



BOARD MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 15, 2024

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Najwa Pitois, Ph.D., P.E.
Senior Water Resources and Data Scientist *NP*

SUBJECT: Approve Authorizing the General Manager to Enter into a Contract with INTERA Incorporated for Groundwater Flow Model Improvement under the Water Resilience Initiative

SUMMARY

SCV Water is seeking to enhance its existing groundwater flow model to assess improved management strategies for the Upper Santa Clara River (USCR) East Basin in the context of an integrated resources management strategy under the Water Resilience Initiative (WRI). To carry out this work, staff is requesting authorization to enter into a professional services agreement with INTERA Incorporated (INTERA) as discussed below.

DISCUSSION

In Summer of 2021, SCV Water issued a Request for Qualification (RFQ) for the WRI through PlanetBids, resulting in a qualified panel of consultants upon which to draw for future work. The multi-year WRI adopts a systems approach to water resource management and is focused on examining the linkages between pumping in the local groundwater basin and functional flows and ecology in the Santa Clara River and overall water supply reliability.

Subsequently, in Summer of 2022, SCV Water developed a draft work plan for its WRI to address the coordinated management of its water supply system, ecosystem, and groundwater system and promote watershed resilience staff identified additional expertise needed to address some of the tasks anticipated in the draft workplan that were not part of the original RFQ solicitation. The additional required expertise falls broadly under:

- Structured Decision-Making and Community Engagement
- Integrated Groundwater Management
- Data Collection and Management

On August 29, 2023, a refined RFQ for the WRI was advertised on PlanetBids seeking qualifications for the above areas of expertise. Nine (9) proposals were received and a five-member panel of SCV Water staff evaluated the proposals, selecting seven (7) pre-qualified consultants for future work.

On December 14, 2023, a Request for Task Order Proposals for Integrated Groundwater Management was released via email to the two highest scoring consultants that qualified for the refined WRI RFQ. SCV Water invited INTERA and Woodard & Curran to submit Task Order Proposals to assist in the development of analytical tools to better enable utilization of

the existing groundwater flow model (model) to produce analyses that are essential to timely decision-making under the WRI. Staff evaluated the proposals from the two consultants and found that INTERA provided a scope of work that addressed the proposed groundwater evaluation needs in a comprehensive manner, considering the broader objectives of the WRI. INTERA also proposed innovative approaches for assistance in prioritizing future alternative groundwater management actions. Therefore, staff recommended INTERA to perform the work.

As SCV Water undertakes substantive improvements to the groundwater flow model, it is essential that groundwater analyses support decisions regarding investments in new groundwater development programs and major planning efforts including:

- Functional Flow Evaluations
- Updates to the Urban Water Management Plan
- Updates to the Groundwater Sustainability Plan

These new tools or improvements in existing tools and applications to the existing groundwater flow model under this Task Order would be evaluated and recommended to provide:

- Improved representation and visualization of model output.
- Improved quality of input to the model.
- Processes or criteria for prioritizing proposed alternative groundwater management evaluations, developed and discussed in collaboration with agency staff, in relation to the WRI needs as described in the WRI work plan and RFQ.
- Automated modeling to reduce costs of conducting necessary simulations.

On February 14, 2024, the Water Resources and Watershed Committee considered staff's recommendation to approve authorizing the General Manager to enter into a contract with INTERA Incorporated for Groundwater Flow Model Improvement under the Water Resilience Initiative and through consensus to move this item forward for consideration and approval by the Board of Directors.

STRATEGIC PLAN NEXUS

The scope of work under this Task Order will help meet the Agency's Strategic Plan Goal C. Water Supply and Resource Sustainability: Implement programs to ensure the service area has reliable and sustainable supplies of water.

Strategy C.1 Conduct planning to ensure long-term water demands are met.

- C.1.2 Identify projects and initiate planning for projects to enhance long-term water supply reliability consistent with the updated Water Supply Reliability Report.
- C.1.5 Monitor climate change science and public policy. Incorporate climate change impacts on water demand and supplies into long-term plans and programs to maintain reliable and sustainable water supplies.

Strategy C.3 Advance the integrated management of water resources.

- C.3.5 Coordinate and analyze performance of water banking and exchange programs, local groundwater production and water conservation measures.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Funding for this work is included in the FY 2024 and FY 2025 Capital Budget. However, depending on data availability and evolving needs of the agency, current and future budgets and schedules may need to be adjusted to accommodate this project.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Water Resources and Watershed Committee recommends that the Board of Directors authorize the General Manager to enter into a contract with INTERA Incorporated for Groundwater Flow Model Improvements in the amount of \$195,788.

MBS