

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: December 14, 2023

PREPARED BY: Gary Shaffer, Director of Library Services

REQUEST: PURCHASE AND APPROPRIATION FOR A CUSTOMIZED LOW-SPEED
ELECTRIC VEHICLE FOR MOBILE LIBRARY OUTREACH

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Authorize the purchase of a customized electric low-speed utility vehicle for library outreach from Valero Services in an amount not to exceed \$73,116.84, plus CA sales tax.
2. Authorize Director of Finance to set aside a 20% contingency in the amount of \$15,756.68.
3. Authorize Director of Finance to appropriate funds to Equipment Replacement Fund in General Government Capital Autos/Vehicles Account Number .5304195-4403000 in the amount of \$94,540.07.
4. Authorize Director of Finance to make an interfund transfer from the Library Services Fund Account No. 2524199-4501000 to the Equipment Replacement Fund Account No. 5300000-3910000 in the amount of \$94,540.07 to accommodate this request.
5. Authorize the City Attorney to make any necessary non-monetary changes to the agreement.
6. Authorize the City Manager to execute all documents necessary to effectuate this action.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The City is taking over local library services from the County of Riverside and its library operator LSS, beginning July 1, 2024. The City's Library Task Force requests that library staff conduct mobile library outreach beginning May 1, 2024, two months ahead of the planned opening. The mobile library will continue to be well used after July 1, 2024 to provide outreach and direct library services throughout Palm Desert.

Two Southern California cities, Monrovia and Whittier, have recently taken delivery of this type of bookmobile (pictures attached), both using GEM Cars model el XD, and both customized by the same vendor, Valero Services of Delmont, PA. The GEM car was chosen because it is the only vehicle that has the appropriate weight capacities for the desired customization, outreach supplies, and physical books that will be on the vehicle and available for checkout when it travels throughout the City. The Monrovia Library has had their vehicle on the road since 2021 and has experienced little to no issues.

The GEM car is an electric vehicle (EV) engineered for local streets. GEM cars are street legal on most roads 35 mph or less. It can travel at a maximum speed of 25 mph. Additionally, GEM Cars are engineered to exceed low-speed vehicle (LSV) federal safety standards and include three-point safety belts, headlights, taillights, reflectors, turn signals, speedometer, mirror, horn, fenders, and a windshield. The GEM Car also features regenerative braking, back-up warning signals, an integrated back-up camera, and a certified Occupant Protection System (OPS).

Staff proposes the customization be performed by Valero Services of Delmont, PA, as they are the only known vendor to do this kind of customization to GEM Cars. At this report's writing, Valero Services has identified an available GEM Car that meets the City's needed specifications. They are ready to complete the customization work, should the vehicle remain available, wrap the vehicle with marketing messages the City designs, and ship it to the City ahead of the target May 1, 2024, launch-date of the vehicle.

Research:

Staff contacted two local golf cart vendors (JR Thomas Golf Cars and Cart Mart) Cart Mart sells GEM Cars, but is not able to meet staff's desired timeline.

Staff reached out to two additional customizers, both of whom were not interested in bidding on the project.

Pursuant to Section 3.30.160 (J) of the Purchasing Ordinance, the City Manager may determine there is only one source that provides the needed equipment and may procure in the best interest of the City. As such, staff recommends approval of this request.

Legal Review:

This report has been reviewed by the City Attorney's office.

Appointed Body Recommendation:

Two Library Task Force subcommittees, that met in late November, recommended Palm Desert launch this mobile library outreach vehicle, in their individual meetings.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Funds are available in the Library Services Fund and may be transferred to Equipment Replacement Fund for this purpose. The following appropriations are necessary to accommodate this request:

Valero Quote	\$73,116.84
Sales Tax	5,666.56
Total Purchase Price	\$78,783.40
20% Contingency	\$15,756.68
NTE Budget Request for Library Mobile	\$94,540.07

Appropriations Necessary	Amount
2524199-4501000 (Transfer Out)	\$94,540.07
5300000-3910000 (Transfer In)	\$94,540.07
5304195-4403000 (Expense)	\$94,540.07

Due to supply chain issues, and concern that this vehicle may no longer be available upon approval, staff is recommending a 20% contingency to accommodate any necessary changes to the purchase.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Photos of the Cities of Monrovia and Whittier GEM Car Bookmobiles, both customized by Valero Services.
2. Palm Desert Valero Services Quote.