

**Metropolitan Domestic Water Improvement District  
Board of Directors Meeting**

**February 13, 2012**

**Approval of Vacuum Unit**

**Synopsis**

The Board of Directors is requested to approve the purchase of a new Air Vacuum Excavator from Ditch Witch of Arizona.

**Background**

The District purchased its first Vacuum Excavator in 1999 for use in potholing of utilities, repair of services, and repairs of water mains. The purchase of the Vacuum Excavator was one of the most beneficial acquisitions the District has made. It has saved numerous man hours by reducing repair times when traditional tractors could not be used due to access issues or proximity to other infrastructure. It has become a standard piece of equipment on almost every service line or mainline repair. As the District only has one unit, it is in high demand between the crews for use. In addition to the repair work it is used for cleaning storage tanks by Production and Customer Service uses it to clean meter boxes for better meter reading as well as meter change out.

**Issues**

Over the past 13 years the existing unit has lost a little of its power and requires a little more effort to use. The loss of suction allows the hose to become clogged more often which leads to the unit not being able to keep up with the water flow of a leak and staff time to stop and clean out the hose. The unit is still effective on the less demanding tasks such as small potholing activities and cleaning meter boxes, which will be heavily utilized for the upcoming meter replacement in the Hub Service Area. The purchase of a second Vacuum Excavator will provide for a solid vacuum to be utilized in emergency situations such as mainline repairs as well as provide for an additional unit to be used by other staff.

The District placed an ad in the Daily Territorial on January 3, 2012. The ad ran for 4 consecutive days. Additionally, staff sent out bid notices to known vendors of vacuum units. As a result of the advertisement and the bid notices sent four vendors responded with sealed bids on January 25, 2012. The pricing ranged from \$33,500.27 to \$47,996.85. A bid summary is attached for review. These prices were based on modest specifications provided by the District for a basic unit. The pricing would be much higher with additional specifications as many other configurations, sizes and options are available. The unit specified was very similar to the District's existing unit; however, with an increase in capacity from 350 gallon tank to a 500 gallon tank. The District also specified a water tank and wands for use in water jetting excavation to reduce the risk of damaging buried infrastructure. The existing unit does not have

this capability. The District also allowed for the submission of a Gas or Diesel engine to operate the unit. Vendors supplied pricing on both styles with the Diesel engine being a higher cost.

Ditch Witch was the low bidder at \$33,500.27, including tax and freight, with a Gas engine unit meeting the specifications. The unit is one of their basic models; however, it has a greater capacity, water jetting capability, and a slightly higher CFM rating than our existing unit that has served the District so well for many years. The next lowest bidder was Pacific Tech at \$36,675.00. Pacific Tech is out of California and did not include any taxes or freight. An Arizona "Use Tax" of 7.1% would have to be paid if we purchased from Pacific Tech bringing their total to \$39,278.92

Additional options accessories and spare parts were quoted by Ditch Witch that can be added to the Vacuum Excavator unit that would be beneficial to the District: Additional 25' of vacuum hose, a 2 in 1 tool to allow water jetting and vacuuming at the same time, and spare parts. The sum of the additional options is \$2,271.95 including tax. The base unit plus the options brings the total to \$35,777.22.

An extended two year warranty is also available for the unit. The two year extended warranty starts at the expiration of the one year manufacturer warranty. This would provide for a total of a three year warranty. The cost of the two year extended warranty, including tax is \$2,454.75. The Utility Division's Fiscal Year 2011-2012 budget for the vacuum unit is \$37,000. Adding the extended warranty and the options above would exceed the budget by \$1,226.97 for a new total of \$38,226.97. The extended warranty can also be added anytime during the first year while the unit is under the manufacturer's warranty.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board of Directors approve the purchase of a new Air Vacuum Excavator Model FX25 from Ditch Witch of Arizona including optional accessories and spare parts selected in the amount not to exceed \$35,777.22. Staff is not recommending purchase of the extended warranty but to consider including it for next year's budget.

### **Suggested Motion**

I move to approve the purchase of a new Air Vacuum Excavator Model FX25 from Ditch Witch of Arizona including optional accessories and spare parts selected in the amount not to exceed \$35,777.22.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Shepard  
Utility Superintendent

I concur with the above recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark R. Stratton, P.E.  
General Manager