



KELLY MADIGAN  
*Inspector General*

STEVE QUISENBERRY  
*Deputy Inspector General*

## Office of the Inspector General

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March 25, 2022

Stacy L. Rodgers  
County Administrative Officer  
400 Washington Avenue  
Towson, Maryland 21204

Re: OIG External Report 20-002-1

The mission of the Office of the Inspector General (“the Office”) is to provide increased accountability and oversight in the operations of the Baltimore County government (“the County”) by identifying fraud, abuse, and illegal acts, while also striving to find ways to promote efficiency, accountability, and integrity.

In early 2020, the Office received a complaint concerning one of the County’s on-call plumbing companies. Specifically, the complainant alleged there were two companies holding master agreements for Tier 2 on-call plumbing projects (i.e. projects valued at \$5,000 or more), and one of those companies was receiving preferential treatment in that it was getting assigned to a disproportionate number of the jobs. In response to the complaint, the Office initiated an investigation consisting of interviews and a review of various records. The records reviewed included the County’s on-call plumbing master agreements, bid-related documents, purchase orders, delivery orders, invoices, payments, email communications, and manuals pertaining to procurement.

Based on the interviews and the records reviewed, the Office was not able to substantiate the allegation that one of the Tier 2 on-call plumbing companies had received preferential treatment over the other during the period covered by the master agreement, which is approximately September 2018 to September 2023. However, during the course of the investigation, the Office identified a separate issue concerning the handling of proposals for on-call plumbing work within the Property Management Division of the Office of Budget and Finance (“Property Management”). Specifically, the Office found that on two occasions, a Property Management employee shared bid-related information submitted by one Tier 2 on-call plumbing company with another Tier 2 plumbing company before the bid solicitation period closed. The Office also found that while the County has formal policies and procedures addressing procurement matters, Property Management does not have formal policies and procedures that

incorporate the relevant sections from the County Purchasing Manual as they pertain to the handling of bid solicitations and proposals for on-call contractors. Based on the investigation, the Office has no reason to believe that there is any correlation between the original complaint and the two specific acts of the Property Management employee as further described in this report.

I. Applicable Sections of the County Purchasing Manual

Listed below are the applicable sections from the County Purchasing Manual, which are attached as **Exhibit 1**:

Section 2: Purchasing Policy

- 2.1 All formal bids/proposals shall be opened publicly in the presence of the Purchasing Agent or designated representative at the date and time stated in the solicitation.
- 2.3 The policy of the Purchasing Agent shall be to encourage purchasing by competitive bid or proposal, either formal or informal.
- 2.8 All bids/proposals/quotations shall be considered final, and in no case shall any employee of the using agency use such bid/proposal/quotation for the purpose of bargaining with any bidder/offeror.
- 2.9 No employee of the County is permitted to favor any particular individual or firm with orders or to give those submitting bids/proposals/quotations information which will give anyone an advantage over others seeking County business. So far as possible, all communications with and information to potential bidders/offerors shall be in writing so that similar information can be furnished to others inquiring.

II. Role of the Property Management Specialist

According to interviews of Property Management personnel, individuals assigned to the position of Property Management Specialist (PMS) are responsible for obtaining proposals from companies for various services. The proposal is the company's price to perform a specified scope of work for the County. The company's price consists of its projected labor and material costs, the cost to subcontract out any portion of the project to other companies, plus any profit the company hopes to make on the project. For plumbing projects, labor rates are established in the master agreements. At the end of the bid solicitation period, the PMS evaluates the submitted proposals and makes the award to the company whose proposal meets the requirements for the project and is considered the best value to the County – often referred to as the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

As noted earlier in the report, the County uses a two-tiered system for plumbing work. For the past several years, the County has had master agreements with three companies for on-call plumbing services – one company for Tier 1 work and two companies for Tier 2 work. Tier 1

projects are valued under \$5,000 and Tier 2 projects are valued at \$5,000 or more. Company A and Company B are the County's Tier 2 on-call plumbing companies.

For non-emergency plumbing projects estimated to cost \$5,000 or more (Tier 2 projects), the practice within Property Management since approximately 2019 has been for the PMS to solicit proposals from both Company A and Company B. While the PMS is not required to actually secure two proposals, the PMS is expected to make a good faith effort to at least try to get both companies to submit proposals in the spirit of competition. Should one of the two companies choose not to submit a proposal, the PMS is supposed to document this in the file.<sup>1</sup>

### III. Relevant Emails and Documents

As part of the investigation into the original complaint, the Office reviewed emails between County employees and the representatives from Company A and Company B. During the review of emails, the Office discovered that on two separate occasions in 2021, a PMS within Property Management ("the Employee") had shared bid-related information from Company B with Company A prior to the closing of the bid solicitation period.

