



## PURCHASING MANUAL & POLICIES

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## PURPOSE OF MANUAL

The purpose of this manual is to provide all departments with the procedures and policies to be used in the requisitioning and issuing of supplies, materials and equipment. Employees of the City of Thomasville involved with any aspect of the purchasing process should be familiar with, and adhere to, all guidelines set forth in this manual.

It is anticipated that there will be procedural changes resulting from more definite alignments of responsibility and changes in requirements. These procedural modifications will be provided as they occur and should be used to replace like pages in this manual when forwarded from the Purchasing Department. Each department should maintain the manual in a loose-leaf form so that it is readily available.

The information included within this manual should prove to be beneficial to the City, City employees and Vendors wishing to do business with the City of Thomasville.

This policy manual is effective immediate upon issuance and receipt, and supersedes all previous purchasing manuals.

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Alan Carson  
City Manager

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Anthony Choice  
Purchasing Administrator

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Date Issued

## PURCHASING AGENT

Section 2-9 of the Thomasville Municipal Code: City Manager to supervise purchases and conduct personal property sales.

Section 13-5 Purchasing.

(a) *General supervision.* The utilities committee shall have general supervision of all purchasing and sales or disposal of surplus or unserviceable equipment for the utilities systems.

(b) *Overall supervision.* The superintendent in his capacity as purchasing agent shall have overall supervision of all purchases of supplies, services, and equipment and of all disposal of surplus or unserviceable equipment for the utilities systems.

The City Manager/Utilities Superintendent, in his duties as purchasing agent for the general government and utilities department of the City, shall devise, establish and cause to be maintained a system of purchase orders, requisitions or other forms of purchasing controls in general accordance with established good principles in municipal governance in the state. He shall faithfully follow and comply with rules and regulations for purchasing and contracting established by the City Council. As purchasing agent for the City general government and utilities department, the City Manager/Utilities Superintendent shall conduct all sales of personal property of the City, which the City Council may authorize to be sold and which may have become unnecessary or unfit for the City's use. (Ord. of2-10-86(1))

## **Purchasing Objectives:**

1. Assist departments in the purchase quality materials, equipment, supplies, and services in the correct quantity, at the lowest evaluated cost, and at the required time, focusing on reduced lead times, improved service levels, increased value added services and optimized inventory cost to the operating departments.
2. Enhance supplier relationships with properly authorized and documented bidding procedures; improved purchase specifications, sales terms and conditions; and reduced times for invoice verification and payment.
3. Ensure bids and proposals for goods and services are conducted competitively and objectively, giving equal opportunity to all suppliers and developing reliable and competitive sources.
4. Assist departments in the selection suppliers, not by price alone, but through detailed evaluation of quality, service, price, productivity, availability, administrative costs, and environmental impact that best fits the need of the department and in the best interest of the City of Thomasville.
5. Assist in monitoring required delivery schedules, supplier performance and post completion contractor warranties to meet departmental and contractual requirements. Provide guidance regarding Purchase Order changes and claims.
6. Research, collect, and share information on innovative practices and new products for potential City use that would create savings and continuous improvement in the purchasing process.

## POLICY

As a matter of policy, the Purchasing Department shall be of service to all City departments. All functions shall comply with the good purchasing practices; applicable City ordinances, state and federal laws; and as set forth in this manual.

Purchasing policy as follows:

1. All requests for prices and/or services, and all purchases shall be made without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, age or sex and in accordance with this manual,
2. The Purchasing Department shall have full authority to question the quality, quantity, and kind of commodities or services requisitioned to assure that the best interests of the City are served. However, the Purchasing Department shall not alter or in any way change technical requirements stated on the purchase requisition.
3. The Purchasing Department shall not receive any benefit or profit from any contract or purchase made by the City.
4. Acceptance of gifts, at any time, other than advertising novelties, shall be prohibited.  
No City personnel shall become obligated to any vendor and must not conclude any City transaction from which they may personally benefit directly or indirectly.
5. The Purchasing Department shall strive to maintain strong professional and cooperative relationships with vendors of proven ability and with those who have a desire to meet the needs of the City. To accomplish this, purchasing activities shall be conducted so that the vendors will value City business and be encouraged to make every effort to fulfill City requirements based on quality, service and price.
6. The City shall buy only from vendors who have adequate financial strength, high ethical standards, and a record of adhering to specifications, maintaining shipping promises and giving a full measure of services. New vendors will be given due consideration as multiple sources of supply are necessary to insure availability of commodities and services.
7. All qualified bidders shall be afforded equal opportunities to quote and shall compare on equal terms.
8. The City's goal is to receive maximum value for the dollars spent and to purchase in the best interest of the City. The Purchasing Department shall act as a City representative on all matters pertaining to purchasing.

