PURCHASING POLICY
Town of Highgate

PURPOSE. The purpose of this Purchasing Policy is to obtain the highest quality goods and services for the Town of Highgate at the lowest possible price, to exercise financial control over the purchasing process, to clearly define authority for the purchasing function, to allow fair and equal opportunity among qualified suppliers, and to provide for increased public confidence in the procedures followed in public purchasing.

PURCHASE AUTHORIZATION. When making any purchase not subject to the bid process described below, officers and employees must solicit quotes from at least two vendors. Vendors will be selected based on cost, the quality of the goods and services offered, and the ability, capacity, and skill of the vendor demonstrated under prior contracts with the Town.

BID PROCESS. All single purchases of $5,000.00 or greater shall be subject to a bid process. The bid process shall be initiated by the issuance of a request for bids prepared by the appropriate municipal panel (A.M.P.). Notice of the request for bids shall be forwarded to known providers soliciting bid responses, notices posted in three locations, and advertisements placed in a newspaper of general circulation in the region.

BID SPECIFICATIONS. Bid specifications shall include:

1. Bid name.
2. Bid submission deadline and methods of delivering.
3. Date, location, and time of bid opening.
4. Specifications for the project or services including quantity, design, and performance features.
5. Bond and/or insurance requirements.
6. Any special requirements unique to the purchase.
7. Delivery or completion date.

Once a request for bids has been issued, the bid specifications will be available for review at the Town office.

BID SUBMISSION. All bids must be submitted in sealed envelopes and plainly marked with the name of the bid and the time of the bid opening. Bid proposals will be date stamped on the outside of the envelope immediately upon receipt. Any bid may be withdrawn in writing prior to the scheduled time for the opening of bids. Any bids received after the time and date specified shall not be considered and shall be returned to the bidder unopened.

Bidders shall bid to specifications and any exceptions must be noted. A bidder submitting a bid thereby certifies that the bid is made in good faith without fraud, collusion, or connection of any kind with any other bidder for the same work, and that the bidder is competing solely on his/her behalf without connection with or obligation to any undisclosed person or firm.

BID OPENING. All properly submitted bids will be opened at a public meeting by the A.M.P., or if expediency demands it, the bids shall be opened by a designated staff member in the presence of two witnesses and the results documented. The bid opening will include the name and address of bidder; for lump sum contracts, the lump sum base bid and the bid for each alternate; for unit price contracts, the unit price for each item and the total, if stated; and the nature and the amount of security furnished with the bid if required.

CRITERIA FOR BID SELECTION. In evaluating bids, the following criteria will be considered:

1. Price.
2. Bidder's ability to perform within the specified time limits.
3. Bidder's experience and reputation, including past performance for the Town.
4. Quality of the materials and services specified in the bid.
5. Bidder's ability to meet other terms and conditions, including insurance and bond requirements.
6. Bidder's financial responsibility.
7. Bidder's availability to provide future service, maintenance, and support.
8. Nature and size of bidder.
9. Any other factors that the A.M.P. determines are relevant and appropriate in connection with a given project or service.

The A.M.P. reserves the right at its sole discretion to reject any and all bids, wholly or in part, to waive any informalities or any irregularities therein, to accept any bid even though it may not be the lowest bid, to call for rebids, to negotiate with any bidder, and to make an award which in its sole and absolute judgment will best serve the Town's interest. The A.M.P. reserves the right to investigate the financial responsibility of any bidder to determine his or her ability to assure service throughout the term of the contract.

CHANGE ORDERS. If specification changes are made prior to the close of the bid process, at the site visit or by the deadline for questions in writing, the addendum will be forwarded to all firms that have notified the town of their interest in bidding. Once a bid has been accepted, if changes to the specifications become necessary, the A.M.P. will prepare a change order specifying the scope of the change. Once approved, the contractor and an authorized agent of the Town must sign the change order.

EXCEPTIONS. (Listed in no specific order)

Employee Bid Submission. In the event a hired employee, elected official, or appointed official of the town submits a bid for consideration, they must follow the same bid submission process. Prior to awarding a bid to an employee, elected or appointed official of the town, two outside bids must have been solicited to avoid acts of favoritism or special treatment.

Sole Source Purchases. If the Selectboard determines that there is only one possible source for a proposed purchase, it may waive the bid process and authorize the purchase from the sole source.

Recurring Purchases. If the total value of a recurring purchase of a good or service is anticipated to exceed $3000.00 during any fiscal year, the bid process shall be utilized and shall specify the recurring nature of the purchase. Once a bid has been accepted, all future purchases made within that fiscal year shall be made from that bidder without necessity of additional bids, or until such time as the Selectboard votes to initiate a new bid process.

Emergency Purchases. The Selectboard may award contracts and make purchases for the purpose of meeting the public emergency without complying with the bid process. Emergency expenditures may include immediate repair or maintenance of town property, vehicles, or equipment if the delay in such repair or maintenance would endanger persons or property or result in substantial impairment of the delivery of important Town services.

Professional Services. The bid process shall not apply to the selection of providers for services that are characterized by a high degree of professional judgment and discretion including legal, financial, auditing, engineering, risk management, and insurance services.

The foregoing Policy was adopted by the Selectboard Henry Rainville (Chair), Jeff Towle (Vice-Chair) Brian Rowell (Board Member) and Tom Racine (Town Clerk & Treasurer) of the Town of Highgate, Vermont the 15th day of April, 2010.

The foregoing Policy has been amended by the Finance Committee Heidi Britch-Valenta, Shelley Laroche, Ronald Nye, Paulette Tatro, and Luc Dupuis, and approved by the Selectboard of the Town of Highgate, Vermont the 16 day of June, 2016 and is effective as of this date until amended or repealed.

Chris Yates, Chairperson

Paulette Tatro, Vice-Chair

Randy Connelly

Joshua Larocque

Sharon Bousquet