In the first instance, the Employee had asked Company A and Company B to submit proposals for a plumbing project by a specified date. When the Employee only received a proposal from Company B, the Employee sent an email to their point of contact at Company A on April 29, 2021 with the words "Scope for [project name]." Attached to the email was a redacted version of Company B's proposal dated April 1, 2021. Copies of the email and the redacted document are attached as **Exhibit 2**.<sup>2</sup> The unredacted version of Company B's proposal is attached as **Exhibit 3**. As can be seen when comparing Exhibits 2 and 3, the Employee had redacted Company B's letterhead and its cost breakdown for the project, but kept the scope of work as detailed in numbers 1 to 6. Attached as **Exhibit 4** is the proposal dated April 29, 2021 that was subsequently submitted by Company A. The project was eventually awarded to Company A as they were deemed the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

In the second instance, the Employee again asked Company A and Company B to submit proposals for a plumbing project. When the Employee only received a proposal from Company B, the Employee again sent an email to their point of contact at Company A with the words "Here is [Company B] scope of work for [project name], we don't need a price for [description of work] can you get this to me. Thanks." Attached to the email dated May 3, 2021 was a redacted version of Company B's proposal dated April 27, 2012.<sup>3</sup> Copies of the email and the redacted document are attached as **Exhibit 5**. The unredacted version of Company B's proposal is attached as **Exhibit 6**. Similar to the first instance, the Employee redacted Company B's pricing but left their scope of work with one exception – the Employee failed to redact the total cost for Price #1 of

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<sup>1</sup> These procedures, which were communicated to the Office during interviews of Property Management personnel, are not formally included in any standard operating procedures for Property Management.

<sup>2</sup> Any redactions in black to this exhibit and any subsequent exhibits were made by the Office.

<sup>3</sup> The year 2012 was a typographical error in Company B's proposal. The year should have been 2021.

\$18,897.12. Attached as **Exhibit 7** is the proposal dated May 4, 2021 that was subsequently submitted by Company A. This project was awarded to Company A as they were again considered the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. However, the Office was told that the County never went through with this project for reasons unrelated to this investigation.

#### IV. Interview of the Employee

On January 26, 2022, the Office interviewed the Employee and the following information relevant to this report was provided:

The Employee has had a number of years of experience in the plumbing industry, having worked for several mechanical contracting companies prior to joining the County, including Company A. The Employee viewed Company A and Company B as having similar levels of expertise in the plumbing industry. The Employee also stated that while they did not favor Company A over Company B, they preferred to work with Company A on projects because they were easier to supervise. The Employee advised that their prior employment with Company A had nothing to do with this preference, nor was it the reason they shared information from Company B's proposals on two occasions with Company A.

The Employee was aware that as a PMS assigned to the Property Management Division, they were required to try and obtain price quotes from both Company A and Company B for non-emergency Tier 2 on-call plumbing projects. Further, on the occasions where one of the companies did not respond to a bid solicitation after multiple requests, the Employee was to document in their files that the company was not interested in the project.

With regard to emailing aspects of Company B's proposals to Company A on the two occasions referenced in this report, the Employee believed they were allowed to share scopes of work among companies so as to ensure the proposals received by the County could be compared using similar criteria. Further, the Employee did not believe that a scope of work was proprietary just because it is on a company's letterhead. The Employee explained that had they known such information could be deemed proprietary, they would have never shared Company B's scopes of work with Company A on those two occasions. With regard to the sharing of bid pricing or labor hour estimates among companies, the Employee was aware that the sharing of such information is prohibited in the industry. When asked about the disclosure of Company B's total cost for Price #1 of \$18,897.12 to Company A as can be seen on Exhibit 5, the Employee said it was a mistake, and that they had inadvertently failed to redact that number when redacting the other figures on the document. The Employee could not recall Company A notifying them about the mistake. The Employee could not explain why they had redacted Company B's letterhead as can be seen on Exhibit 2. Aside from the two instances detailed in this report, the Employee could not recall any other occurrence in which they had shared bid-related information among companies during a bid solicitation period.