8. The Purchasing Department shall not knowingly issue a purchase order when there is a conflict of interest. All known or suspected conflict of interest situations shall be referred to the City Attorney, whose opinion shall be final in the absence of any specific instructions from the Mayor and City Council. Such opinions or instructions shall be documented by the issuing authority.
9. The officials engaged in purchasing shall foster constructive by constantly seeking new bidders, obtaining several bids on almost everything purchased and developing more than one active source of supply for various products and services.
10. It is City policy to effect maximum feasible standardization of products used within and among departments in order to minimize stock levels and obtain better prices through large quantity purchases.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Every person with the City of Thomasville is responsible for the control of supplies, materials, and equipment, which are provided for the accomplishment of the City's activities. The security, accountability and physical maintenance of these items is the responsibility of each to whom these materials are allocated. Department heads are further responsible for the control of material usage, allocation of supply quantities, physical security for materials and proper disposition of surplus items.

1. Department heads will have the following responsibilities:
  - (a) Initiating requisitions for non-stock purchases based on need, lead-time and approved budget.
  - (b) Preparing specifications and determining if specifications are appropriate and are in the best interest of the City.
  - (c) Consulting as to quality and quantity in both stock and non-stock purchases.
  - (d) Receiving materials and submitting documents to substantiate invoice payment; except when items are received at the warehouse. The warehouse personnel will accept and receive materials and collate documents.
  - (e) Indicating to the Purchasing Department undelivered orders, damage or other discrepancies; the warehouse personnel are responsible for both stock and non-stock items received at the warehouse.
  
2. The Purchasing Administrator will have the following responsibilities:
  - (a) Purchasing for price, quality and performance using effective techniques.
  - (b) Investigating discrepancies, reconciling problems relating to vendors and sales representatives.
  - (c) Inform department heads of market changes, new products and other such factors.
  - (d) Developing and processing bids.
  - (e) Maintaining good vendor relations.
  - (f) Disposing of obsolete, excess and junk materials.
  - (g) The Purchasing Administrator, under the guidance of the City Manager, the Mayor and the City Council, is responsible for reviewing all purchases made, verifying the correct process was used, the proper documentation is provided and policy was not circumvented. All purchase documentation must be forwarded to Accounts payable during the Purchase Requisition creation.
  
3. The Finance Department will have the following responsibilities:
  - (a) Matching invoices to Purchase Orders.
  - (b) Notifying the Purchasing Department of discrepancies on invoices.



- (c) Making timely payments of vendor invoices and taking discounts, as available.

## **GENERAL PROCEDURES**

### **PRICING PROCEDURES:**

The City uses several methods of securing prices depending upon the size and the type of purchase. We may use competitive sealed bids, competitive informal bids, fax quotes, telephone quotes, personal contacts and state contracts. All price quotes are to be firm for at least 30 days, unless specified otherwise by the vendor, or by the City. All prices are to be quoted F.O.B. Destination (City of Thomasville docks) & freight is prepaid.

### **DELIVERIES:**

As the City has various receiving points for goods, be sure that delivery directions are understood when placing orders. All Purchase orders will indicate correct delivery points.

### **INVOICING:**

Please invoice the City as soon as complete orders are delivered and received. Billing should be sent to City of Thomasville, Accounts Payable, P.O. Box 1540, Thomasville, Georgia 31799-1540.

### **PAYMENTS:**

All valid invoices will be paid net 30 days. We also take advantage of discounts offered for early payment. For an invoice to be valid it must reference a City of Thomasville purchase order number and only one purchase order number per invoice.

## PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS

### Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to establish standards for ensuring purchasing efficiency, open competition and the best value for the City at the lowest possible cost.

It is the responsibility of the purchasing administrator to ensure that proper procurement procedures are as followed:

**Purchasing Methods and Dollar Thresholds** – The dollar value of the goods and services to be purchased determines the purchasing method to be used. The award of Purchase Orders and contracts with suppliers will be based on the lowest evaluated cost, while meeting the specified quality, quantity and delivery requirements. Any exceptions to this are further defined in this Policy.

With the GEMS Financial software system, ALL goods and services purchased by the City MUST have a Purchase Requisition created in the system. This is not dependent upon the dollar amount as all purchases must be documented in this manner. Determination of the **method of purchasing** is still dependent upon the dollar threshold. The only exceptions are purchases made with city-issued credit cards which are paid monthly through the finance department after required departmental and administrative staff has reconciled and approved all documents.

