




Memorandum



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To: The Honorable Carlos A. Gimenez, Mayor, Miami-Dade County
The Honorable Audrey M. Edmonson, Chairwoman
and Members, Board of County Commissioners, Miami-Dade County

From: Mary T. Cagle, Inspector General 

Date: November 18, 2019

Subject: OIG Observations of the Procurement Process for Helicopter Purchase for the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department Pursuant to RFP No. 01424; Recommendation for Approval to Award Contract Scheduled for Board of County Commissioners Meeting of November 19, 2019; Ref: IG19-0017-O

By way of this memorandum, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) advises that we actively monitored the procurement process for the “Helicopter Purchase for Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department” pursuant to RFP No. 01424. We would like to take this opportunity to share some observations.

On October 3, 2019, the recommendation to award Contract No. CBW9827-3/21 to AgustaWestland was rejected and the Administration stated that it would conduct a new, expedited procurement for the purchase of four helicopters. As a result, RFP 01424 was issued on October 10, 2019 with an expedited time line; responses were due in 14 days on October 24, 2019. Unlike the predecessor procurement (a competitive bid waiver), this was an open solicitation requesting proposals from any and all vendors.

Following the release of the RFP, the OIG undertook the following activities:

- Reviewed the specifications for the helicopters in RFP 01424 and compared it to the specifications for previous RFPs
- Reviewed proposals submitted in response to RFP 0424 by:
 - AirBus Helicopters, Inc.
 - AgustaWestland Philadelphia Corporation
- Reviewed composition and qualifications of members appointed to the RFP’s Competitive Selection Committee (CSC), including Technical Advisors
 - Subsequent review of representatives of the highest ranked proposer
 - Subsequent review of the members of the County’s negotiating team and technical advisors
- Attended and monitored all meetings of the CSC and the subsequent negotiations

The meetings attended by the OIG were as follows:

Selection Process

Oct. 15, 2019 Pre-Proposal Conference at MDFR at Tamiami Airport, including inspections of the existing Bell helicopters
Oct. 25, 2019 CSC Kick-Off Meeting
Oct. 28, 2019 CSC Evaluation Meeting
Nov. 1, 2019 CSC Evaluation and Scoring Meeting

Negotiations Process¹

Nov. 5, 2019 ISD/MDFR Internal Strategy Meeting
Nov. 6, 2019 Negotiation Meeting with AgustaWestland
Nov. 7, 2019 Negotiation Meeting with AgustaWestland
Nov. 8, 2019 Negotiation Meeting with AgustaWestland
Nov. 12, 2019 Negotiation Meeting with Pratt & Whitney Canada, AgustaWestland
Nov. 13, 2019 Negotiation Meeting with Honeywell, AgustaWestland
Nov. 14, 2019 Negotiation Meeting with AgustaWestland
Nov. 15, 2019 Negotiation Meeting with AgustaWestland

Competitive Selection Committee (CSC)

In an abundance of caution, the OIG conducted its own due diligence on the recently appointed members to the CSC to ensure that there were no residual effects from the prior helicopter procurements. As to one voting member, the OIG brought to ISD's attention that person's past public support for one vendor over another. Following discussions with ISD, changes were made to the composition of the CSC. It was clear to the OIG that ISD wanted to ensure a fair and impartial CSC, and we thank them for heeding our counsel.

The OIG reviewed the two proposals submitted and compared our own assessment to those expressed by the CSC members during the evaluation and scoring process at the November 1, 2019, Evaluation Meeting. The OIG notes that following the announcement of individual members' scores, the CSC Chair offered members an opportunity to explain their rationale for divergent scores. In each case, explanations provided were consistent with the OIG's concerns (for example, the Airbus proposed helicopter not being currently FAA certified, the proposed delivery schedule, and the price difference). The OIG finds that the CSC evaluated the proposals in a fair and objective manner consistent with the criteria provided in the RFP, and that ISD procurement staff conducted the selection process in a professional, open, and transparent manner. The OIG also notes that representatives from both vendors were present at the final evaluation meeting when the scores were announced.

¹ AgustaWestland, Pratt & Whitney Canada, Honeywell participated in these meetings via WebEx.

Negotiation Meetings

The OIG monitored over 40 hours of negotiations with AgustaWestland, Pratt & Whitney, and Honeywell conducted over seven days, plus considerable additional hours of internal meetings. These negotiations resulted in four separate agreements: 1) the purchase of four AgustaWestland AW139s (including training, transition and warranty); 2) the sale of four exiting helicopters to AgustaWestland; 3) the lease-back agreement for the helicopters sold to AgustaWestland; and 4) full components maintenance plan. The agreement with Pratt & Whitney for engine maintenance and the agreement with Honeywell for avionics maintenance have not yet been completed. ISD Procurement has advised that these agreements must be completed prior to the delivery of the first helicopter, which is scheduled for September 2, 2020.

Throughout the negotiations, the OIG noted that both parties were keenly aware of the delivery expectations and worked diligently towards that end to ensure that MDFR would receive the helicopters with adequate time for transitional training. This transitional training is key to ensuring the continued uninterrupted safety of the residents of Miami-Dade County and possibly the surrounding communities.

Summary

The resulting proposed contract award for the purchase of the four helicopters and full components plan (including Optional Terms 1 and 2) is \$2,094,437 less than the previous agreement that was presented on October 3, 2019. The OIG acknowledges that this agenda item is subject to the 4-day rule, however, we note that any delay to this contract award will have an adverse impact to the delivery schedule and transitional training, which will ultimately affect the price of this contract.

The OIG finds that that the procurement process for the helicopters was conducted in a fair and transparent manner consistent with the requirements of RFP 01424. The OIG believes that had it not been for the diligence, expertise, and determination of the members of the County's selection and negotiations teams, the process would not have reached this far.

cc: Edward Marquez, Deputy Mayor
Maurice Kemp, Deputy Mayor & Interim Director, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue
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Namita Uppal, Chief Procurement Officer, Internal Services Department
Gregory Rubin, Communications Division Chief, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue
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