

Agenda Item: 2.d

Meeting Date: June 4, 2026

MEMORANDUM

To: City Commission

Through: Jennifer K. Bramley, City Manager

From: Joe Mclemore

Date: 2026-05-27

Subject: Sole Source Purchase of an ABI Force - Z-23 Zero-Turn Turf & Infield Maintenance Laser Grading Machine from St. Johns Turf Care, LLC, in the amount of \$54,885.

Presenter(s): Anthony Mulkey, CPRE, Parks & Recreation Director; and Joe McLemore III, Parks Superintendent

Staff Recommendation: Motion to approve the Sole Source purchase of ABI Force Z-23 Zero-Turn Turf & Infield Maintenance Laser Grading Machine from St. Johns Turf Care, LLC, of Mishawaka, IN, in the amount of \$54,885.

Strategic Themes: Community Amenities

Boards & Committees: N / A

Budget Impact: Funds for this purchase are available in the General Fund, in the amount of \$54,885, in Acct. #001-4647-572-056401-CR. Funding is available via the attached 'Budget Adjustment' which will move excess budget from the Parks Forestry Mulcher and Athletic Field projects, into the Parks Maintenance & Equipment GL account. There is no net change in fund balance as a result of this transfer. This 'Budget Adjustment' will be brought before the Commission at a future date to formally reallocate the necessary funding.

Past Action: N / A

Next Action: Issue a Purchase Order (PO) to St. Johns Turf Care, LLC subject to City Commission approval of staff's recommendation.

Attachments: [A. Quote \(Estimate #4993\) - St. Johns Turf Care.pdf](#)
[B. Purchasing Manager Memo - Sole Source Purchase \(St. Johns Turf Care, LLC\).pdf](#)
[C. Sole Source Letter \(Force by ABI\).pdf](#)
[D. BA-BT Form - Parks & Rec - Athletic Field Equipment \(St.](#)

[John's Turf Care ABI Force\).pdf](#)

[E. ABI Force - Z-23 Zero-Turn Turf & Infield Maintenance Laser Grading Machine.pdf](#)

Background:

Staff is requesting Commission approval to proceed with a Sole Source purchase from St. Johns Turf Care, LLC, of Mishawaka, IN, in the amount of \$54,885, to acquire an ABI Force Z-23 Zero-Turn Turf & Infield Maintenance Laser Grading Machine. The ABI Force (specifically, Model Z-23) is a specialized piece of athletic field equipment, consisting of a stand-on zero-turn machine designed primarily for ball field maintenance, landscaping, and site preparation. The advantage of this asset is the ability to perform the work of much larger, heavier equipment with a significantly smaller footprint and greater maneuverability.

Key Performance Advantages:

- ~ Precision Laser Grading: It is the only stand-on zero-turn machine capable of automated laser grading, achieving accuracy within 1/8 of an inch (0.125"); ensuring perfect drainage and playability on infields;
- ~ Responsive Variable Force (RVF): This patented technology allows operators to hydraulically control mid-mounted attachments with lift, variable down pressure (up to 1,000 lbs), and pitch adjustments;
- ~ Zero-Turn Agility: The compact design allows the Z-23 to work in tight spots, around edges, and close to tree lines where traditional tractors or skid steers cannot reach; and
- ~ High Efficiency: It can aerate over 115,000 square feet per hour (approx. 3.5 acres), making it significantly faster than standard walk-behind or small-towed equipment.

This purchase will be incorporated into the Athletic Field Renovation Program. Maintaining an even and consistent playing surface is essential for both player safety and quality of play. Over time, due to regular use and environmental factors, athletic fields require comprehensive refurbishment to address issues such as surface irregularities, drainage deficiencies, and soil compaction. These renovations are typically performed on an approximate 15-year cycle.

The proposed equipment will be utilized to maintain all clay playing surfaces to professional standards. In addition, it will support the upkeep of warning tracks, shell, and gravel trails throughout the City, and assist with site preparation for future projects.

Acquiring this equipment will enable the department to perform these renovations in-house rather than relying on external contractors. As a result, the department anticipates achieving long-term cost savings while maintaining greater control over the

quality and timing of field improvements.

The combination of zero-turn capability and mid-mounted attachments makes this product truly unique. Staff has also had the opportunity to test this equipment through the Blue Jays organization, as it is the same model they use to maintain their fields.

As such, staff hereby recommends the Commission approval of the Sole Source purchase of the referenced ABI Force Z-23 Athletic Field Equipment from St. Johns Turf Care, LLC, of Mishawaka, IN, in the amount of \$54,885, as detailed herein.