



Legislation Text

File #: 2993-2021, **Version:** 1

BACKGROUND: The Division of Police Digital Forensic Unit is in need of purchasing Cellebrite's Hardware Premium Unlocking Device and Services to extract digital evidence from cellular phones to solve crimes for the citizens of Columbus in a more efficient and effective manner. As the world evolves, law enforcement has to reimagine its approach to solving crimes and dealing with violence, and using digital evidence will assist in this goal. Most crimes have some link to digital evidence. Due to this fact most divisional units are using the services of the Digital Forensics Unit to extract evidence from cellular devices. Currently, the Digital Forensic Unit cannot decrypt the newer iOS and Android phones with current forensics software, thereby making high-level evidence extractions unattainable. The current method to gain access to the newer phones is to retrieve the pin code from the owner, suspect, or victim; which rarely happens.

The vendor Cellebrite Inc. has the equipment and licensed software called Cellebrite Hardware Premium Unlocking Device and Service sold exclusively to law enforcement. The equipment is an on-site solution that caters to both iOS-Apple and Android phones. It is currently the only software solution on the market that can access and decrypt a majority of locked devices. With this hardware and software the Digital Forensics Unit detectives gain an evidentiary advantage by having the ability to unlock and decrypt more phones and extract more evidence to solve crimes. This evidence includes accessing: 3rd party Apps, stored passwords and tokens, chat conversations, location data, email attachments, system logs, deleted content, and much more. Cellebrite also offers free unlocking services at their facility.

BID INFORMATION: The Division of Police requests to waive competitive bid provisions of the Columbus city code to purchase this equipment due to its compatibility with other equipment owned by the division of Police. Cellebrite is currently the only software solution on the market that can access and decrypt a majority of locked devices.

CONTRACT COMPLIANCE: CC70059-11491; Expires 10/23/2017 Cellebrite Inc. will be contract complaint by the time this legislation is heard by Council.

FISCAL IMPACT: The funding for Cellebrite Hardware Premium Unlocking Device and Services has already been appropriated and authorized by Ordinance 2339-2021 passed on 9-29-2021. This expenditure is funded by Law Enforcement Seizure Fund, 2219.

To authorize the Director of Finance and Management, on behalf of the Public Safety Department, to enter into a contract with Cellebrite Inc., to extract digital evidence from cellular phones to solve crimes for the citizens of Columbus; to waive competitive bidding provisions of the Columbus City Codes; and to authorize the expenditure of \$130,378.00 from the Law Enforcement Seizure Fund. (\$130,378.00)

WHEREAS, the City of Columbus Division of Police needs to purchase Cellebrite's Hardware Premium Unlocking Device and Services to extract digital evidence from cellular phones to solve crimes for the citizens of Columbus and the cost of the hardware and software is \$130,378.00; and

WHEREAS, the funding for the hardware and software have been appropriated and authorized by Ordinance 2339-2021 passed on 9/29/2021; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the City to waive competitive bidding for this purchase; and

WHEREAS, it has become necessary in the usual daily operation of the Department of Public Safety, to authorize the Director of Finance and Management, on behalf of the Public Safety Department, to enter into a contract with Cellebrite Inc.; **now, therefore:**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the Director of Finance and Management, on behalf of the Public Safety Department, be and is hereby authorized and directed to enter into a contract with Cellebrite Inc for hardware and software to extract digital evidence from cellular phones to solve crimes for the citizens of Columbus.

SECTION 2. That the expenditure of \$130,378.00 or so much thereof as may be needed, be and the same is hereby authorized in the Law Enforcement Seizure Fund in object class 06 per the accounting codes in the attachment of this ordinance.

SECTION 3. That this Council finds it in the best interest of the City to waive the competitive bidding provisions of the Columbus City Codes to permit the aforementioned purchase contract.

SECTION 4. That the funds necessary to carry out the purpose of this ordinance are hereby deemed appropriated, the City Auditor shall establish such account codes as necessary.

SECTION 5. That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.