



Recommendation for Action

File #: 19-2497, **Agenda Item #:** 6.

8/8/2019

Posting Language

Authorize negotiation and execution of a financing agreement with the Texas Water Development Board for a 20-year low-interest loan in the amount of \$6,200,000 through the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas loan program, for the implementation of Austin Water's Advanced Metering Infrastructure project.

Lead Department

Austin Water

Fiscal Note

Funding for the contract is contingent upon available funding in future budgets.

Prior Council Action:

April 21, 2016 - Council authorized the City Manager to apply for funding from the TWDB for a 20-year SWIFT loan, not to exceed \$80,195,000, for the development and implementation of Austin Water's AMI project.

December 7, 2017 - Council approved a consulting services contract with West Monroe Partners, LLC for advanced metering infrastructure program management.

For More Information:

Inquiries should be directed to the City Manager's Agenda Office, at 512-974-2991 or AgendaOffice@austintexas.gov.

Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

Recommended by the Water & Wastewater Commission on a 8-3 vote with Commissioners Williams, Michel and Turrieta absent.

Additional Backup Information:

On July 21, 2016 the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) approved the City of Austin's application for a low interest, multi-year loan in the amount of \$80,195,000 through the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) for the implementation of Austin Water's Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) project.

On December 7, 2017, Council authorized Austin Water to negotiate and execute a consulting services agreement with West Monroe Partners, LLC. The consultant is currently producing an AMI assessment report and will assist in the production of AMI system solicitation documents. The report will include a business process needs assessment, evaluate which AMI technologies are best for Austin Water, and determine their potential impact on Austin Water's business processes. It will also assist Austin Water in identifying the best value AMI program options.

Austin Water's AMI project will replace mechanical customer water meters with water meters connected to a wireless network, so that meter reads will no longer be collected manually every month. After AMI implementation, water meter reads will be collected at least daily. This data will be made available to

customers via electronic devices, so they can better monitor their water usage between billing cycles. The AMI water meters will improve data collection, reduce meter re-reads and provide more frequent data collection. They will minimize the labor costs and vehicle mileage needed to support meter reading. Other potential benefits include improving customer service and customer satisfaction, enabling customer usage alerts before a bill arrives, or identifying potential customer-side leaks. This data will also enable Austin Water to have better system diagnostic tools, such as semi-real time leak detection, and a superior metering asset management database, that will better facilitate operations and maintenance activities.

This financing agreement will cover Austin Water's FY2019-2020 CIP spending plan costs, with subsequent loan closings proposed in the chart below. This financing agreement does not obligate the City of Austin to close on additional loan installments with TWDB in future years. Future loan installments will require Council approval to negotiate separate financing agreements.

The closing on this loan is anticipated to occur in November 2019. The City anticipates receiving up to a 35% reduction on the interest rates that TWDB obtains during their fall 2019 bond sale, based on their AAA bond rating. These reduced interest rates will save ratepayers financing costs for the funding of this project, as compared to traditional bond financing.

TWDB SWIFT Loan for AMI Project - Proposed Multi-Year Financing Schedule

Loan Closing Date	Proposed Closing Amount
November 2018	\$3,000,000
November 2019	\$6,200,000
November 2020	\$16,995,000
November 2021	\$18,000,000
November 2022	\$18,000,000
November 2023	\$18,000,000
Total	\$80,195,000