**The following specific dollar thresholds are used to determine the appropriate purchasing method:**

**Less than \$1,000** – The purchase of goods and services in an amount less than \$1,000 shall be by a departmental supplied purchase order with a Purchase Requisition created in the system. These purchases do not require a competitive bid process. Department managers and/or authorized representative(s) may select a supplier, taking into consideration: fair and reasonable cost, delivery/pickup time, and convenience to the work site.

During the Requisition conversion process, purchasing reviews all purchases made, verifying the correct process was used, the proper documentation is provided and policy was not circumvented. All purchase documentation must be retained by the end-user and a copy of the purchased documentation to be paid must be inter-office mailed, emailed or scanned to account payable during the Purchase Requisition creation.

**\$1,000 to less than \$5,000** – Informal quotes from at least three (3) suppliers are required. Quotes should be scanned, inter-office mailed or emailed to account payable during the creation of the Requisition. The Purchasing Administrator reviews all requisitions to ensure proper documentation has been included and the correct process followed. **Sole source vendors, repairs and inventory are exceptions to this procedure.**

**\$5,000 to less than \$10,000** – Informal quote(s) or bid; with the assistance of Purchasing, from at least three (3) suppliers are required. The department will issue a Requisition and the same process is followed as with all other purchases. The formal Sealed Bid process is optional at this level and will be determined in consultation with Purchasing. **Sole source vendors, repairs and inventory are exceptions to this procedure.**

**\$10,000 – to less than \$15,000** – Some purchases estimated in value to meet or exceed

\$10,000 shall be made using the formal Sealed Bid process. The department will issue a Requisition and the same process is followed as with all other purchases. The formal Sealed Bid process is optional at this level and will be determined in consultation with Purchasing. **Sole source vendors, repairs and inventory are exceptions to this procedure.**

**Over \$15,000-Formal Seal Bid Limit-** For Vehicles and equipment, an approved Vehicle/Requisition Form must be signed by the Direct Report/Department Head, Assistant City Manager (where applicable), Chief Financial Officer and the City Manager prior to Purchasing proceeding with the Sealed Bid solicitation. Prior to any award in excess of \$15,000 the bid award recommendation must be approved by the Mayor and Council. After approval, a Purchase Requisition/Order and/or Services Contract shall be processed by the department. For detailed procedures, see the section in this Policy titled “The Formal Sealed Bid Process.” **Sole source vendors, repairs and inventory are exceptions to this procedure.**

## **PURCHASING METHODS:**

**Contract Purchases / Professional Services** - Purchase transactions \$10,000 and greater for services performed on City of Thomasville’s property or on behalf of the City of Thomasville shall be purchased using a duly executed, formal contract. The contract shall contain, but not be limited to the following elements: specifications fully describing the goods, materials, and equipment including the construction and maintenance services and the effective dates; general conditions of the contract; special conditions, if applicable, and the contractor’s proposal.

Except for licensed Professional Services, which are exempt from State Purchasing regulations, this purchase method requires the Purchasing Department to solicit bids or assist the operating department with the solicitation of bid, obtain a technical evaluation by the operating department, prepare a evaluation; if needed, and obtain a purchase approval prior to an award.

The City Manager/Utilities Superintendent or his designee shall execute **all** service contract documents. Purchasing will issue a Purchase Order in conjunction with the contract. The Purchase Order will reference the contract document and the City will utilize the Purchase Order and the Voucher for Payment to render receipt and payment for services performed by the contractor. All procedures and processes regarding Purchase Orders remain unchanged by this method.

**Operating Department “Supplier Direct” Purchases** - The operating department may purchase directly from the supplier and may process these transactions up to \$1,000 in value by creating a Purchase Requisition. These purchases are for goods that are not purchased in bulk or not found in stock at the City Warehouse. For these Supplier Direct Purchases, the operating departments are required to send a copy of all supporting documentation for selecting, receiving, and invoicing associated with the purchase transaction.

**Purchase Orders Purchases** - Purchase Orders will be issued on all purchase transactions, regardless of dollar amount. . The first step is the creation of a Purchase Requisition in the GEMS financial software system, followed by a work flow routing to approvers and finally conversion to a Purchase Order by the Purchasing Administrator. Purchase Orders shall be complete in detail, accurate in content, have all documentation **scanned into the system and meet all requirements of the operating department and the City.**

Prior to the approved Purchase Order’s being routed to Accounts Payable for payment, the Purchase Order must be “receipted” into the system verifying the goods or services have been received. This process requires a copy of the bill of lading and or packing slip, or other documentation and final invoice. The invoice should be sent to Accounts Payable with the Purchase Order number. Before receipting, the buyer should have verified that all goods and services ordered were received by the City. The verification process includes but is not limited

to comparison of quantity ordered to quantity received, Purchase Order price to supplier's invoice price, goods ordered to goods received, discount terms and payment terms, etc. It is the City's policy to make payment(s) for only goods ordered and received and at the price agreed upon by the Purchase Order. Supplier invoice errors should be brought to the attention of the Purchasing Department or Finance Department.