V. Conclusion

During the investigation, the Office discovered two instances in 2021 in which information from Company B's proposals was shared with Company A during the bid solicitation period. The sharing of such information is not consistent with the County's Purchasing Policy as outlined in the County's Purchasing Manual. While these were the only two instances the Office uncovered, it should be noted that the investigation was limited solely to an analysis of the County's on-call plumbing companies for a specified timeframe.

As a result of the investigation, the Office is making two recommendations. First, the County should increase the opportunities for procurement training for employees whose duties and responsibilities include procurement-related activities. This training recommendation is consistent with information put forth by the National Association of State Procurement Officials ("NASPO") in its research paper published in December of 2019 titled "Best Practices: Ethics and Accountability." In its research, the NASPO stated that a "focus on training...can contribute significantly to building trust in public procurement." Increased procurement training was also recently recommended by the Baltimore County Commission on Procurement, Purchasing and Contracting in its Final Report from January 2022.

The second recommendation is that Property Management establish formal policies and procedures that incorporate the relevant sections from the County Purchasing Manual as they pertain to the handling of bid solicitations and proposals for on-call contractors. While the Office is aware that Property Management uses a document titled "Use of on call contractors," which addresses some of these issues, the document itself does not adequately address the types of concerns that have been discussed in this report. It is worth noting that the Office of the County Auditor issued a report in July 2021 titled "On-Call Contractors for Capital Improvement Project Work Assignments." This report recommended that Property Management "establish adequate policies and procedures to ensure that the Division complies with County Code requirements for competitive procurement..."

This matter is being referred to you for an official response. Please respond in writing by April 8, 2022, indicating what action has been taken or what action you intend to take regarding this matter. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,  
  
Kelly Madigan  
Inspector General  
Office of the Inspector General

cc: John A. Olszewski, Jr., County Executive  
Patrick H. Murray, Chief of Staff  
James R. Benjamin, Jr., County Attorney  
Edward P. Blades, Director, Office of Budget & Finance  
Debra D. Shindle, County Property Manager

# PURCHASING MANUAL



Office of Budget and Finance

Exhibit 1

## **SECTION 2: PURCHASING POLICY**

- 2.1 All formal bids/proposals shall be opened publicly in the presence of the Purchasing Agent or designated representative at the date and time stated in the solicitation.
- 2.2 All purchases initiated by a requisition shall be forwarded to the Purchasing Division by the authorized personnel of the using agency, and shall be paid from funds available for the designated purpose.
- 2.3 The policy of the Purchasing Agent shall be to encourage purchasing by competitive bid or proposal, either formal or informal.
- 2.4 No subdividing of orders as an evasion of the procedure prescribed shall be permitted.
- 2.5 Using agencies submitting any requisition to the Purchasing Division are required to specify in full, at the time of placing the requisition, the commodities or services desired in such terms as to make all specifications as open as possible in order to permit unrestricted bidding, and every effort must be made in preparing specifications to encourage broad competition.
- 2.6 Specifications and standards resulting from the work of the recognized Standards and Specifications Committee or other appropriately formed County committees shall be used wherever practicable.
- 2.7 No change, modification or revision of the Purchase Order shall be binding upon the County unless made in writing by the Purchasing Agent or designated representative.
- 2.8 All bids/proposals/quotations shall be considered final, and in no case shall any employee of the using agency use such bid/proposal/quotation for the purpose of bargaining with any bidder/offeror.
- 2.9 No employee of the County is permitted to favor any particular individual or firm with orders or to give those submitting bids/proposals/quotations information which will give anyone an advantage over others seeking County business. So far as possible, all communications with and information to potential bidders/offerors shall be in writing so that similar information can be furnished to others inquiring.
- 2.10 All bids/proposals will be properly recorded and witnessed on a bid tabulation form. All open market orders will be filed with all supporting documents in the Purchasing Division and made available for public inspection upon request.

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 29, 2021 1:11 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: Message from "RNP58387907F4E2"  
**Attachments:** 20210429115104928.pdf

[REDACTED]

Scope for fullerton fire

-----Original Message-----

**From:** PropertyManagementAccountingAreacopier@baltimorecountymd.gov  
<PropertyManagementAccountingAreacopier@baltimorecountymd.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 29, 2021 11:51 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Message from "RNP58387907F4E2"


This E-mail was sent from "RNP58387907F4E2" (MP 4055).

