



RACINE FIRE DEPARTMENT
Chief's Office: 262-635-7911

December 8, 2010

Honorable Mayor and
Common Council

Dear Honorable Mayor and Common Council:

The Fire Chief is requesting permission to waive formal bidding, authorizing and directing the Purchasing Agent to negotiate with Foster Coach of Sterling, Illinois, on the purchase of a 2011 Ford E450 Diesel/Medtec ambulance.

In 2010, Ford Motor Company announced they will not be redesigning their E450 Ford van chassis to accommodate their new diesel motor. This will apply to 2011, and future E450 Ford van ambulance chassis. Instead, Ford will only offer a gasoline motor option in the E450 van ambulance chassis. There are a number of drawbacks to the gasoline motor. First is fuel economy. Using the gasoline motor will cut our fuel economy almost in half compared to our diesel motors; second, less motor torque for moving the vehicle; third, significant under-hood heat problems with gasoline motors; forth, additional maintenance issues, including oil, sparkplugs and electrical problems associated with under-hood heat. The fire department moved away from gasoline motors almost 25 years ago due to similar problems and lack of fuel economy.

Currently, Foster Coach of Sterling, Illinois, has two (2) 2010 Ford E450 Ambulance van chassis in stock. We are looking to secure one of the chassis for the ambulance we will be replacing in 2011, with funding approved through the CIP process by the Common Council. In researching our options for other diesel-powered ambulance chassis, we did find Ford offers a pickup truck type chassis, which is known as a Type 1 Ambulance chassis on a F450 pickup frame. Similar in weight-carrying capacity and fuel economy, the most significant drawback is about an \$18,000 up-charge to go with this F450 chassis. Recognizing the financial challenges we face today, the fire department would like to take advantage of cost savings wherever we can.

Historically, we have purchased several ambulances from Foster Coach. They have a reputation for quality and service when we have needed their expertise. The fire department has absolutely no issue with the company and recommends we continue our relationship with Foster Coach in the acquisition of this fire department ambulance in 2011.

Our recommendation is the purchasing agent be authorized to issue an official letter of intent to purchase, prior to December 31st, in order to secure this chassis and that the ambulance be delivered in 2011.

Fiscal note: funding is available in the 2011 budget under account 991.300.5010.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Hansen, Fire Chief