### **SPECIAL TYPES OF PURCHASE TRANSACTIONS:**

In addition to the primary purchase methods described above, some special types of purchase transactions may be used. The specific dollar amounts defined in "Purchase Thresholds" also apply to Special Types of Purchase Transactions, which include the following:

**Blanket or Open Purchase Orders** - For recurring purchases or leases of the same goods and services with the same supplier, the Purchasing Department may issue Blanket, or Open Purchase Orders. Originally processed as a Request for Proposal or Quotation (RFP/RFQ), the bid award will designate specific items and prices that may be purchased over a specified period of time, usually one year or the term of a contract, by the operating departments under the Blanket, or Open, Purchase Order without additional negotiations or approvals so long as price and specifications remain the same as the original bid award. The bid number (RFP/RFQ) must be included in the Vendor/Sourcing Notes section on the purchase requisition.

**Cooperative Procurement** - Federal, State, and County Government Contracts and Contracts negotiated by other governmental agencies can be used to the fullest benefit of the City of Thomasville. The City Manager or his designee shall be authorized to enter into purchasing or contracting cooperatives with other governmental agencies inside or outside the State (O.C.G.A. § 36-69A).

The purchaser should use these contracts as a benchmark for pricing and specifications and use when Purchasing cannot add value or secure better pricing by bidding locally. Purchases under these contracts may be made without public advertisement or competitive bidding as long as the contracts were originally competitively bid. Depending on dollar threshold, customary purchasing methods are followed. The agency or cooperative (such as U.S. Communities or NJPA, etc.) and the contract number must be included on the purchase requisition in the description section.

**Emergency Purchases** - An emergency is defined as any unforeseen event or circumstance that threatens or results in a negative impact on public health, welfare and /or safety or results in the loss or potential loss of an essential service. Under these circumstances, with pre-approval of the City Manager, the Direct Report shall have the authority to purchase necessary goods and services with values up to \$15,000 without competitive bidding. Purchases greater than \$15,000 must be pre-approved by the City Manager and are authorized when an existing agency contract is available for use. Emergency Purchases will be performed using competitive sources of supply when practical under the restrictions imposed by the emergency situation. A Purchase Requisition, including a written explanation of the basis for the emergency and the Supplier selection, shall be submitted to support and request payment for the Emergency Purchase. Emergency repairs to in-service Public Safety or Public Works vehicles, equipment or infrastructure are considered Emergency Purchases when timely repairs are necessary to continue essential City services. An Emergency Purchase scenario can also be utilized in circumstances when a contractor does not perform to the City's satisfaction or when a breach of contract occurs and there is no time to re-bid the work. "Emergency Purchase" should be included as a note that prints on the Purchase Order, entered in the General Description section of the electronic requisition.

**Original Equipment Manufacturer Purchases** - Competitive bids are not required for purchases when the purchase is made from the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) and other sources are not available. The Department will document the purchase by indicating "OEM Purchase" on the purchase requisition. Purchasing will encourage the consideration of

“like” or “similar” products by notifying the operating department of product availability. The operating department will evaluate the additional source of supply and the product’s acceptability prior to purchasing. Approval is required by Mayor and Council for some purchases over \$15,000. It should be noted on the purchase requisition that the purchase is from an original manufacturer.

**Sole Source Procurement** - Sole source procurement is initiated by a department with the completion of a written statement verifying the Supplier is the only source. This letter is attached to the Purchase Requisition and sent to the Purchasing Department. The statement briefly identifies the product or service to be purchased and the reason(s) justifying the sole source selection. Supplemental documentation (specifications, manufacturer letter etc.) should be furnished when available. A copy of the Sole Source letter from the Vendor or the completed Sole Source/Brand form must be scanned into the requisition, along with the invoice.

### **Single Source Procurement**

A contract may be awarded for a supply, service, and equipment or construction item without competition when the Purchasing Department determines that an item is available elsewhere, but the Purchasing Department source is where it is available elsewhere, but you choose a single source for any number of legitimate reasons. Reasons are such things as standardization, maintenance capability, a proprietary situation, adherence to a local preference regulation.

