

City Council – Action Request Form

Date: May 13, 2025

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore and Members of the City Council

From: Christopher Diamont, Assistant Chief of Police
Darren Redfield, Purchasing Manager
Angel Wright-Lanier, Assistant City Manager

Council Action Requested:

Adoption of a Resolution Awarding a Contract for Police Vehicle Upfits

Strategic Focus Area: Service Excellence

Strategic Objective: Ensure Service Delivery Efficiency and Effectiveness

Strategic Plan Action Item: No

Key Work Item: No



Summary of Information:

The current contract for police vehicle upfits ends in June 2025. The current vendor, Mobile Communications of America (MCA), failed to deliver vehicles in a timely manner such that the Police Department received permission to pull the last 13 vehicles taken by MCA in August 2024 and had Brooks Network Services perform the work to get the vehicles finished and on the street.

Due to this lack of service and the arrival of our sixty 2025 Ford Police Interceptor Utility beginning in March, the Police Department requested a new contract be bid out. City/County Purchasing advertised a formal purchase with installation bid for new five-year police vehicle upfit contract. The following bids were received on March 24, 2025:

<u>Company</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Lighting</u>	<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Labor</u>	<u>Total</u>
Batteries of NC ⁽¹⁾	Lillington	\$359,808.0 0	\$278,135.4 0	\$251,160.0 0	\$889,103.40
Brooks Network Services	Gibsonville Spartanbur g, SC	\$356,310.0 0	\$468,369.6 0	\$270,000.0 0	\$1,094,679.6 0
Mobile Communications America	/Winston- Salem	\$506,449.8 0	\$386,238.0 0	\$168,000.0 0	\$1,060,687.8 0

(1) = alternate interior equipment

Committee Action:

Committee	Finance Committee 05/13/2025	Action	Approval
For	Unanimous	Against	

Remarks:

The standard of award for a formal purchase bid per North Carolina General Statute (N.C.G.S.) 143-129(a) is the “lowest, responsible bidder(s) taking into consideration quality, performance, and the time specified...for performance of the contract.” N.C.G.S. 143-129(a) further states that, “proposals may be rejected for any reason determined to be in the best interest of the unit [of government]”.

- I. Staff presents the following justifications to demonstrate that awarding the contract to Batteries of NC is not in our best interest:
 - The bid cost difference is the interior equipment. The offered equipment was a substitution under a Sourcewell cooperative group contract where a municipal discount is applied, usually based on sales volume.
 - The substituted equipment may be of inferior quality to the specified equipment. For example, the current lockers provided by Batteries of NC and installed by MCA failed to stay latched in most cases and required a retrofit which PD handled in-house to keep vehicles in service.
 - There is a quality concern given the higher-than-expected number of lighting equipment failures which takes vehicles out of service. Equipment failures occurred both when Batteries of NC had the previous police vehicle upfit contract and under the latest contract where MCA purchased the equipment through Batteries of NC.
 - Only offers a manufacturer warranty. Batteries of NC’s practice has been to file equipment failure warranty claims with the manufacturer and wait until claims are approved before making the repair; which results in vehicles being out of service even longer instead of making the fix as a matter of good faith.
 - As a preferred Whelen lighting installer per their website, there is a concern that Batteries of NC may prioritize other contract work that use Whelen products over ours that use Federal Signal products, resulting in a slower turn-around time.
 - Additional cost or time to get vehicles to the upfit location, which was not addressed in the bid. Batteries of NC will charge \$650 per vehicle to transport to their location two hours away [added cost of \$39,000], or police staff will have to transport back-and-forth. Given the limited staff availability and four-hour round trip, PD estimates it would take almost three months for us to deliver and pick up all 60 vehicles.
- II. The next lowest bid is from Mobile Communications of America, who should not be considered due to their inability to complete vehicle upfits in a timely manner and decline in quality especially during the past year. In addition to not completing the most recent 13 upfits, WSPD collected ~\$15,000 worth of uninstalled lighting equipment that MCA still had in their possession. MCA is therefore deemed to not be a responsible vendor.
- III. Brooks Network Services offers the following advantages over the other upfit vendors:
 - Offers a 5-year equipment and installation warranty.
 - Offers mobile service and/or will pick up vehicles needing warranty or repair work.
 - Upfit location is 45 minutes away versus 2 hours. That’s ten vehicles delivered in eight hours versus only four.
 - Has ample staffing and facility to handle high volume if needed. Brooks picked up all 13 vehicles -- that MCA couldn’t finish -- in a single trip that they upfit for us.
 - Earned a professional recommendation from Federal Signal, the specified lighting

manufacturer.

- Is offering to install armored door panels at no extra cost, increasing officer safety.
- Should this 5-year contract be awarded to them, may open a location in the city limits, resulting in job growth and/or spending locally, and reducing travel time to 15 minutes or less.

Therefore, it is recommended that a contract be awarded to Brooks Network Services for the Police Vehicle Upfit contract, in the amount of \$1,094,679.60 to upfit the 60 new police vehicles. Terms of the bid allow the City to renew this contract annually for up to a total of five years with a CPI-U increase allowed. **NOTE:** the City does not order 60 new police vehicles every year, but the awarded vendor will perform unmarked vehicle upfits and other repairs as needed during the year.

The equipment will be purchased under the City's leasing program in the amount of \$824,679.60 as a FY 2024-25 capital budget expense, and the labor amount of \$270,000.00 will be funded by the Police Department's FY 2024-25 capital operating budget. Unused funds of \$14,825 from the existing MCA labor contract will help offset this new contract, and the ~\$15,000 of lighting equipment taken from MCA will be installed to further offset the new equipment cost. **NOTE:** around 10 vehicles will become administrative vehicles and thus not receive the full upfit package, which will further reduce the overall expenditure.

M/WBE comment: This bid was advertised on the City's website. Notifications of the bid opportunity was sent to known businesses that supply this equipment. See Exhibit A for a complete list of businesses notified of this bid and workforce demographics.