



City Council Staff Report

Subject: Citywide Fuel Reduction Program

Date: December 12, 2023

Submitted By: Justin Nartker, Director of Public Services
Rick Lawrence, Public Services Manager

Department: Public Services

Recommendation:

- A. Adopt a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Rocklin Awarding the Contract for the City of Rocklin 2024 Grazing Services to Blue Tent Farms LLC and Authorizing the City Manager to Execute an Agreement with Blue Tent Farms LLC.
- B. Adopt a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Rocklin Awarding the Contract for the City of Rocklin 2024 Weed and Rubbish Abatement and Authorizing the City Manager to Execute an Agreement with Northern State Contractors, Inc.

Background:

The City's Fuel Reduction Program reduces the threat of fire in the City by providing preventative maintenance (e.g., eliminate weeds, dry brush, dead trees) in the open space areas and vacant parcels throughout the city. This is accomplished by using goat and sheep grazing, as well as other methods such as handwork for rubbish and brush removal, tractor discing, and mowing.

Grazing Services

For the past 13 years, the City of Rocklin has contracted services for goat and sheep grazing on City-owned and maintained open space areas, for the purpose of fuel load reduction and general open space management. The US Army Corp of Engineers and California Department of Fish and Wildlife restrict the use of chemical and mechanical methods of vegetation control in open space preserves, which makes grazing the preferred method for open space management. When the City began utilizing grazing in 2010, there were 465 acres to be grazed. In 2024, the total open space acreage has increased to approximately 996 acres (Attachment 2) and the current contract for grazing services expires on December 31, 2023.

The bid for 2024 Grazing Services was advertised on September 7, 2023, and September 14, 2023, with the bid opening Thursday, October 9, 2023. Two (2) bids were received from the following (Attachment 3).

Blue Tent Farms, LLC (Red Bluff)	\$1,539,158.00
Legacy Ranching and Land Management (Grass Valley)	\$1,775,050.20

In 2019, the average cost for grazing in the city was \$350 per acre. The two bids that were received are significantly higher than the proposals received in 2019. Blue Tent's price per acre is \$495 for 2024 and increases 4% each year after, and Legacy proposed \$594 per acre for the 3 years with no increase. The current grazer provided their breakdown to help illustrate the justification for cost increases as such and generally reflects the industry as a whole. In addition to regular costs associated with inflation, there has been a 71% increase in fuel cost over the life of the contract, changes to state regulations targeting the herding industry which has resulted in 112% increase in payroll, a 521% increase in insurance costs resulting in urban grazing compared to rural grazing, and a 163% increase in animal rental to address the city's expanded open space program and logistics associated with grazing longer narrower waterways.

Staff has reviewed the low bid for sufficiency, determined it was responsive, and determined Blue Tent Farms LLC submitted a responsible bid. Staff recommends that the City Council award the contract to Blue Tent Farms LLC.

The first term of this agreement is for a term of three (3) years, from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2026, with the option to renew the contract for up to two additional one-year terms at the City's sole discretion, provided budget funds are available. The cost of the first three (3) year term is \$1,539,158.00. Pursuant to the Rocklin Municipal Code 3.04.050, the City Manager, or their designee, has change order authority of fifteen (15) percent (\$230,873.70) of the contract amount. The amount for this project including fifteen (15) percent change order authority brings the total cost to \$1,770,031.70 for the initial three (3) year term. In addition, staff recommends that the City Council authorize the City Manager, or their designee, to add future acreage to the contract that has been annexed into the City's open space program and has an identified funding source.

If the term of the contract is extended beyond the initial three-year term, any requests made by the Contractor for a price increase must be fully documented utilizing an appropriate Consumer or Producer Price Index or other relevant market data to justify a price change, not to exceed 4%. In its request for price increases Contractor shall cite sources, specific conditions, and document how those conditions affect the cost.

Weed and Rubbish Abatement

During the 2023 season (April – September), approximately 90 acres were abated. Staff expects a similar amount during the next season (Attachment 5); however, that can increase or decrease depending on the addition of open space and the number of vacant parcels in which the owners elect to have the City abate their property.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued for the City of Rocklin 2024 Weed and Rubbish Abatement Project and was advertised on October 5, 2023, and October 12, 2023, with a submittal date of Wednesday, November 15, 2023. Two (2) proposals were received from the following contractors (Attachment 6):

Northern State Contractors, Inc. (Sacramento)	\$259,500
DCS (Hazleton, PA)	\$463,530

The proposals were evaluated by City Staff, and reference checks were performed. Staff received excellent recommendations from the references for Northern State Contractors, Inc. and recommends the City Council award the contract for the project to Northern State Contractors, Inc.

The proposal consisted of a fee schedule that provides the costs of various forms of abatement (discing, handwork, mowing) per acre. The proposal item/tasks costs can be used on various budgeted maintenance and projects, allowing for other divisions to utilize this contract provided there is available funding within their budget.

The first term of this agreement is for a term of three (3) years, from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2026, with the option to renew the contract for up to two (2) additional years. The annual cost of the contract is for a not-to-exceed amount of \$200,000, with a maximum not-to-exceed amount of \$1,000,000 over the five-year period. This not-to-exceed amount has been identified to allow for the use for other projects, within the city.

No additional budget appropriations will be needed as any potential funds have already been included in the budget. Once the contract is implemented, staff will issue work orders on a per job basis throughout the year. In addition, staff recommends authorizing the City Manager, or their designee, the authority to extend the contract for two (2) additional one (1) year terms, as well as authorization to add/delete acreage as vacant parcels are added or removed.

Environmental Analysis:

The City of Rocklin's Weed Abatement and Open Space Management Grazing Program Regulations and Permit Conditions includes a Notice of Exemption (NOE) complying with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements.

The City of Rocklin's Environmental Coordinator has reviewed the City of Rocklin Weed Abatement Project under the previously approved Notice of Exemption for the City's weed abatement projects, Resolution No. 2019-259 and is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to California Code of Regulations Section 15301.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no direct fiscal impact to approving the contracts, as sufficient funds are available in the annual budget in the General Fund, CFD 5 Fund (232) and CFD 6 Fund (233).

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [Resolution A - Grazing Services](#)
2. [Project Location Map - Grazing Services](#)
3. [Bid Summary - Grazing Services](#)
4. [Resolution B - Weed and Rubbish Abatement](#)
5. [Project Location Map - Weed and Rubbish Abatement](#)
6. [Bid Summary - Weed and Rubbish Abatement](#)