



MEMORANDUM

Date: April 1, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Commissioners

Via: Brian L. Barroso
City Manager

CC: Christina Bervaldi
Director of Finance

From: Lucas Torres-Bull
Procurement Manager

Subject: **File ID 26-5242 – Approving the award of Request for Qualifications (RFQ) No. 26-002 to Wells Fire Consultant, Inc. for Fire Department ISO Class One (1) Consultant; and authorizing the City Manager, or designee, to negotiate and execute a contract in accordance with RFQ No. 26-002, and to execute any necessary related documents and associated budget transfers or adjustments, subject to review and approval by the City Attorney.**

Introduction

Staff recommends that the Mayor and City Commission adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager, or designee, to enter into negotiations with Wells Fire Consulting, Inc for the provisions described in Request for Qualifications (RFQ) No. 26-002 and, upon successful completion of those negotiations, execute an agreement.

Background

On January 29, 2026, at 8:00 p.m. (Eastern Time), the City of Key West publicly advertised Request for Qualifications (RFQ) No. 26-002 in The Key West Citizen and on DemandStar, in accordance with the City's procurement requirements. The purpose of this solicitation was to obtain qualified consulting services to assist the City in maintaining its Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating.

Maintaining a favorable ISO rating is critically important to both the City and its residents, as it directly influences the cost of fire insurance premiums for residential and commercial properties. Communities that maintain a top-tier ISO classification, such as a Class 1 rating, can realize estimated insurance premium reductions ranging from approximately 10% to 30% compared to average-rated jurisdictions, with even greater savings when compared to lower-rated communities. When applied across the City's full inventory of residential and commercial properties, these reductions may equate to millions of dollars in annual savings community-wide. In addition to direct financial benefits, a strong ISO rating reflects the effectiveness of the City's fire protection system—including fire department operations, emergency response capabilities, water supply infrastructure, and community risk reduction programs—which in turn supports property values, enhances economic competitiveness, and reinforces the City's commitment to public safety and resilience. Conversely, any decline in the ISO rating could result in increased insurance costs, placing a measurable financial burden on property owners and negatively impacting the local economy.

Proposals were due on February 25, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. (Eastern Time), at which time the City Clerk's Office publicly opened the submittals received in response to RFQ No. 26-002. The City received one (1) proposal, submitted by Wells Fire Consulting.

On March 18, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. (Eastern Time), the City's evaluation committee convened to review and evaluate the proposal in accordance with the established evaluation criteria and scoring matrix. Each evaluator independently reviewed and scored the submission, followed by a collective discussion of the proposer's qualifications, experience, and overall approach.

Following comprehensive review and discussion, the evaluation committee recommends Wells Fire Consulting for award. While the firm demonstrated limited direct experience specifically as an ISO consulting provider, the committee determined that the proposer's extensive tenure and firsthand operational experience as a Key West firefighter provides significant institutional knowledge, familiarity with local systems, and an in-depth understanding of the operational, logistical, and documentation requirements necessary to maintain and potentially improve the City's ISO rating. The committee concluded that this practical, localized expertise will be instrumental in supporting the City's ongoing efforts to sustain its current classification and continue delivering substantial financial and public safety benefits to the Key West community.

Procurement

There is no immediate or guaranteed financial obligation associated with the award of this contract. Services will be provided strictly on an as-needed basis and only upon written authorization by the City. Any expenditures incurred under this agreement shall be governed by the approved hourly rates and the established annual cap on billable hours.

This agreement also constitutes a strategic investment in preserving the City's ISO Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating. Maintaining a strong ISO rating may yield significant indirect financial benefits to the community by helping to reduce fire insurance premiums for residential and commercial property owners, potentially resulting in substantial community-wide savings, without requiring the City to make any fixed or upfront financial commitment.

All work performed under this agreement shall be subject to the availability of appropriated and budgeted funds and must comply with all applicable City approval and procurement thresholds.

Funding Source: 001-2201-522-3100 (General Fund – Fire Department – Professional Services)

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Mayor and City Commission adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager, or designee, to enter into negotiations with Wells Fire Consulting, Inc for the provisions described in Request for Qualifications (RFQ) No. 26-002 and, upon successful completion of those negotiations, execute an agreement.