



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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**TO:** Gene Baietto, Purchasing

**FROM:** Gordy Paprocki, Fleet Services

**DATE:** November 29, 2010

**SUBJECT:** Sole source purchase of articulated tractor budgeted for in 2011 Capital Equipment

Contained within the 2011 Public Works Dept. Capital Equipment budget are funds to replace one of our oldest four-wheel drive, multi-function, articulated tractors. We have been using this type of equipment in the Public Works operation since the early 1980's for a multitude of functions, the mainstay being snow and ice control /removal on all of the City maintained sidewalks as well as year round use which includes but not limited to mowing of varying types, specialized trenching, pavement grinding and leaf collection. As time goes on we continue to find new uses for this equipment as they have evolved into very versatile and useful units within our operations. This is the second of four tractors that we will be replacing over the next few years, the first was replaced in 2010 and this, the second Unit in 2011 with a couple of years separation before we look to replace the third and fourth units.

This process included but was not limited to researching the other types of tractors currently available in the market place and how they compared to our existing group of tractors, this information I might add remains the same today as it was when we conducted our research during the winter of 2009. We found that out of the three other tractors currently available in the country two would not meet our needs right from the start due to the fact that the implement hitch arrangement on both of these (McClaine and Trackless) is entirely different then our current Holder brand tractors rendering the wide array of attachments that we have accumulated over the years useless to us on these two brands. The implement hitch on the two afore mentioned tractors is product specific to their tractors and theirs only, designed and engineered to carry their implements only, where as the hitch on the Holder tractors is a generic category three agricultural hitch design to hook up to and carry a multitude of implements available in the market place from a wide variety of manufacturers.

A more logical choice for us is the GSV tractor manufactured by M-B Corporation. We all had high hopes for this particular product for several reasons; M-B is a Wisconsin company, we had two M-B GSV tractors in the fleet prior to the Holder tractors, this tractor uses the same generic category three hitch as the Holder, and other than the cab and electronics the power train of this tractor is not manufacturer specific. But as the saying goes " the proof is in the pudding". Once we demonstrated the tractor we were very disappointed with the engineering and performance of the product. To begin with for our winter operations it is imperative that we are able to carry the maximum amount salt on these tractors which amounts to approx. 1.5 cu.yds, which is the combined capacity of the spreader and the tractor mounted dump body. The Holder tractors have a very low profile and consequently a low center of gravity which makes them very stable when the dump body and spreader are fully loaded. The M-B on the other hand has a tall profile and the dump body which in our humble opinion is poorly designed as it looks more like an afterthought for this product and gives this tractor a high center of gravity so that when this body is fully loaded (approx. 0.75 cu.yds.) makes this tractor rather unstable to the point where in a turn on flat ground we noted the inside front wheel breaking traction with the pavement so we could only imagine what may happen when climbing a curb or bouncing over snow piles with this tractor, several of our operators felt very uncomfortable with this. Also oscillation and side-to-side weight transfer of the front half of the tractor is virtually non-existent on this product which contributes greatly

to the feeling of instability with a full load of material. The height and configuration of the dump body also detracts greatly from the visibility to the rear of the machine for the operator, this is a safety issue. Another problem that we encountered while demonstrating the M-B product was that the electronics for the throttle control were actually too responsive making the tractor very jerky, we were told that it could be adjusted to smooth out the throttle control but after several attempts it really didn't seem to make any notable improvement in the control. We also need to take into account that we had purchased two M-B folding V plows to use on our existing tractors last year we did have some problems early on with the hitch pins flexing and bending as well as the underside of the moldboard breaking on both of the plows both of them were sent back to the factory to be reworked, unfortunately the rework failed as well. I have been in contact with the dealer several times since then and to this point in time the problem has not been resolved and I will continue to pursue a resolution to this issue. This does not bode well with me if we should have any design or engineering issues with the tractor as well.

This brings us full circle to the direct replacement of our existing tractor with the current production model from Holder Mfg. The Model 9.92 is the current production tractor which would be the direct replacement for our existing units. Updating our fleet with this tractor would be transparent as it works with all of our existing implements, accessories and ALL of our applications as well. We have demonstrated this tractor and were very pleased with its performance and all of the improvements and updates to the unit. I had the dealer Industrial Marketing work up a quote for a new tractor, dump body and spreader. We have budgeted \$131,000.00 in the 2011 capital equipment budget to replace this tractor, dump body and spreader. The quote that I received from IM is at \$115,893.00 for the package. The base tractor came in at \$107,000.00, which is an exceptional price when you consider that the Minnesota State bid price this year for the same tractor is at \$123,664.00. I have also been told by the dealer that the manufacturer will only hold this pricing for us until the end of this year (2010) and after the first of the year the price will go up to the Minnesota State bid price, which at this point I have no reason to doubt. We have had a long-standing relationship with this product and this dealer; yes there have been some rough patches along the way but for the most part it has been a mutually good experience, so I would have no problem in continuing the process. With this being said I recommend that it would be in the Department's and the City's best interests to purchase the Holder tractor as quoted from Industrial Marketing. If you should have any questions or concerns please contact me directly. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

cc: T. Harmatys  
M. Lewis