Scan Date: 04.29.2021 11:51:04 (-0400)

Querles to: PropertyManagementAccountingAreacopier@baltimorecountymd.gov



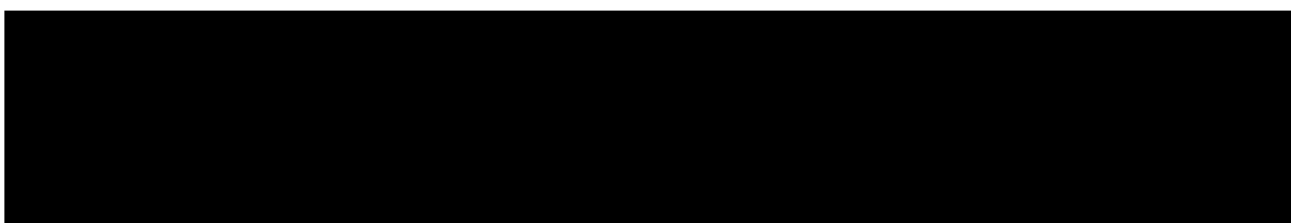
April 1, 2021

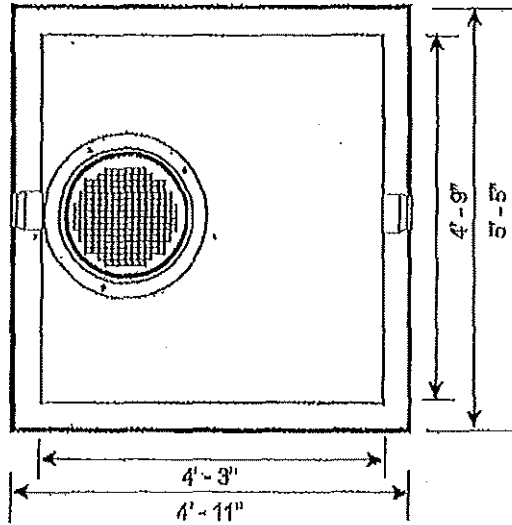
To: Baltimore County Government  
Re: Fullerton Fire House Oil Interceptor Project  
Attn: 

The purpose of this letter is to provide our scope and cost for the referenced project.

1. We will excavate along the left side of the fire house to expose the three french drain storm drain lines coming out of the building and disconnect them from the storm system.
2. We will then reconnect the three of them to a new 4" SDR-35 sanitary drain line.
3. Then we will excavate out to the front of the building and turn across the driveway and excavate over to the existing sanitary running down the front of the property.
4. The asphalt driveway will be cut and removed to install the new sanitary line then backfilled with stone and re-asphalted. It will be a 4" base coat of asphalt and then a 2" final layer of surface asphalt. Concrete walk will also be replaced where removed.
5. The new oil separator will be installed in the grass area prior to tying into the sanitary line.
6. Once all work is completed and tested all disturbed areas will be restored and seeded and strawed.

**EXCLUSIONS:**

1. Any work not listed in scope above.
  2. Any work inside the truck bays.
- 



24" DIA. CAST IRON  
FRAME & COVER

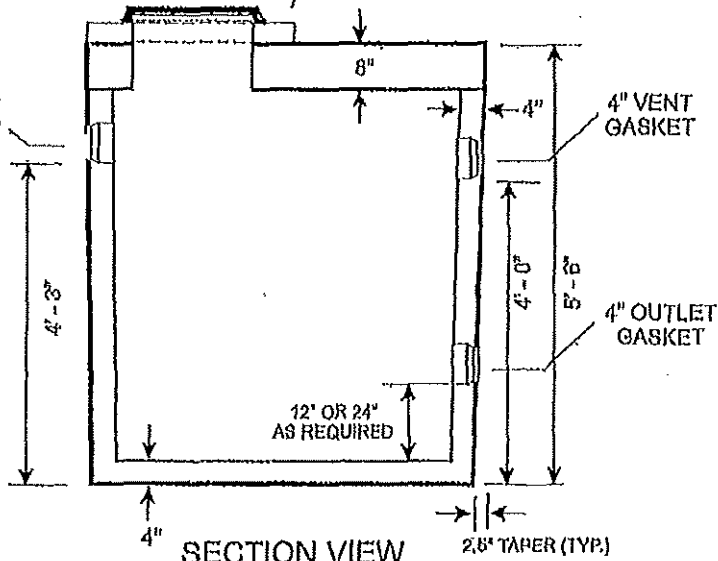
CONCRETE GRADE RING  
AS REQUIRED

4" INLET  
GASKET

4" VENT  
GASKET

4" OUTLET  
GASKET

12" OR 24"  
AS REQUIRED



SECTION VIEW

2.5" TAPER (TYP.)