**Multi-Step Sealed Bidding** -When it is considered impractical to initially prepare a purchase description to support an award based on price, an Invitation for Bids may be issued requesting the submission of un-priced offers to be followed by an Invitation for Bids limited to those bidders whose offers have been qualified under the criteria set forth in the first solicitation.

**Split Bid Awards** - At its discretion, the City may elect to award a percentage or a portion of a service contract to a secondary supplier. This option will be stated in the RFP/RFQ document and may be exercised if the primary supplier is unable to meet all of the needs of the operating department or if the existence of a secondary supplier is deemed to be of benefit for maintaining continuity of service. The City’s final determination regarding the use of a secondary supplier and corresponding percentage of the contract to be awarded shall be determined by the evaluation team during the evaluation and negotiation stages of the formal Sealed Bid process. The RFP/RFQ number must be included in the requisition Notes.

## **ADDITIONAL PROCESSES AND DOCUMENTATION:**

**Where applicable, the following processes and corresponding documentation are to be maintained by the purchaser and/or Supplier as described:**

**Immigration Compliance Reporting** - In compliance with O.C.G.A. §§13-10-91(b)(1) and as amended in SB 160, all Contractors and Subcontractors bidding on City projects wherein the labor or services exceed \$2,499.99, must complete and submit a Contractor’s or Subcontractor’s Affidavit of Immigration Compliance indicating the firm adheres to and is participating in a federal work authorization program\* [any of the electronic verification of work authorization programs operated by the United States Department of Homeland Security to verify information of newly hired employees, pursuant to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) P.L. 99-603.

**Insurance Requirements** - The Department is responsible for obtaining Certificates of Insurance on service contracts or service Purchase Orders. Insurance certificates shall be complete, current and in accordance with the limits set in the contract language. The City of Thomasville shall be named as Additional Insured. The Department should send all current certificates to Purchasing and Purchasing is responsible for maintaining current certificates

on all active contracts. If the Contractor fails or refuses to provide a renewal certificate, immediate action shall be taken to stop work and file a breach of contract notice to the contractor. Operating departments should assist Purchasing with the enforcement of a stop work order given to the contractor.

**Performance Bond** – For all Public Works construction projects and for other work over \$15,000 as required in the bidding documents, a Contractor may be required to furnish a corporate surety bond as security for the performance of the service or construction contract awarded via a sealed bid. Said surety bond shall be in the amount of one hundred percent (100%) of the annual gross revenue of the contractor under the service contract.

Georgia Code §36-91-2 defines a Performance Bond as a bond with good and sufficient surety or sureties for the faithful performance of the contract and to indemnify the governmental entity for any damages occasioned by a failure to perform the same within the prescribed time. Such bond shall be payable to, in favor of, and for the protection of the governmental entity for which the work is to be done.

In certain cases, the City may adopt Georgia Code §36-91-71: Credit In Lieu Of Bond - When the amount of the performance bond required under this article does not exceed \$500,000.00, the governmental entity may, in its sole discretion, accept an irrevocable letter of credit by a bank or savings and loan association, as defined in Code Section 7-1-4, in the amount of and in lieu of, the bond otherwise required under this article.

**Purchase Requisitions** - All purchases – regardless of funding sources - will be made using properly prepared and authorized Purchase Requisitions which will be reviewed for funding accuracy and converted to a Purchase Order. Purchase Requisitions shall specify the requirements for goods and/or services in full detail and are required of all purchases.

In an effort to circumvent the required competitive bid process, the departments must not divide any purchases into smaller quantities of the same goods/services and submit these invoices separately on multiple purchase requisitions. Incorrect or incomplete Purchase Requisitions will be rejected and sent back to the applicable operating department with comments about what is needed for approval.

**Sales Tax Exemption** - The City of Thomasville is exempt from sales tax. Suppliers may request a tax exemption certificate or tax exemption form for their records. These forms are available from the Purchasing Department.

**Securing Payment** - Following any Purchasing Method and upon receipt and verification of any purchased materials, equipment, or services, an operating department shall go to the corresponding with the Purchasing Department or Warehouse to Receipt it. Then, the warehouse should send the paper invoice, along with a copy of the Purchase Order; if available to the Finance Department. The invoice supporting the Purchase Order will be processed 30 days from receipt date in accounts payables.

