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DATE: September 2, 2025

TO: Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Kyle Knopp, City Manager

SUBJECT: Authorization for Public Works Landscaping Services Request for Proposal

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL:

1. Authorize the City Manager to develop and issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for annual landscaping maintenance services; or, take no action

BACKGROUND

The City of Rio Dell currently uses its utility crew for grounds maintenance activities in addition to specialized utility operations that require technical expertise and involve regulatory compliance.

Over ten years ago, the City of Rio Dell issued an RFP for landscaping services, but from the memory of staff, the proposals came in at a very high cost. The proposal was dropped in favor of continuing to use the Utility Crew for grounds maintenance.

DISCUSSION

Rio Dell's small city staff means that many individual employees have a diverse array of responsibilities. In discussions amongst staff the topic of how to make the Public Works Department's Utility Crew function better, the topic has centered generally around providing better pay, more employees and revisiting the option to contract out landscaping services. This agenda item proposes to explore contracting out landscaping services as a potential method to make the utility worker positions more inviting, sustainable, less physically exhausting and to boost the morale of the Public Works Department.

Other benefits may include more specialized expertise in grounds maintenance and additional time for the City's utility crew to focus on training for and maintenance of various City systems.

Additional benefits may also include the level of landscape maintenance not being tied to the level of City staffing.

However, adding a contractor for this function without reducing costs in other areas will result in a net cost increase to the City. In this case were it to move forward, costs would theoretically rise in Water and Wastewater Fund operations as more of the time of the Utility Crew would be focused on that function. However, with more time focused on water and wastewater functions, customers may see fewer disruptions and a higher level of service.

Weighing the pros and cons of this approach are difficult to estimate. It is recommended that staff seek out proposals from licensed landscape maintenance outfits to better understand the costs of such work which will allow staff to better analyze an approach to the overall department.

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