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

LOWER OUTLET IS LOCATED 24" FROM THE BOTTOM FOR SAND INTERCEPTOR, 12" FROM THE BOTTOM FOR GREASE OR OIL INTERCEPTOR



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**GENERAL NOTES:** CONCRETE STRENGTH 5000 PSI AT 28 DAYS;  
STRUCTURE MFG IN ACCORDANCE WITH ASTM C1613;  
DESIGNED FOR MAXIMUM 6" COVER


REV043014

600 WSSC

NO SCALE

April 1, 2021



To: Baltimore County Government  
Re: Fullerton Fire House Oil Interceptor Project  
Attn: 

The purpose of this letter is to provide our scope and cost for the referenced project.

1. We will excavate along the left side of the fire house to expose the three trench drain storm drain lines coming out of the building and disconnect them from the storm system.
2. We will then reconnect the three of them to a new 4" SDR-35 sanitary drain line.
3. Then we will excavate out to the front of the building and turn across the driveway and excavate over to the existing sanitary running down the front of the property.
4. The asphalt driveway will be cut and removed to install the new sanitary line then backfilled with stone and re-asphalted. It will be a 4" base coat of asphalt and then a 2" final layer of surface asphalt. Concrete walk will also be replaced where removed.
5. The new oil separator will be installed in the grass area prior to tying into the sanitary line.
6. Once all work is completed and tested all disturbed areas will be restored and seeded and strawed.

**Our cost for the work as described above in our scope will be \$ 63,777.30.**

**Material Cost = \$2,700.00 x 17% = \$3,159.00**

**Labor Cost = 40 hrs.@ \$83.48/hr. = \$3,339.20**

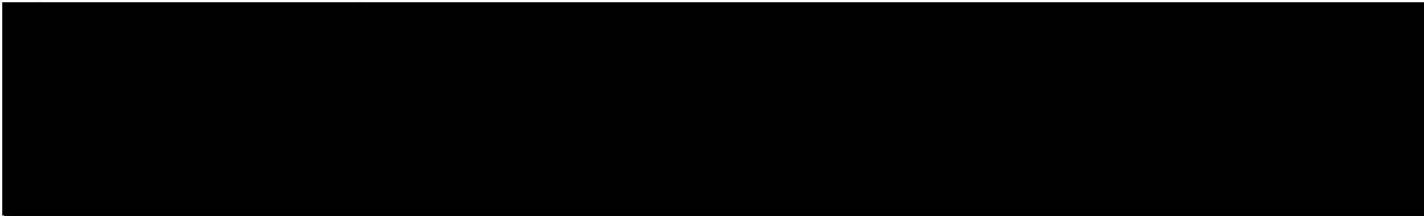
**Labor Cost = 40 hrs.@ \$40.72/hr. = \$1,628.80**

**Subcontractors Cost = \$45,615.00 x 22% = \$55,650.30**

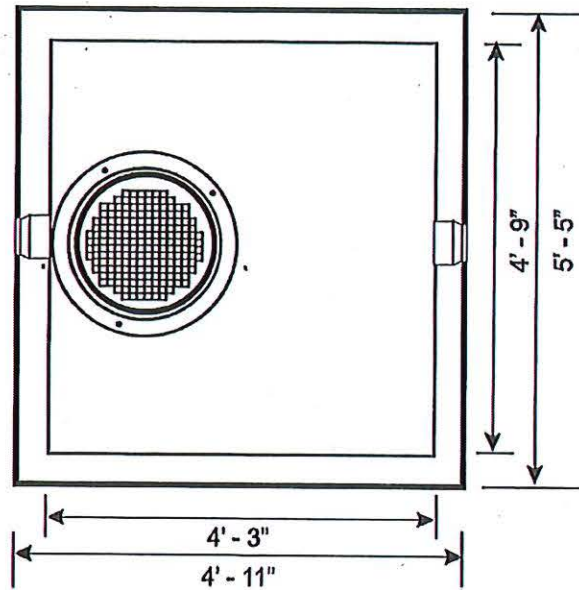
**Deduct to use Baystar Interceptor = \$10,965.00**

**EXCLUSIONS:**

1. Any work not listed in scope above.
2. Any work inside the truck bays.



**Exhibit 3**



24" DIA. CAST IRON  
FRAME & COVER

CONCRETE GRADE RING  
AS REQUIRED

4" INLET  
GASKET

4" VENT  
GASKET

4" OUTLET  
GASKET

12" OR 24"  
AS REQUIRED

**SECTION VIEW**

2.5" TAPER (TYP.)

