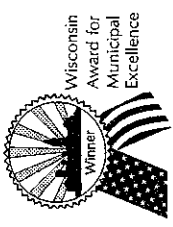


CITY OF WEST ALLIS

WISCONSIN



Public Works Department

MICHAEL PERTMER
Director

GORDON PAPROCKI
Superintendent
Equipment Repair Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: Gene Baietto, Purchasing

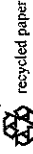
FROM: Gordy Paprocki, Equipment Repair *GP*

DATE: October 12, 2005

SUBJECT: Sole Source Purchase of Vermeer 275 Vacuum/Excavator "Demo" Unit

Included in the 2005 budget for the Water Department are funds to replace the current portable vacuum unit that is used extensively to clean out valve boxes throughout our water system. After some discussion with Dan Schwelke and his crews, I found there to be a great deal of interest in the combination process of vacuum/hydro-excavation, so rather than looking at strictly vacuum units, we decided to see what was available in combination machines. Upon further discussion, we were able to refine the department's requirements for their application. One of the areas of major concern was the physical size of the unit, as the need to mirror as closely as possible the size and layout of the current machine. Due to many of the confined areas that they work in, along with the need for one-man hookup, pulling it with a 1/2 ton pickup truck and the very limited parking space in the yard, this weighed heavily in the process. So I began to research the marketplace with the mindset that the size concern would not be an issue. I soon found out otherwise; not all hydro/vac's are created equal!

We reviewed a broad cross-section of the current production units from Vector-Vac, Vactron, Vaxcavator, Ditch Witch and Vermeer, looking specifically at their smallest trailer-mounted units. We brought units in from Vactron, Vaxcavator, Ditch Witch and Vermeer. Vector-Vac did not have a demo unit available. The smallest unit available from Ditch Witch, Vactron and Vector are 500-gallon units. Considering the fact that our current unit is approximately 120-gallon capacity, these units were huge in comparison making them just too big and clumsy for our applications. There also were some quality issues as far as design and construction with some in regards to their filtration system. Vactron, Vaxcavator and Vector use replacement elements, where Ditch Witch and Vermeer use washable, reusable elements. The other major issue, with the exception of Vermeer, has to do with the design of their potholing tool/digging tool. All with the exception of Vermeer again, used a ring with multiple nozzles in the head which did not deal well with stones, it was constantly plugging. The Vermeer unit uses a single rotating nozzle which is offset in the head out



of the path of the spoils, no clogging problem. The Vermeer unit operates at 3500 psi, where the others are at 3000 psi. This makes for a marked increase in digging speed. Getting back to the size issue, Vermeer's smallest unit is a 275-gallon unit on a single axle trailer. The layout of this unit is very compact and very similar in size to our current unit. The only other manufacturer that offers a smaller capacity unit under 500 gallons is Vaxcavator, however they as well as some of the other manufacturers use a standard size 10,000 lb. tandem axle trailer for all their units and just vary the size of the debris tank, so this unit was no longer considered either.

So with all this said and done, we have established that this type of unit would be a tremendous asset to the department in labor and time savings, and that the department does have some specific requirements that directly impact which unit we will purchase. With this in mind, the clear and only choice is the 275 from Vermeer. Vermeer – Wisconsin is offering a low hour demo unit to use with some fairly significant savings over new. It is our recommendation that it would be in the department's best interest to purchase this unit as quoted.

If you should have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

GP/djk

cc: D. Schwebke
M. Pertmer

RECEIVED

OCT 13 2005

**CITY OF WEST ALLIS
PURCHASING DEPT**