All Purchases of any dollar amount shall be consistent with the purchasing procedures as described in “Purchase Thresholds.” In addition to those procedures, the guidelines below are also applicable:

**Material, Supplies, and Equipment Receipts** – When operating departments receive materials, supplies and/or equipment at any location, the receiver should immediately count the goods and compare to the packing list quantity. Discrepancies in quantity or damage to goods must be noted on the shipping ticket and the department’s order copy. This packing list, bill of lading, or other documentation for the items received must be sent to the warehouse financial services during the PO Receiving process.

If the packing slip does not accompany delivery of goods, the receiver should make a record of the delivered quantity and date on the order file copy. A copy of this documentation must be scanned into the financial system during the PO Receipting process.

**Construction, Maintenance and other Service Receipts** - An operating department receiving services for construction, maintenance, and other services should compare the Purchase Order document and/or contract for the agreed to payment terms. The Purchase Order Receipting process must be completed for invoice payment in strict accordance with the payment terms, such as payment for lump sum contracts, where payment is made upon completion; or payment is made for completed work progress; etc. Under no circumstances should an operating department pay in advance for work or material received related to the project, unless provided under the contract terms.

## **Bidding Process:**

### **Bid Authority Form**

A Bid Authority Form must be completed by the operating department, approved by the Department Head, Direct Report, Chief Financial Officer and the City Manager and then sent to the Purchasing Department to schedule the bid preparation. This form must be accompanied by a complete list of specifications and potential suppliers, including name, address, phone, fax, email, and contact person.

### **Solicitation**

Once the Bid Authority Form is completed, signed, and sent to Purchasing, the Purchasing Department will set a date for bid opening and will prepare bid packages. Bid packages will include but are not limited to, at a minimum, the following information and/or materials:

- A transmittal letter inviting the suppliers to bid
- The date and time the bids are due and any pre bid conference meetings (if any)
- Address of the office in which bids are to be received.
- A Statement of Work including a complete description of the goods or the services required.
- The technical specifications plans and drawings (if applicable)
- Contract terms and conditions, including warranty and bonding or other security instruments (if applicable)
- A proposal/ pricing form
- Acknowledgment of agreement with all aspects of the bid including a date or schedule on which goods or services are required
- Contractor's/Subcontractor's Affidavits for Immigration Compliance or SAVE Documents; Supplier's References, Business License and Certificate of Insurance with minimum coverage as required by the City.
- Any other special requirements as outlined in the bid documents.

### **Public Posting**

For purchases over \$15,000, Purchasing will post the formal solicitation on the City website and may advertise through newspapers and other means, such as trade journals. Public Works Projects over \$100,000 must be advertised in the official legal organ of the county. The public shall be notified in regards to the bidding of projects funded under Community Development Block Grant Regulations (CDBG). This public notification shall be in accordance with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations and policies and advertised in the legal organ of the county.

Bid packages will be mailed via the United States Postal Service or other delivery service and are posted in a protected document on the city website.

Any change to a formal solicitation after the initial public posting, including but not limited to changes to requirements, attachments, or the closing date and time, must be posted as official written addenda. When posting an addendum, the City must ensure bidders are provided adequate time to view and process the new information. Addenda are also posted on the City's website.

### **Pre-Qualified Suppliers**

The City of Thomasville will strive to pre-qualify its suppliers and maintain the qualified suppliers in a database, classified by commodity and service type along with technical and commercial factors. Vendor registration for this database is accomplished on the City's website. Additions to or removals from the database will be a consensus of the operating department and Purchasing. Suppliers currently utilized by the City will be considered qualified and/or pre-approved. Registering as a Vendor does not guarantee a business opportunity.

### **Instructions for Bid Packages**

Sealed bid packages may be distributed via the following processes:

- Bid packages may be hand delivered at a pre-bid conference. Purchasing will issue a letter of invitation to the bidders announcing the bid solicitation, the pre-bid conference location, and the requirement to attend.
- Bid packages may be sent via USPS or another delivery service.
- Bid packages may be picked up at the Purchasing Department.
- Bid packages may be downloaded from the City's website, but submissions must be in paper form and must be sealed.

At its discretion, the City may choose to hold a pre-bid conference in order to clarify any ambiguities, answer questions, and ensure that all bidders have a common understanding regarding the supplies or services required. The conference shall be held at least seven (7) days prior to the bid deadline, and the bid solicitation should contain all conference details, including whether or not bidder attendance is mandatory. Statements made at the pre-bid conference shall not be considered addenda to the bid solicitation unless a written addendum is issued pursuant to the conference.

