

David Whitaker, Esq.
Director
Irvin Corley, Jr.
Executive Policy Manager
Marcell R. Todd, Jr.
Director, City Planning Commission
Janese Chapman
Director, Historic Designation
Advisory Board

John Alexander
Roland Amarteifio
Megha Bamola
LaKisha Barclift, Esq.
Nur Barre
Paige Blessman
M. Rory Bolger, Ph.D., FAICP
Eric Fazzini
Christopher Gulock, AICP

City of Detroit

CITY COUNCIL

LEGISLATIVE POLICY DIVISION
208 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
Detroit, Michigan 48226
Phone: (313) 224-4946 Fax: (313) 224-4336

Derrick Headd
Marcel Hurt, Esq.
Kimani Jeffrey
Edward King
Jamie Murphy
Kim Newby
Analine Powers, Ph.D.
Laurie Anne Sabatini
Rebecca Savage
Ryan Schumaker
Sabrina Shockley
Renee Short
Thomas Stephens, Esq.
Timarie Szwed
Dr. Sheryl Theriot
Theresa Thomas
Ashley A. Wilson

TO: Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director 
Legislative Policy Division

DATE: July 25, 2022

RE: Contract 6002855: DMT Solutions Global Corporation dba BlueCrest

As a result of the submission and subsequent approval of the amendment to contract 6002855, Council Member Angela Whitfield-Calloway requested the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) provide a report relative to the purchase and use of the ReliaVote Sorting Machine and comparable municipalities utilizing the equipment, training, and software.

100% City Funding – AMEND 1 – To Provide an Extension of Time and an Increase of Funds for Maintenance and Various Support Services in Addition to a One Time Purchase of a Reliavote Sorting Machine. – Contractor: DMT Solutions Global Corporation dba BlueCrest – Location: 37 Executive Drive, Danbury, CT 06810 – Contract Period: June 30, 2022 through June 29, 2024 – Contract Increase Amount: \$509,160.00 – Total Contract Amount: \$1,060,377.00. Original Contract Period: June 30, 2020 through June 29, 2022

The ReliaVote sorting machines has been in use for 20 years. Its manufacture, BlueCrest works with over 60 other municipalities across the country with the ReliaVote Automated Inbound Mail Ballot Solution and similar equipment. Together the system touched more than 30 million ballots in the 2020 presidential general election cycle.

According to BlueCrest, the most comparable municipalities to the city of Detroit are Franklin County in Ohio, Kane County in IL, Miami Dade, Philadelphia, and Marion County/Indianapolis where they are currently in the process of installing the BlueCrest solution. Listed below are the comparable municipalities identified by the vendor and the number of registered voters in each municipality.

1. Kane County Illinois- 314,073
2. Franklin County Ohio- 841,300
3. Miami- Dade County- 1,502,847
4. Philadelphia- 1,047,993
5. Marion County Indiana- 678,067
6. Detroit Wayne County- 1,407,316
7. City of Detroit- 504,714

As we know, the 2020 Philadelphia election was one of the most critical and closely watched of the election cycle. A total of 749,000 ballots were cast, of those approximately 365,000 were mail in ballots, reportedly Philadelphia's highest turn out since 1984.

As a result of our inquiry, the following information was provided to our offices by DMT/BlueCrest.¹

The ReliaVote Automated Inbound Mail Ballot Solution has been touted as the gold standard of technology when it comes to the timely and accurate processing of returned mail in ballots. It consists of a high speed (24,000 pieces per hour) Vantage Sorter that scans and sorts incoming mail ballots to facilitate a more automated and auditable process. As it relates to the city of Detroit, the key benefits of this Reliavote system can be grouped into two broad categories:

1. Reduction in the time, cost and resources needed to verify and process returned mail ballots within your required deadlines

- **Reduces amount of full time and temporary labor for processing of returned ballots**
 - The ReliaVote system can scan and sort 20,000 returned ballots per hour with 2-3 operators. The results in significant time savings as there are over 500 precincts in the primary that are sorted with multiple passes. Essentially this is the first record of receipt as a scanned picture with date and time is recorded for each ballot or voter ID. Additionally, the system's on-screen signature comparison tool typically results in 5-7 times faster verification than the City's current manual method. This means more ballots processed with significantly less staff.

- **Accommodates peak processing times around Election Day**

¹ Fred M. Allen, DMT Regional Account Manager, July 12, 2022

- The largest volume of returned ballots are received on or around Election Day. The ReliaVote automated solution helps to handle this increased volume within your required deadlines, without requiring huge staffing increases, while ensuring the highest level of accuracy and accountability.
- **Enables faster reporting of results**
 - Mailing envelopes cannot be opened, nor ballots scanned, until the required verification steps are completed. The high efficiency of the ReliaVote system means envelopes are verified quicker, making them available for subsequent opening and counting sooner.