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

LOWER OUTLET IS LOCATED 24" FROM THE BOTTOM FOR SAND INTERCEPTOR, 12" FROM THE BOTTOM FOR GREASE OR OIL INTERCEPTOR



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**GENERAL NOTES:** CONCRETE STRENGTH 5000 PSI AT 28 DAYS;  
STRUCTURE MFG IN ACCORDANCE WITH ASTM C1613;  
DESIGNED FOR MAXIMUM 5' COVER


REV043014

500 WSSC

NO SCALE

April 29, 2021

Baltimore County Government  
Office of Budget and Finance  
12200A Long Green Pike  
Glen Arm, Maryland 21057

Attention: 

Reference: Fullerton Firehouse  
New Oil Interceptor

We are pleased to submit our budget estimate in the amount of \$63,200.60 (Sixty-Three Thousand Two Hundred Dollars and 60/100) to furnish and install One (1) 55GPM, 550 gallons, 110 oil. Rework Three (3) storm drain lines on left side of building. Tie them into existing sanitary line. Saw cut in front of bay doors and install steel plates. Repave driveway. Replace sidewalk, seed and straw.

Breakdown for this work is as follows:

Labor		
Mechanic 240hrs. @ \$67.19	= \$	16,125.60
Material \$30,500 @ 14%	= \$	34,770.00
Excavation 5,000 @ 7%	= \$	5,350.00
Blacktop 3,500 @ 7%	= \$	3,745.00
M-scope 500 @ 7%	= \$	535.00
Rentals 2,500 @ 7%	= \$	<u>2,675.00</u>
Total	= \$	<u>63,200.60</u>

If we can be of further assistance, please advise.

Sincerely,

  
  
Exhibit 4

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 3, 2021 10:53 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: Message from "RNP58387907F4E2"  
**Attachments:** 20210503102343910.pdf

[REDACTED]

Here is [REDACTED] scope of work for Marshy point nature center, we don't need a price for removal of garden bed irrigation can you get this to me. Thanks.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** PropertyManagementAccountingAreacopier@baltimorecountymd.gov  
<PropertyManagementAccountingAreacopier@baltimorecountymd.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 3, 2021 10:24 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Message from "RNP58387907F4E2"

This E-mail was sent from "RNP58387907F4E2" (MP 4055).

Scan Date: 05.03.2021 10:23:43 (-0400)

Queries to: PropertyManagementAccountingAreacopier@baltimorecountymd.gov

April 27, 2012



To: Baltimore County Government  
Re: Marshy Point Nature Center  
Attn: [Redacted]

The purpose of this letter is to provide our scope and cost for the referenced project.

**Price #1**

1. Disconnect and remove all 6 watering stations in the garden areas. Disconnect and remove the well tank inside the trailer.
2. F&I one new WX-250 Well tank with all the necessary accessories.
3. Start excavation at the point of connection and excavate roughly 125' over to the area where five new frost proof yard hydrants will be installed.
4. Furnish and install five new Zurn ground yard hydrants with 3' buried and a 12x12 concrete pad poured around each one at the surface.
5. Remove miscellaneous sprinkler risers in the gardens and cap below grade.

Our cost for the work as described above in our scope will be \$ 18,897.12.

Material Cost =

Labor =

Labor =

Rental Equipment =

**Price #2**

1. Rx. plumbing fixtures and water heater and replace with new fixtures and a new 6-gallon point of use water heater.
2. Rx. approximately 50' of 3/4" copper in the trailer and replace with new 3/4" CPVC piping to the water heater and plumbing fixtures.