### **Receipt and Evaluation of Sealed Bids**

The Sealed Bid process prohibits fax, email, telegram, or verbal responses unless specified in the bid documents. All bids solicited under the Sealed Bid process will be processed and maintained as follows:

Bidders' responses to the solicitation shall be in written form and subject to the Sealed Bid process. Purchasing will only accept responses through the USPS, other overnight delivery service, or by hand-delivery to the Purchasing Department unless specified in the bid documents. Regardless of delivery methods, all bids must be presented in paper format to be considered. For consideration, all bids shall be placed in a sealed package and marked with the appropriate bid/proposal name. Failure to follow this process is reason to disqualify a Supplier's bid.

All bid packages will be date and time stamped when received to indicate timeliness. Late bids are generally rejected unless due to a fully documented delivery service delay. All bids subject to and received on or before the due date shall be maintained unopened in a protected, proprietary environment.

A public opening of bids/proposals will be held at the location placed on the bid/proposal document on the date and time specified in the solicitation package. The information read aloud shall consist of the bidder names, including those who submitted "no bids" and "non-responses and the submitted pricing. There are no awards made at the bid opening.



Operating departments and purchasing personnel may prepare independent evaluations depending on the purchase transaction. The evaluation process for each of the two formal bidding processes is described in the “Bid Evaluations” section of this Policy.

### **Extension of Due Date**

**Extension of the due date during the bid solicitation process is granted uniformly to all bidders by the Purchasing Department and with the concurrence of the operating department. Any extension of the due date will be based on the technical, commercial and financial impact on the City of Thomasville. Bid extensions may be verbally granted, but they will be confirmed in writing to all bidders as an addendum to the bid and will be posted on the City’s website.**

### **Late Bids**

A proposal or modification to a bid received after the due date is classified as a “late bid.” The Purchasing Manager usually rejects all late bids or modifications, with the following exception:

If the supplier’s bid is delayed due solely to failure of the USPS or other delivery services to deliver on time, Purchasing will consider the postmark or other date stamp indicator as documentation the delivery was attempted prior to the due date and time. Fully documented delivery failures will be taken into consideration as to when the package was entered into the delivery service system.

### **Modifications or Withdrawal of Bids Prior to Bid Closing**

A bidder or an authorized representative may modify or withdraw the bid in person before the time and date set for bid closing. The modification or withdrawal must be in writing and must be received before the time and date set for the bid closing.

All documents concerning a modification or withdrawal of a bid shall be retained in the appropriate procurement file.

### **Late Modifications or Withdrawal of Bids**

During the evaluation process, if the evaluator suspects a bid has a calculation error, the bidder will be given opportunity to reconfirm the bid before a final recommendation is made. The supplier shall not be permitted to correct the bid unit price, but will be permitted to correct extended amounts. Should the supplier determine a unit price(s) is in error, the supplier will be permitted to withdraw its bid without penalty and without affecting future bidding opportunities. Purchasing, at its option, will be permitted to exercise a supplier’s bid bond if the supplier does not produce satisfactory evidence of the error. In such case, it will be the practice of the Purchasing Department to accept a bid withdrawal and exclude the supplier from future bidding for a period of one year. Purchasing will document the decision.

### **Bid Evaluations:**

**Bid Evaluations**- Technical and/or Commercial - are components of the Request for Proposal (RFP) process and are sometimes used in consideration of Requests for Quotation (RFQ) where price is not the only factor used in making an award. An ad-hoc team of subject matter experts conducts the technical evaluations. This team of employees may conduct interviews and negotiations for a specific product or service following receipt of sealed bids. Commercial evaluations are conducted by the Purchasing Department and those results blended with those of the Technical Evaluation team. All evaluation criteria for analyzing the technical and cost proposals should be developed in a manner that is straightforward and fair to all bidders.

**Technical Evaluations** –When considering an RFP in which fulfilling or developing technical specifications is critical, the bid response is expected to describe in detail what an offeror proposes to furnish and the method of delivery, along with the price proposal. The evaluation team will perform technical evaluations on bids that must consider the bidders’ specifications,

the City's specifications, the product or service performance, the bidders' delivery or completion schedule and any alternate proposals or options that might impact the operating department's requirements. The team members typically represent the functional areas identified in the Statement of Work (SOW) which need to be addressed in the discussions, is chaired by a purchasing representative and may include staff from City Administration. Before the evaluation team reviews any proposal(s), its members should be provided the evaluation criteria and a list of bidder names so that any conflicts of interest may be exposed and members recused, if necessary. The Technical Evaluation does not consider the price proposal or contractual areas since the Commercial Evaluation will review those.

