



RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

Board Memorandum

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

DATE: MARCH 10, 2025

SUBJECT: FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH JAMES HUSS DBA WEST SWPPP SERVICES FOR WEED ABATEMENT SERVICES OF PUBLIC UTILITIES PROPERTIES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$49,000, FOR A REVISED CONTRACT TOTAL OF \$98,000

ISSUE:

Consider approving the First Amendment to the Services Agreement with James Huss dba West SWPPP Services for weed abatement services of Public Utilities properties in the amount of \$49,000, for a revised contract total of \$98,000.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Board of Public Utilities:

1. Approve the First Amendment to the Services Agreement with James Huss dba West SWPPP Services for weed abatement services of Public Utilities properties in the amount of \$49,000, for a revised contract total of \$98,000; and
2. Authorize the City Manager, or designee, to execute the First Amendment and any other documents necessary to effectuate the project described herein, as well as the ability to make minor non-substantive changes in accordance with all purchasing policies.

BACKGROUND:

Riverside Public Utilities (RPU) has 48 properties for both the Electric and Water divisions that require varying levels of weed abatement services throughout the year. Weed abatement is a mandated program required by the State Fire Marshall and enforced by local agencies to reduce the risk of wildfires. As the climate changes, fire reduction programs have become year-round activities instead of being limited to certain seasons. Local agencies notify property owners of compliance orders using weed abatement notices. Weed abatement must be completed within 30 days to reduce the risk to life or property. It is critical that RPU follow best practices and maintain the ability to act quickly in response to fire abatement notices and be able to address weed abatement concerns in a timely manner.

RPU has historically sought to maintain a multi-year contract for services. The last weed abatement contractor RPU had under a multi-year agreement was Scott Tractor.

On June 27, 2023, Scott Tractor notified the City of Riverside (City) that they were no longer able to perform the full scope of work under their Agreement. On December 11, 2023, the Board of Public Utilities (Board) determined Scott Tractor was in default and authorized termination of their contract. Staff is still in the process of working with Scott Tractor's Surety (Liberty Mutual) to finalize settlement terms in that matter.

On July 1, 2023, staff began utilizing various other weed abatement contractors, on an as-needed basis, to maintain fire abatement notice compliance at these 48 sites.

In August 2023, staff solicited for temporary weed abatement services. A number of contractors responded stating they were unable to perform all services originally under contract with Scott Tractor, which included mowing, disking, handwork and trash removal. Additionally, none of the weed abatement contractors were willing to do trash removals.

Staff determined it was best to separate the San Bernardino and Riverside properties into two different scopes of work since San Bernardino areas can be disked, but Riverside areas can only be mowed due to a City directive. Trash removal services were removed from the scope and the work is being completed on an as-needed basis using other vendors.

After revising the different scopes of work, seven potential weed abatement contractors were solicited using the informal procurement process to obtain per acre pricing for disking/mowing, and per hour pricing for manual handwork. In April 2024, staff received three responsive bids with West SWPPP Services being the lowest responsive bidder. West SWPPP Services was a new vendor with the City and were on-boarded with the City's Purchasing Department.

West SWPPP Services began work for RPU on July 1, 2024, under a Services Agreement for \$49,000 for a period of twelve months (Purchase Order No. 244645). RPU is close to exhausting the funds within this purchase order. Dry weather this year has resulted in an increased amount of clearance necessary to comply with the state's fire risk programs.

DISCUSSION:

In March of 2025, staff will put out a new Request for Bid (RFB) for a multi-year weed abatement services contract to begin on July 1, 2025. In the interim, staff requests an increase of \$49,000 with the current Services Agreement with West SWPPP Services, bringing the total to \$98,000. West SWPPP Services has provided a superior level of service since July 1, 2024, and staff is confident they will perform the needed work as required. The additional funding will allow staff to call upon West SWPPP as needed for weed abatement services through June 30, 2025.

Board approval is required for any purchases over \$50,000. Because this request will increase the purchase order from \$49,000 to \$98,000, the change requires Board approval.

Staff worked with the City Attorney's Office to draft the First Amendment to Services Agreement with James Huss dba West SWPPP Services for Weed Abatement – Disking & Handwork.

Purchasing Resolution 24101, Section 402 states, "Informal Procurement may be conducted under the supervision of the Manager if the Procurement expenditure is estimated to be Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) or less, does not fall within the Utilities Exception, and does not involve the Procurement of Construction or Goods of the type required by Section 1109 of the

City Charter to be acquired by Formal Procurement.”

Purchasing Resolution 24101 Section 1104 Change Orders states, "Unless otherwise specifically authorized by the Awarding Entity, Change Orders which cumulatively exceed the following will require Awarding Entity... b) Any Change Order which causes the contract price to exceed the authorization section 203 hereof, if the Contract and/or Purchase Order was not previously approved by the Awarding Entity."

The Purchasing Manager concurs that the recommendations are in compliance with Purchasing Resolution 24101.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 6 - Infrastructure, Mobility and Connectivity** and **Goal 6.2** – Maintain, protect, and improve assets and infrastructure within the City’s built environment to ensure and enhance reliability, resiliency, sustainability, and facilitate connectivity.

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – Well maintained Utility properties protect our assets and maintain public trust.
2. **Equity** – RPU’s properties span two counties and numerous Cities. All these properties are equally maintained thereby providing an equitable benefit to all customers.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The lowest price for these weed abatement services was ensured through solicitation of seven weed abatement contractors along with following the City’s Purchasing requirements.
4. **Innovation** – A collaborative approach between the City Attorney’s office and staff was used to develop the First Amendment to Services Agreement.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Maintaining weed abatement in compliance with local requirements helps maintain sustainable and resilient real property assets, reduces fire risk, and protects our facilities.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total fiscal impact is \$49,000 for a revised contract total of \$98,000. Sufficient funds are available in the Public Utilities Water Operations Maintenance/Repair of Buildings and Improvements Account No. 6200000-424130.

Prepared by:	Robin Glenny, Utilities Assistant General Manager/Water
Approved by:	David A. Garcia, Utilities General Manager
Certified as to availability of funds:	Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Approved by:	Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form:	Jack Liu, Interim City Attorney

Attachments:

1. First Amendment to Services Agreement
2. Presentation