2. Improves the accuracy, transparency, and auditability of the mail ballot process

- **Provides a more secure method for handling and processing returned mail ballots.**
 - Envelopes are securely stored after scanning and mail ballots are then verified and adjudicated electronically. This eliminates the need to have dozens, if not hundreds, of election workers handling live ballots throughout the office.
- **Ensures accurate handling of every returned mail ballot**
 - The system is updated with data from the state's Qualified Voter File daily to ensure accurate and timely handling of received mail pieces. Invalid pieces are automatically flagged and out sorted by the system thereby ensuring all mail pieces are handled appropriately and accurately.
- **Prints audit trail information on each returned mail ballot**
 - The system automatically endorses each envelope with a time and stamp upon initial receipt, as well as identifying which staff member verified each piece.
- **Provides an audit trail of every returned mail ballot envelope.**

This audit shows every time a mail ballot was handled by the sorter, as well as its location and final disposition. A full electronic image of the envelope is also saved and available for review purposes.

According to the company website, the ReliaVote system is the only integrated, secure, end to end vote by mail solution for processing both outbound and inbound mail ballots.² Based upon the needs of a municipality and the various state laws governing elections, the solutions systems are custom configured to address the needs of the client. Consequently, this was a sole source procurement.

With vote by mail and absentee balloting becoming more widely utilized, the Relia-Vote solution seems to be a suitable solution for large to medium counties and municipalities for processing mail in ballots. If you have additional questions or concerns, LPD would be glad to

² www.bluecrestinc.com/solutions/vote-by-mail-relia-vote/

provide additional information. We have attached LPD's original contract summary review document for your reference.

Line Item 6.5

ELECTIONS

6002855 100% City Funding – AMEND 1 – To Provide an Extension of Time and an Increase of Funds for Maintenance and Various Support Services in Addition to a One Time Purchase of a Reliavote Sorting Machine. – Contractor: DMT Solutions Global Corporation dba BlueCrest – Location: 37 Executive Drive, Danbury, CT 06810 – Contract Period: June 30, 2022 through June 29, 2024 – Contract Increase Amount: \$509,160.00 – Total Contract Amount: \$1,060,377.00.

Original Contract Period: June 30, 2020 through June 29, 2022

Waiver of Reconsideration Requested

Funding

Account String: **1000-28710-710042-622301**

Fund Account Name: **General Fund**

Opportunity

Appropriation Name: **Effective Governance - City Elections**

Funds Available: **\$206,605 as of June 10, 2022**

Complies

*****Costs budgeted to Fiscal Year 2022-2023.**

Disclosure

Tax Clearances Expiration Date: 6-21-23

Disclosure

Political Contributions and Expenditures Statement:

System Record Signed: **5-19-22** Contributions: **None**

Disclosure

Consolidated Affidavits

Date signed: **5-19-22**

Covenant of Equal

Hiring Policy Compliance; Employment Application

Slavery Era Records

Prison Industry Records

Immigrant Detention

Bid & Background Information

No bid, this is an amendment to a previously approved contract. This vendor was the sole bid at that time.

Contract Details:

Vendor: **DMT Solutions Global Corporation dba BlueCrest** Amount: **+\$509,160.00 to \$1,060,377.00**

End Date: **+ 2 years to June 29, 2024**

Services/ Fees:

The equipment was purchased to ramp up Clerk’s Office/ Election Department’s ability to process absentee ballots to mitigate the spread of Covid 19.

The “ReliaVote Inbound” sorting machine processes include processing all Absentee Voter return envelopes before they are sent and then upon return, they are verified via the sorting machine and/or manually before the votes are counted. They are verified via the registered Voter list provided by the Elections department through the Relia-Vote database.

The fees include licensing fees, maintenance cost/ hardware support, and outlays for onsite technicians:

2- Onsite Technicians- Weekday Coverage 6-13-22 to 8-3-22 (37days) \$1,600 each is (\$59,200 X 2) = \$118,400

2- Onsite Technicians- Saturday Coverage 6-13-22 to 8-3-22 (7 Days) \$1,980 each is (\$13,860 X 2) = \$ 27,720

**Field Service Level Annual Maintenance Agreement -Contract Extension per year is (\$35,400) =
\$ 35,400 Actual costs for FY 2022 – 2023 - TOTAL
\$181,520**

According to OCP and the Elections Department, the remaining \$327,640 of the total contract amount is an estimate for future costs. The future years are estimates based on past year maintenance, with additional estimated equipment purchases which will include additional maintenance over 2-years. The department provided a requisition to cover the first quoted year FY22 amount, with funds drawn on new FY 2022-2023. There will be onsite support for training, trouble shooting and maintenance -45 days out from election.

The full \$551,217 authorized amount has been expended on this contract.

Additional Information:

Contract 6002855 was originally approved June 16, 2022 for the Elections Department to purchase sorting machines and maintenance/support services for \$551,217; through June 29, 2022.