

# Mayor and Council Communication

**DATE:** 04/09/24

**M&C FILE NUMBER:** M&C 24-0295

**LOG NAME:** 35POLICE AIR SUPPORT HELICOPTER PURCHASE

## **SUBJECT**

(ALL) Authorize Execution of a Purchase Agreement with Bell Textron, Inc. for the Purchase of a New Bell 505 Helicopter in the Amount of \$2,062,242.93; Authorize Execution of a Vendor Services Agreement with CNC Technologies, LLC for the Purchase of Police Mission Equipment and Installation in the Amount of \$1,896,049.31 for a Total Purchase Amount of \$3,958,292.24 for the Police Department

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## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council authorize:

1. Execution of a purchase agreement with Bell Textron, Inc. for the purchase of a new Bell 505 helicopter in the amount of \$2,062,242.93; and
2. Execution of a vendor services agreement with CNC Technologies, LLC for the purchase of police helicopter mission equipment and installation services in the amount of \$1,896,049.31 for the Police Department Air Support Unit for a total of \$3,958,292.24.

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## **DISCUSSION:**

This Mayor and Council Communication (M&C) requests authorization to purchase a new Bell 505 helicopter and its associated police mission equipment to replace inoperable Police Department Air Support helicopters, increasing the Air Support Unit fleet to two. The budget for the new helicopter is \$4,000,000.00 using previously appropriated Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funds.

**Background:** Police Department aerial support, via helicopter, can provide valuable and timely information during events such as missing persons, kidnappings, robberies, shootings, large-scale disasters, assisting the Fire Department during large fires, and searching fields or bodies of water. The ability to safely and efficiently guide officers and other resources dramatically impacts successful conclusions to these situations, protecting the health, safety, and welfare of both the citizens of Fort Worth and public safety personnel.

Historically, the Fort Worth Police Department (Police) has had a fleet of at least two operational helicopters. Two existing Police Air Support Unit helicopters are no longer in service due to significant age and accumulated flight hours, reducing the Police fleet to a single flightworthy helicopter "Air1" in May 2023.

During 2023, the Air Support Unit responded to 1,372 missions, or an average 4.5 missions each day of availability. Between May 2023 and December 2023, "Air1" was unable to provide air support on 59 days due to unavoidable maintenance events; one maintenance event took three weeks to complete. The Police Department estimates that during the scheduled and unscheduled maintenance events in 2023, "Air1" was unavailable for over 250 missions.

In the next 18 to 24 months, "Air1" will need an intensive and required 3,000 flight hour maintenance event which will take it out of service for at least a month or longer. If "Air1" is needed for approximately 4.5 missions a day, the potential risk is that "Air1" could be unavailable for more than 135 missions during the required 3,000 flight hour maintenance event.

The City Attorney's Office approved a Chapter 252 Exemption from bidding requirements for purchasing this helicopter as necessary to preserve or protect the public health or safety of the City of Fort Worth's residents. This exemption allows Police to move forward with the purchase of a second helicopter immediately. A fleet of two flightworthy helicopters will minimize the risk to the public's health, safety, and welfare due to an extended lack of aerial support from Police.

Upon City Council approval of this M&C, the Police will execute a purchase agreement with Bell Textron Inc. (Bell) and a vendor services agreement with CNC Technologies, LLC (CNC). Bell will provide the helicopter aircraft; CNC will provide and complete the upfitting of the Police helicopter mission equipment.

**Maintenance and support costs:** The Bell 505 aircraft includes a three-year/1,000 flight hours warranty for the repair or replacement of defective aircraft parts. During the warranty period a separate service agreement will be executed with Bell for scheduled and unscheduled maintenance, based on the number of flight hours and an hourly rate set at the time of helicopter delivery, to continue for five years. For calendar year 2023, the third year of the warranty period for existing Police helicopter "Air1", maintenance costs were approximately \$121,000.00.

In order to limit major engine maintenance expenses for "Air1", the City entered into a service agreement with Safran Helicopter Engines USA, Inc. (Safran) for scheduled and unscheduled engine maintenance. For calendar year 2023, the engine maintenance costs were approximately \$135,000.00.

Once the new helicopter is accepted by the City during 2026, service maintenance agreements with Bell and Safran will be executed; costs are expected to increase approximately three to five percent above 2023 maintenance costs.

Upon final completion, all CNC-installed Police mission equipment will have a one-year warranty. The second-year equipment support agreement

may be purchased for approximately \$22,500.00.

Upon City Council approval of this M&C, final delivery of the helicopter is expected to take 18 to 24 months. Police will return to City Council for authorization to enter into annual service maintenance agreements with Bell and Safran for the new helicopter, once hourly rates are established. Costs for all service maintenance and equipment support agreements will be budgeted in the Fiscal Year 2026 Police General Fund Operating budget.

Trade-in credits: The quote provided by CNC for the police mission equipment and installation includes credits for the trade-in of Police 1996 Bell 206B3 helicopter and Police 2003 Bell 206B3 at \$74,905.00 each. Also included is a trade-in credit of \$30,000.00 for a Generation 1 Wescam MX-10 thermal imaging system for low altitude surveillance.

Payment terms: Upon execution of the authorized purchase agreement with Bell for the Bell 505 basic aircraft, an initial payment of \$309,336.44 will be made, with the balance of \$1,752,906.49 paid upon acceptance of aircraft from Bell.

Upon execution of the authorized purchase agreement with CNC for police mission equipment and installation services, an initial payment will be made for approximately 10 percent of the agreement total. Once a date has been determined for delivery of the aircraft from Bell, a second payment of approximately 40 percent will be made for the CNC police mission equipment order according to product delivery lead times. Mutually agreed upon milestones will be established for up to three progress payments throughout the installation process for approximately 40 percent of the contract amount. Upon final delivery and acceptance of the helicopter from CNC, the remaining 10 percent of the contract amount will be paid.

The Crime Control and Prevention District Board approved funding of \$4,000,000.00 for the purchase of a helicopter.

Funding is budgeted in the CCPD Capital Projects Fund for the Police Public Safety Department for the purpose of funding the PD 2024 Helicopter project, as appropriated.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGE ORDER: An administrative change order or increase may be made by the City Manager up to the amount allowed by relevant law and the Fort Worth City Code and does not require specific City Council approval as long as sufficient funds have been appropriated.

DVIN-BE: The Police Department was approved for a Chapter 252 Exemption by the City Attorney's Office. Therefore, the business equity goal requirement is not applicable.

**FISCAL INFORMATION / CERTIFICATION:**

The Director of Finance certifies that funds are available in the current capital budget, as previously appropriated, in the CCPD Capital Projects Fund for the PD 2024 Helicopter project to support the approval of the above recommendations and execution of the purchase agreements. Prior to any expenditure being incurred, the Police Department has the responsibility to validate the availability of funds.

**Submitted for City Manager's Office by:** William Johnson      5806

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