

**R-26**

CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF FIRE — DAVID W. ELLIS, FIRE CHIEF

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August 23, 2005

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with Wittman Enterprises, LLC, to provide billing and collection services for the Basic Life Support ambulance transportation program. (Citywide)

DISCUSSION

Emergency medical services (EMS) transports are divided into two categories: Advance Life Support (ALS), in which Paramedics provide emergency transport to the hospital for serious cases, and Basic Life Support (BLS), in which a contract ambulance company transports patients for non-life threatening injuries/illnesses. However, Firefighters and Paramedics provide the initial response to all patients and provide the assessment, treatment and preparation of patients for transport. City staff has been studying alternatives over the last three years that would integrate ALS and BLS transports and improve service to the community.

Per the Fire Services optimization study, presented to the City Council in February 2005, "the level of emergency medical services provided to the citizens of Long Beach is commendable and any enhancement would only improve an already high quality service." The optimization study noted that it is in the best interest of the City to assume a larger role in the provision of EMS and supported the recommendation that the Fire Department implement a BLS ambulance transportation program. This integration of BLS and ALS transport will improve customer service by speed of response, level of care and reliability.

The City intends to begin this service in September 2005 as a pilot program. The objective is to improve service to the community and generate revenue to recover emergency services costs. After six months of operation, the Fire Department will report on the program status and revenue receipts. In order to effectively implement this program, assistance is required to process the billing and collection of fees and costs associated with the transports.

The City issued a Request for Proposals for billing and collection services in June 2005 and ten vendors responded. An interdepartmental committee reviewed the proposals

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and the two most qualified vendors were invited to make presentations. The Committee recommended that Wittman Enterprises, LLC, (Wittman) be utilized to provide the BLS billing and collection. Wittman, based in Sacramento, specializes in EMS transport medical billing and collection services in California for municipal agencies and has fifteen years of experience in this field. Other clients include Sacramento Metropolitan Fire, and the cities of Huntington Beach, Santa Ana, Glendale, Beverly Hills, and over 80 others.

The contract fee to be paid to Wittman will be 6 percent of net collections. The annualized fee is estimated to be between \$160,000 and \$180,000, depending on the success of collection.

This item was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Richard Anthony and Budget Management Officer David Wodynski on August 15, 2005.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

City Council action on this matter is requested on August 23, 2005 in order to have the contract in place to coincide with the implementation of the BLS program.

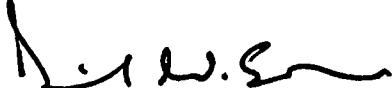
FISCAL IMPACT

The revenue from this activity is included in the FY 06 Proposed Budget and will contribute to the offset of the City's General Fund EMS costs.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



DAVID W. ELLIS
FIRE CHIEF

APPROVED:



for Christine J. Shupp
GERALD R. MILLER
CITY MANAGER