Material Cost =

Labor Cost =

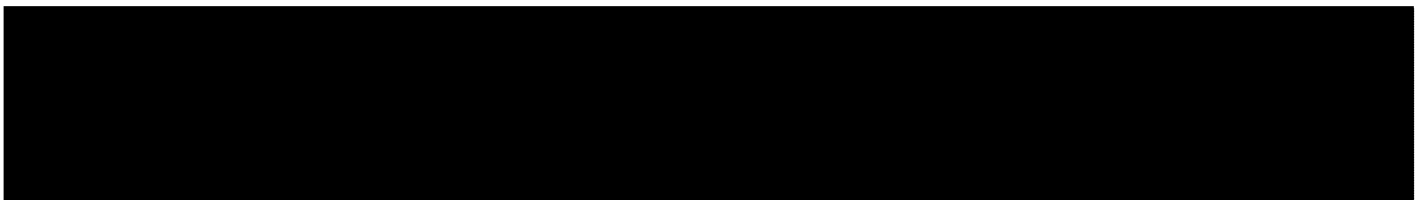
Labor Cost =

Subcontractor Cost =

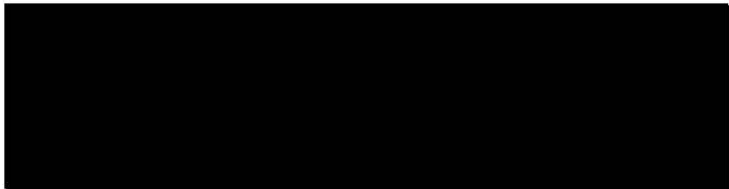
Our cost for the work in Price #2 =


**EXCLUSIONS:**

1. Any work not listed in scope of work above.



April 27, 2012



To: Baltimore County Government  
Re: Marshy Point Nature Center  
Attn: 

The purpose of this letter is to provide our scope and cost for the referenced project.

**Price #1**

1. Disconnect and remove all 5 watering stations in the garden areas. Disconnect and remove the well tank inside the trailer.
2. F&I one new WX-250 Well tank with all the necessary accessories.
3. Start excavation at the point of connection and excavate roughly 125' over to the area where five new frost proof yard hydrants will be installed.
4. Furnish and install five new Zurn ground yard hydrants with 3' buried and a 12x12 concrete pad poured around each one at the surface.
5. Remove miscellaneous sprinkler risers in the gardens and cap below grade.

**Our cost for the work as described above in our scope will be \$ 18,897.12.**

**Material Cost = \$5,936.00 x 17% = \$6,945.12**

**Labor = 80hrs. @ \$83.48/hr. = \$6,678.40**

**Labor = 80hrs. @ \$40.72/hr. = \$3,257.60**

**Rental Equipment = \$1,800.00 x 12% = \$2,016.00**

**Price #2**

1. Rx. plumbing fixtures and water heater and replace with new fixtures and a new 6-gallon point of use water heater.
2. Rx. approximately 50' of 3/4" copper in the trailer and replace with new 3/4" CPVC piping to the water heater and plumbing fixtures.

**Material Cost = \$1,336.00 x 17% = \$1,563.12**

**Labor Cost = 24hrs. @ \$83.48/hr. = \$2,003.52**

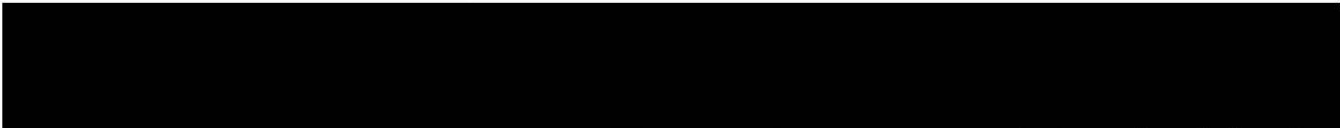
**Labor Cost = 24hrs. @ \$40.72/hr. = \$977.28**

**Subcontractor Cost = \$800.00 x 22% = \$976.00**

**Our cost for the work in Price #2 = \$5,519.92**

**EXCLUSIONS:**

1. Any work not listed in scope of work above.








5/4/2021

Baltimore County Government  
Office of Budget and Finance  
12200A Long Green Pike  
Glen Arm, Maryland 21057

Attention: 

Reference: Marshy Point  
Freeze Proof Lawn Hydrants

Dear: 

We are pleased to submit our budget estimate in the amount of \$18,276.56 (Eighteen Thousand Two Hundred Seventy-Six and 56/100 dollars) to demo existing irrigation system and replace with five (5) freeze proof lawn hydrants with curb cocks & concrete bases at each hydrant. All work to be performed Monday thru Friday 7:00am thru 3:30pm.

Breakdown for this work is as follows:

Labor:		
Mechanic 124 hrs.@ \$67.19		= \$8,331.56
Material \$4,500.00 @ 14%		= \$5,130.00
Excavation & Backfill \$4,000 @ 7%		= \$4,280.00
Miss Utility \$500 @ 7%		= <u>\$535.00</u>
		<b>Total: \$18,276.56</b>

If we can be of further assistance, please advise.

