

Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: April 7, 2009

Date Submitted: March 19, 2009

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Benjamin H. Pingree, County Administrator
Lindsay Stevens, Assistant County Administrator
Alfred Nelson, Housing Director
Robin Dias, WAP Coordinator

Subject: Request Board Consideration and Approval for the Purchase of a 2009 Chevrolet, 4 Wheel Drive Trailblazer for \$26,220.00 for the Housing Services Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

Statement of Issue:

This agenda requests Board consideration and approval for the purchase of a 2009 Chevrolet, 4 Wheel Drive (4WD) Trailblazer from Champion Chevrolet, Inc., Tallahassee, Florida at the purchase price of \$26,220.00 to assist with the Wakulla County Housing Services Weatherization Assistance Program.

Background:

The United States Department of Energy (DOE) through the State of Florida, Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) has approved for the Wakulla County Division of Housing Service to purchase a vehicle to assist in providing Weatherization assistance to our citizens (Attachment #1). The vehicle will primarily be used for the County Weatherization Program. The County Housing Services Weatherization Program has received a 4-fold increase in funding, and in turn workload, for the FY2009/10. The State of Florida DCA has approved for purchase of a vehicle, on a reimbursement basis, to assist in providing the increased services to Wakulla citizens. (Attachment #1). Wakulla County will initially purchase the vehicle and will be reimbursed by DCA including the cost of title, any sales tax, and interest.

This agenda request is for Board consideration and approval for Wakulla County Housing Services to purchase a 4WD Chevrolet Trailblazer Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV). The selected SUV is suitable for the Wakulla County terrain, and is the same make and model vehicle being used by other Wakulla County Departments for administrative and inspection purposes. Housing Services currently owns one vehicle, a 2004 Ford F150 pickup with approximately 90,000 miles. The existing Housing Services truck is used to support all housing related programs and is valued at approximately \$8,000. Housing Services proposes to retain the existing truck and continue to use it in support of the Section 8 and State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) Programs. The new vehicle will be used exclusively for the WAP and will be an additional 4WD vehicle available to the County in the advent of a natural disaster.

Analysis:

The County will bear the up-front costs of purchasing the SUV. Housing Services will utilize existing funds from its FY2008/09 budget uncommitted cash flow reserves account, which currently contains approximately \$42,000.00. DCA will reimburse the County for the cost of the SUV over a three (3) year period, with a monthly payment of no less than \$728.00 through the WAP, on a per job voucher request installment plan. In other words, for each WAP job completed by the County WAP, DCA will contribute a portion of the SUV cost until the vehicle is paid-off. During the FY2008/09, Wakulla County weatherized 12 homes, and the FY2009/10 WAP funding is expected to be more than 4 times that of the FY2007/08 as a result of the federal stimulus package.

Once DCA has reimbursed the County for the up-front purchasing of the Vehicle, the vehicle will be owned by DCA for inventory purposes and the vehicle will be returned to the State if and when Wakulla County no longer decides to participate in the WAP.

In researching vehicle options, Housing Services requested competitive bids from 3 local vendors and obtained quotes (Attachments #2-5). Housing Services believes that the quote from Champion Chevrolet, Inc., of Tallahassee is the most favorable to the County due to their overall price, vehicle options and the guaranteed availability of the quoted vehicle. The estimated time of delivery of the vehicle is 30 to 90 days.

Housing Services did consider environmental responsibility and energy efficiency when researching vehicle options in an effort to conserve energy and reduce fuel emissions. The alternative fuel vehicle options identified by the Alternative Fuel Vehicle Institute include:

- Bio-diesel
- Compressed natural gas (CNG)
- Ethanol (E-85)
- Hydrogen
- Propane

In addition, the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Division includes:

- Electric Vehicles
- LNG
- Methanol

Housing Services determined that none of these alternative vehicles are readily available for purchase at a competitive price and on State Contract:

Hybrids – There is one quote for a comparable hybrid vehicle on State Contract for the current year; the Ford Motor Company 2009 Escapes. However, Ford is no longer accepting orders for this model year. Ford has not started to accept orders for the 2010

Mercury Mariner hybrid models and Ford has not released the pricing for that model year. The average price for the 2010 Mercury Mariner hybrid 2 Wheel Drive (2WD) vehicle is expected to start at around \$30,000.00 plus any sale tax, tag, or title. Staff notes that this is a 2WD model, as opposed to the 4WD which is preferred for the roads and terrain expected to be covered in Wakulla County.

Electric – no options available on State Contract.

Bio-diesel – no options available on State Contract.

Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) – no options available on State Contract.

In summary, Housing Services has a need for an additional vehicle to provide weatherization services to Wakulla County's citizens. The State of Florida Department of Community Affairs has a program to reimburse the County for the vehicle purchase over a 3-year period of time. Housing Services anticipates that the County WAP will experience a significant increase in workload over the next budget year and purchase of a new vehicle will assist staff in meeting the increased number of projects. Housing Services researched alternative-energy options when considering this possible vehicle purchase. Housing Services determined that the preferred vehicle purchase at this time is a 2009 Chevrolet, 4WD Trailblazer for \$26,220.00. A Budget Amendment is attached to debit the \$26,220.00 from existing funds contained in Account #120-0003-389-900 for the purchase of the new vehicle (Attachment 6).

Options:

1. Approve the Housing Services Division request and related Budget Amendment to purchase a 2009 Chevrolet, 4 Wheel Drive Trailblazer for \$26,220.00 for the County Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).
2. Do not approve the Housing Services Division request and related Budget Amendment for the purchase of a 2009 Chevrolet, 4 Wheel Drive Trailblazer for \$26,220.00 for the County Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).
3. Board direction.

Recommendation:

Option #1

Attachments:

1. State of Florida Department of Community Affairs letter authorizing Wakulla County to purchase a vehicle for the weatherization program.
2. Vehicle quotes from Champion Chevrolet, Inc.
3. Vehicle quotes from Tallahassee Lincoln Ford Mercury.
4. Vehicle quotes from Chevrolet Buick of Quincy, Florida.
5. Vehicle quotes from Tallahassee Lincoln Ford Mercury (Hybrid Vehicle).
6. Budget Amendment.