**CITY OF LONG BEACH**

DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

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September 20, 2005

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with Sigma Communications, Inc. in the amount of \$85,000 for a period of three years for procurement of the *Reverse 911* emergency telephone notification system. (Citywide)

DISCUSSION

Recent natural disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf States, have demonstrated the need for local governments to prepare and implement effective public warning strategies. On March 22, 2005, the City Council received a report on the City's efforts to procure an emergency telephone notification system. This technology would increase the City's capability to provide emergency information by placing thousands of calls to the public in a short period of time. The City currently uses such outlets as KKJZ 88.1 FM, LBTW Channel 8, and the Internet to communicate with the community. This telephone notification system will augment our existing public communication methods.

A telephone notification system can be an effective communications tool in Long Beach with its ability to reach a large portion of the City's population. According to 2000 U.S. Census data, 97 percent of households in Long Beach have telephone service available at home. The potential effectiveness of telephone notification systems has been enhanced as State law now allows cities access to both listed and unlisted phone numbers from local telephone carriers. However, use of the "911" telephone database is limited to emergency situations.

After reviewing systems of several vendors last spring, the City selected the *Reverse 911* product from Sigma Communications, Inc. The *Reverse 911* system is designed to allow for easy activation of emergency messages. Examples of situations in which the system might be activated include hazardous material releases, flood warnings, missing persons, criminal activity and terrorism incidents, or other natural disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis. *Reverse 911* has been designed to efficiently use telecommunications capacity depending on the situation. It can be used to broadcast emergency information to a precise geographic area or to the entire community. In the vast majority of the situations requiring system activation, only a portion of the City would need to be contacted. In these events, the City will be able to use the existing internal telephone infrastructure to initiate the calls. Based on the planned configuration, it is estimated that the system would be able to place about 3,000 calls per hour. There would be no incremental costs for placing the calls.

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For a major incident in which the City would need to place a large number of calls in a very short time period, the City would have access to *Reverse 911's Mass Call* telephone line capacity. As part of the background review, City staff contacted Baldwin County, Alabama who used Mass Call during Hurricane Ivan in September 2004. The County reported that it placed 200,000 calls in six hours, or about 33,000 calls per hour. It is important to note that should the Mass Call capability be activated in response to, or in anticipation of a federally-declared emergency, the cost for the telephone calls may be eligible for reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Administration.

While *Reverse 911's* system is designed for public notifications, it also has employee notification capabilities. It includes a product called Mobilization Plus that would allow the City to contact a large number of employees immediately through various technologies including cell phones, pagers, and blackberries. The City would use Mobilization Plus in emergency call out situations such as an activation of the emergency operations center. This additional capability of the *Reverse 911* product is intended to improve City staff response to emergency events.

This item was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney J. Charles Parkin and Budget Management Officer David Wodynski on September 6, 2005.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

On September 13, 2005, the City Council appropriated 2005 Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) federal grant funding. Included in that action was an appropriation in the Department of Technology Services for the purchase of an emergency notification telephone system. Therefore, approval of this item is requested on September 20, 2005 in order to begin procurement of the *Reverse 911* emergency notification telephone system. City staff estimates it will take 10 weeks to implement the *Reverse 911* system following agreement completion.

FISCAL IMPACT

The procurement and initial start up cost for the system would be approximately \$85,000 including installation and training, and will be covered by UASI 2005 grant funding. Annual ongoing vendor support and licensing fees for the system would be approximately \$10,200 in years two and three, which will be funded by the Department. In the event the City uses the Mass Call option, it would cost the City \$0.20 per call.

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SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.


Respectfully submitted,



CURTIS TANI
DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

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APPROVED:



GERALD R. MILLER
CITY MANAGER