Sincerely,

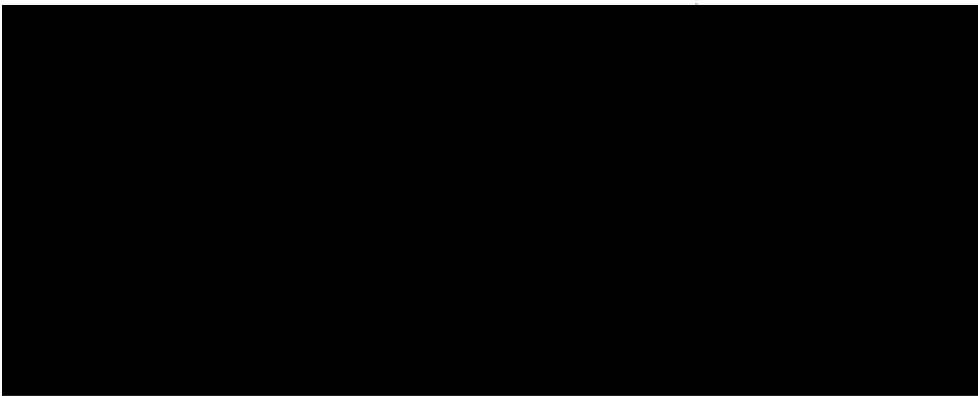


Exhibit 7



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.  
*County Executive*

STACY L. RODGERS  
*County Administrative Officer*

April 30, 2022

Ms. Kelly Madigan  
Inspector General  
Office of the Inspector General  
Baltimore County Government  
400 Washington Avenue  
Towson, Maryland 21204

RE: IG External Report 20-002-01 – Bid Solicitations  
and Proposals for On-Call Plumbing Contractors

Dear Ms. Madigan:

Thank you for sharing report #20-002-01 *Bid Solicitations and Proposals for On-Call Plumbing Contractors*. We have carefully reviewed the report findings and recommendations. Reflected below are the Administration's response and actions.

As your report reflects, upon review, the reported actions of the property management employee do not appear to be a pervasive practice among staff who are responsible for bid solicitations for the department. In that this is a personnel matter we cannot provide specific details of actions taken regarding the employee. We appreciate the identification of the actions outlined in your report as this certainly helps to further inform our training efforts.

As you are aware, over the past year we have initiated proactive activities to thoroughly assess the County's enterprise-wide business operations including procurement operations. We are working to implement best practice strategies and business processes to enhance overall government operations.

Most notably, is the work of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Procurement, Purchasing and Contracting (Commission) and also our Efficiency Review conducted by Public Works, LLC. As we continue to review and implement the various recommendations provided by the Commission and Public Works, LLC your report recommendations will be utilized in conjunction with those recommendations.

In addition, provided below are the County's strategies which respond to your recommendations.

***OIG Recommendation 1: Increase opportunities for procurement training for employees.***

*County's Action:* The County is working to implement the Certified Purchasing Manager (CPM) training through the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO). This training is a best practice. Training will be available to Property Management managers who are responsible for procuring on-call agreements. The County will continue to identify appropriate training opportunities for staff who are responsible for procurement activities on an ongoing basis.

***OIG Recommendation 2: Establish formal policies and procedures that incorporate the relevant sections from the County Purchasing Manual as they pertain to the handling of bid solicitations and proposals for on-call contractors.***

*County's Action:* We acknowledge this gap in procurement practice. The Office of Property Management, in coordination with the Office of Purchasing, will revise their Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to align with the County's purchasing policy. The target date of completion of this action is May 31, 2022. The Office of Property Management will also facilitate a briefing/training for their managers on the revised SOP and purchasing policy. The briefing/training will be conducted by June 30, 2022.

We believe that these actions in addition to the consideration and implementation of recommendations provided by the Blue Ribbon Commission and Public Works LLC will effectively enhance our procurement operations and reduce the potential for inappropriate procurement activity.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond. Please let me know if you have questions or need further information.

Sincerely,



Stacy L. Rodgers, MPA  
County Administrative Officer

cc: John A. Olszewski, Jr. County Executive  
Patrick H. Murray, Chief of Staff  
James R. Benjamin, Jr., County Attorney  
Edward P. Blades, Director, Office of Budget & Finance  
Debra D. Shindle, County Property Manager  
Rosetta Butler, Chief of Purchasing