

**REPORT FROM EVALUATION COMMITTEE
CITY OF FRESNO REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR
ANNUAL BACKFLOW ASSEMBLY TESTING AND CERTIFICATION
RFP NO. 12301639
(Committee Meetings held on 07-20-23 and 08-09-23)**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

- Sherri Cuadros, Procurement Specialist/Facilitator, City of Fresno, General Services Department - Purchasing
- Vince Patlan, Public Works Manager, City of Fresno, DPW - Landscape Maintenance
- Michael Flores, Landscape Superintendent, City of Fresno, DPW - Landscape Maintenance
- Richard Rogers, Facility Manager, City of Fresno, Airports
- Steve Gibson, Operations Supervisor, City of Fresno, DPU - Wastewater Division
- Anthony Quinn, Wastewater Reclamation Coordinator, City of Fresno, DPU - Water Division
- Mark Rivas, Senior Management Analyst, City of Fresno, DPW - Streets, Landscape and Graffiti Divisions

BACKGROUND

The goal of this Request for Proposal (RFP) was to solicit proposals to provide Annual Backflow Assembly Testing. A backflow assembly is a device that is connected to the potable water service and protects the City's water source from the possibility of contaminated water back flowing into the City's public water system. California Administrative Code Title 17, sections 7583 through 7605 and Chapter 6, Article 8 of the Fresno Municipal Code requires that they are tested annually. This contract will test approximately 1800 backflow assemblies annually that serve various City landscape irrigation systems throughout the City. Once the backflow device is tested, the City is required by the State to document that all backflow prevention assemblies are tested and in proper functioning condition. The Landscape Maintenance Division coordinates with the Department of Public Utilities Water Division to ensure that this certification is done correctly and in adherence to State and Local code. The proposer will provide all labor, materials, tools, equipment, supplies, facilities, vehicle and supervision necessary to provide annual tests and basic onsite cleaning associated with annual backflow assembly testing and certification for various City facilities and parks as specified.

This RFP was advertised in both the Business Journal and on Plant Bids on May 26, 2023.

Proposals were submitted by the following seven vendors according to the Request for Proposal June 20, 2023, deadline. Detailed pricing proposals submitted by all seven candidates are included below:

Item	Description	UOM	QTY	AAA Backflow Prevention Services		ACCO Engineered Systems, Inc.		American Incorporated		Community Fire Protection		Fire System Solutions Inc -		New England Sheet Metal and Mechanical Co.		San Luis Obispo County Inspections	
				Unit Price	Line Total	Unit Price	Line Total	Unit Price	Line Total	Unit Price	Line Total	Unit Price	Line Total	Unit Price	Line Total	Unit Price	Line Total
1	Cost for Annual Certified Backflow Device 2" or smaller	Ea	1700	\$94	\$159,715	\$92	\$156,400	\$120	\$204,000	\$60	\$102,000	\$115	\$195,500	\$188	\$319,600	\$76	\$129,200
2	Cost for Annual Certified Backflow Device greater than 2"	Ea	100	\$94	\$9,395	\$95	\$9,500	\$150	\$15,000	\$75	\$7,500	\$115	\$11,500	\$188	\$18,800	\$89	\$8,900
Total:				\$169,110		\$165,900		\$219,000		\$109,500		\$207,000		\$338,400		\$138,100	

There was a subsequent questionnaire requested by the top four candidates on July 21, 2023. Responses to the questionnaires were received by all but one of the four finalists.

COMMITTEE NOTES

The committee members evaluated the proposers on 1) Cost as shown on the proposal form, 2) Ability to meet the stated service requirements, 3) Past Performance and Experience based on References and experience shown on "Statement of Qualifications and Experience", 4) Conformance to the terms and conditions of the RFP.

The first committee meeting took place on Thursday July 20th and was primarily held to confirm all seven bidders had submitted complete and acceptable proposals for comparison and evaluation purposes. It was apparent during that first meeting that the pricing submitted by three of the seven contractors were not realistic based on Division budget estimates. They were subsequently removed from further consideration. Of the remaining four contractors, cost proposals ranged from the bottom to top end of Division estimates. After lengthy discussion, the committee decided to request additional information from the four finalists as well as conduct reference checks prior to any final determinations.

The second committee meeting took place on Wednesday, August 9th. As the meeting began, the committee learned that one of the four finalists had to withdraw themselves from consideration due to unforeseen family commitments. The committee then moved on to review reference feedback as well as the follow-up questionnaires from the remaining contractors. The follow-up questionnaires provided helpful insight, but none provided a significant enough differentiator to influence the committee toward a clear-cut winner. The next criteria reviewed were the reference checks. Community Fire Protection (CFP), who had submitted the lowest bid, only had one of three references respond positively. One didn't respond at all, and other responded claiming they did not have any knowledge of CFP. This raised a number of concerns with the committee. ACCO Engineered Systems Inc. (ACCO), who provided the next lowest bid, provided three references initially, all of which responded with very positive feedback. AAA Backflow Prevention Services, who had the highest remaining bid, only had one of three references respond. Based on these findings, ACCO proved to be the unanimous choice of the committee with the reference checks being the key differentiator amongst the finalists.

CONTRACTOR BID SUMMARIES

AAA Backflow Prevention Services (Total Bid Amount: \$169,000.00) – AAA is the City's current contractor. Service has been satisfactory, but bid proposal represented a 57% increase over current pricing. The committee selected as a finalist for evaluation.

ACCO Engineered Systems, Inc. (Total Bid Amount: \$165,900.00) – ACCO submitted a very detailed proposal and provided all documentation. Pricing was at the top end of Division estimates, but solid follow-up questionnaire response and reference check steered the committee to ultimately determine as best value for the City.

American Incorporated (Total Bid Amount: \$219,000.00) – American did not provide all documentation and pricing was significantly over Division estimates, so they were not part of the final round of evaluations.

Community Fire Protection (Total Bid Amount: \$109,500.00) – Community Fire submitted all documentation and pricing was at the low end of Division estimates, but a poor reference check steered the committee to ultimately determine as to risky to move forward with.

Fire Systems Solutions, Inc. (Total Bid Amount: \$207,000.00) – Fire Systems provided all documentation, but pricing was significantly over Division estimates, so the contractor was not part of the final round of evaluations.

New England Sheet Metal and Mechanical Co. (Total Bid Amount: \$338,400.00) – New England Sheet Metal did not provide all documentation and pricing was significantly over Division estimates, so the contractor was not part of the final round of evaluations.

San Luis Obispo County Inspections (Total Bid Amount: \$138,100.00) – SLOCI submitted a very detailed proposal and provided all documentation. Pricing was within Division estimates, and while they were considered as a finalist, ultimately, they were removed from consideration at their request.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

While all contractors responded to the RFP with adequate proposals for the City, it was clear that three of the seven bids were just too cost prohibitive based on Division estimates. With one of the four remaining contractors removing themselves from consideration, the decision of the three finalists came down to quality and reliability. The strength of the ACCO Engineered Systems, Inc. initial proposal, and the ability of the committee to validate their dependability, cemented the contractor as the top choice. For this reason, the committee feels ACCO Engineered Systems, Inc. not only represents the least amount of risk for the City, but also the best value.