**Clarification and Negotiation** - If the evaluation team or operating department and Purchasing agree that further discussion with the bidder(s) is necessary, a request will be made for one or more rounds of negotiation with the bidder(s) to conclude recommendations. Any proposed modification in scope or process from a bidder must be submitted to the Purchasing Department or during a formal round of negotiation with the evaluation team. These discussions will not permit a bidder to resubmit a proposal with new pricing for the original specification; however, a bidder may propose pricing based on an alternate or option. Price discussion, at this stage, is not intended to circumvent the competitive bid process. The purpose is to negotiate with a short list of the most eligible bidder(s) and seek a best and final offer. If the Operating Department and Purchasing determine the scope has changed too substantially, Purchasing may reject all bids and re-issue a new solicitation for bids.

## **BID TABULATIONS AND AWARDS:**

### **Bid Tabulations**

Bid tabulations are utilized for all RFPs and RFQs. Purchasing will create a Bid Tabulation sheet which may include bid components such as quantity, descriptions, unit price, extended price, FOB, discounts, terms of payment, shipping point, promise date, date required, RFQ due date, and total bid amount. Tabulations shall be maintained in the Purchasing Department files and posted on the City's website following the bid award. From the bid tabulation information, Purchasing will create a Bid Recommendation memo to the operating department or submit a recommendation to the evaluation team or to the City Administrator.

### **Awards**

Following the necessary approvals for tabulations or evaluations, as set forth herein, the winning bidder will be notified of the award.

Purchase transactions less than \$10,000 will be awarded by the Purchasing Department in the form of a Purchase Order.

Transactions greater than \$15,000 shall be awarded by the Mayor and City Council, followed by a Purchase Order and/or Contract. Under certain circumstances, City of Thomasville officials may announce verbal awards.

All Bid Awards are posted on the City's website as soon as they are approved by Mayor and Council by way of formal letter or council minutes. An award may be made verbally first, followed by a written Notice of Award and the Purchase Order and/or Contract. Verbal awards are often made to allow the Supplier to expedite the delivery schedule or the project start/completion schedule. Details of the process are found in the "Bidding Formats" section of this Policy.

## **Open Records Provisions for bids and proposals:**

All submitted bids/proposals shall be subject to the requirements of the State of Georgia Open Records Act, O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70, and made available for public inspection and/or copying per the law. If a bidder or interested party would like to review specific bid(s), that party must first submit a request to the Purchasing Department. The City of Thomasville has three (3) working days to respond, stating the length of time and associated costs necessary to provide the information, if it is available. Purchasing will make an appointment for time to review the document(s). Proprietary and/or confidential information may be redacted from any bid material in the City's possession, at the charges listed in the adopted City's Fee Schedule. Information regarding bids and proposals over \$15,000 is not available until the City Council approves the award and the award has been made.

## VENDOR REQUIREMENTS

The City maintains an approved list of qualified vendors. A vendor who wishes to do business with the City must complete an application to the Purchasing Department.

In addition to legal requirements, vendors must comply with the following:

1. All salespersons must make an appointment to meet with the Purchasing Department. The scheduled appointment day is Thursday of each week.
2. All purchases must be placed with a purchase order number. The City is not responsible for purchases without such number.
3. All warranties are to be assumed by the vendor.
4. NO substitutions or add-ons to orders will be allowed, unless approved in writing or phone approval by the Purchasing Department. Immediate notification by the vendor is required if vendor is unable to fill purchase order as indicated.
5. All shipments must be freight prepaid, unless otherwise, approved by the Purchasing Department. NO C.O.D.'s will be accepted.
6. All shipments received in the warehouse must have a PO # and ATTN to whomever and a packing slip with the Purchase Order number to reference.
7. The specifications, purchase criteria, and award procedures are in order to obtain the best products at the best price, and the vendors are to assume that the City is requesting these types of products and services.
8. The warehouse personnel should be notified of any and all items that are received directly by the department. The department should also send a packing slip to the warehouse to receive the items in the system so payment can be made in a timely manner.

## WAREHOUSE INVENTORY PURCHASES

The warehouse will stock only those items that are critical to operations and maintenance of the system or which can be stocked more economically than purchased as needed from sources. The majority of items in the warehouse support the utility operations.

The warehouse plans to maintain a perpetual inventory system to facilitate charges to user divisions, maintain a usage history by item and provide for inventory control and materials accounting with computerized inventory control techniques.

All inventory purchases in excess of five-thousand and less than twelve-thousand (**\$5,000 to less than \$12,000**) shall be approved by the Assistant City Manager of Utilities. Purchases **\$12,000 and above** shall be approved by the City Manager/Utilities Superintendent.

Purchases considered as "sole source" by the end-user shall be bid periodically in order to ensure competitive competition as well.