




HISTORIC
FRANKLIN
TENNESSEE

ITEM #7
WRKS 07/13/2010

MEMORANDUM

July 2, 2010

TO: Board of Mayor and Aldermen

FROM: Eric S. Stuckey, City Administrator 
Russell Truell, Assistant City Administrator / CFO
Mark Hilty, Water Management Director
Brian Wilcox, Purchasing Manager

SUBJECT: Report of Emergency Purchase – reconditioned comminator to replace a failed unit for the Water Reclamation Facility Division of the Water Management Department

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to report the emergency purchase of a reconditioned comminator to replace a failed unit for the Water Reclamation Facility Division of the Water Management Department.

Background

The City of Franklin purchasing procedures pertaining to “Emergency Purchases” require that such purchases in excess of \$10,000 be reported to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BOMA).

A comminator (pronounced KÖM-ə-noot-er or KÖM-ə-nyoot-er) is a piece of equipment that is used to grind up or pulverize the contents of the influent (raw wastewater or sewerage) at it enters the City’s wastewater treatment plant at 135 Claude Yates Drive.

One of the plant’s two comminutors started malfunctioning on the afternoon of Friday, June 25 and eventually failed on the morning of Sunday, June 27. The equipment has been in service since November of 2006. During the May 1-2 rain event, it was under approximately 40 feet of water. This equipment, while intended for use in a wastewater environment, is not meant for submersion. While it is possible that it was damaged by it being submerged, it is difficult to know with certainty the exact cause of failure.

As this equipment is critical in the protection of four 450-horsepower and two 250-horsepower pumps that convey all the wastewater collected by the City’s wastewater collection system to the headworks of the plant, the wastewater treatment plant is equipped with two comminutors. One serves as a spare in case of failure of the other. While redundancy and extra capacity is built into the design of the plant, pump failure or failures (which very likely would result without a functioning comminator) can in turn result in strict enforcement for noncompliance and severe impacts to human health and the Harpeth River. The lead time for replacing this equipment is three to four weeks. In the opinion of both the plant superintendent and the department director, the City cannot afford to be exposed to the risk of not having a spare comminator, especially as the one now in service was also submerged during the May 1-2 rain event. Staff therefore placed an order on June 30 for a reconditioned comminator.

Even if the purchase of a comminator could be planned, it would be presented to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen as a sole-source purchase inasmuch as the plant’s main pump station is specifically designed for a particular brand of comminator, and that brand is available to the City of Franklin only direct from the manufacturer. The sole-source purchase procedure involves presenting the purchase to BOMA in advance. As time did not permit for that process to be followed for this critical piece of equipment, the emergency procedure provisions were utilized instead.



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Financial Impact

The reconditioned comminator cost is \$25,720.00. Staff is of the opinion that the quoted pricing is the lowest unit pricing possible at this time and in the foreseeable future for the indicated quantity. Staff is also of the opinion that the quoted pricing is within what would be expected in the market place for this industry at this time. This pricing is based on staff driving to the manufacturer's facility and exchanging the failed equipment for the reconditioned. The name of the manufacturer is JWC Environmental. This unbudgeted expenditure will be allocated against the Water Reclamation Facility division of the Water Management Department. Staff anticipates that the purchase will be covered by insurance.

Options

Staff considered purchasing a new comminator instead of a reconditioned one but dismissed that option as it would have cost \$65,795.00 (\$40,075.00 more) even though the performance warranty for the new unit is the same as for the reconditioned.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen acknowledge receipt of this report of an emergency purchase.