (b) (3), the general rule that CEQA only applies to projects that may have an effect on the environment. The action proposed herein, providing first responder counseling services, will not have a potentially significant environmental effect.

FISCAL IMPACT:

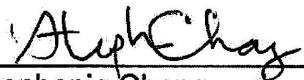
The total cost of this action will be \$150,000 over five years. Funding will be addressed by the utilization of existing and future budgeted appropriations in the Fire Department's General Fund operating budget account for Fire and Rescue Services (10131015-811400). There are no anticipated impacts to other operational programs or capital projects as a result of this action.

Respectfully submitted,



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