



City of Rochester Hills
AGENDA SUMMARY
FINANCIAL ITEMS

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Legislative File No: 2026-0284

TO: Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Tracey Balint, Interim Director Department of Public Services
DATE: June 22, 2026
SUBJECT: Two (2) Ferris Zero-Turn Commercial Turn Mowers

REQUEST:

City Council is requested to authorize the purchase of two (2) Ferris Zero-Turn Commercial Lawn Mowers in the amount of \$34,000.00 from Ball Equipment, Sandusky, Michigan.

REASON FOR PURCHASE:

The City issued an Invitation to Bid for two (2) commercial zero-turn lawn mowers via the MITN website, receiving four (4) responses. Two bids met the exact specifications for the requested Ferris mowers, while two alternate bids were submitted for Spartan and John Deere models. While an alternate bid for a Spartan mower represented the lowest upfront cost, staff is not recommending award of this alternate and instead recommends award of this contract to Ball Equipment of Sandusky, Michigan, as the lowest, responsive, responsible bidder meeting the City's specifications. This recommendation is based on critical factors regarding operator safety, worker's compensation risk mitigation, and fleet standardization.

The primary differentiator between the specified Ferris mowers and the alternate Spartan mower lies in the engineering of their suspension systems, which directly impacts operator health:

- **The Specified Ferris Mower:** Features a patented, independent four-wheel suspension system utilizing automotive-style coil-over shocks and A-arms. The entire chassis moves dynamically with the terrain, keeping the cutting deck stable and isolating the operator from harsh impacts.
- **The Alternate Spartan Mower:** Utilizes "Smart Ride Technology," which relies on a fixed chassis with rubber dampeners, soft tires, and a suspension seat to absorb shock.

Because City operators spend consecutive hours managing rough, uneven terrain, drainage ditches, and bumpy acreage, the full-chassis isolation provided by the Ferris system is required to effectively mitigate full-body vibration.

Prior to 2008, City operators using fixed-frame mowers suffered repetitive-motion back injuries, leading to costly worker's compensation claims and operational downtime. In response, the Fleet and Parks departments evaluated various brands to improve ergonomics and safety, ultimately selecting Ferris. Over the past 18 years, transitioning to Ferris mowers has successfully resolved these operator health concerns, resulting in excellent staff satisfaction and a proven track record of equipment reliability and ease of maintenance.

Approving the Ferris mowers allows the City to maintain 100% fleet standardization. Standardizing our commercial mowers streamlines mechanic training, simplifies parts inventory, and ensures operational continuity, as operators are already fully trained on the safety and handling of this specific equipment.

While the Spartan mower presents a lower initial purchase price, it does not offer an equal level of operator protection against the long-term physical toll of the City's specific terrain. To protect employee health, prevent future worker's compensation liabilities, and maintain the efficiencies of a standardized fleet, it is in the City's best interest to reject the alternate bids and award the purchase of the Two (2) Ferris Zero-Turn Commercial Mowers to Ball Equipment, Sandusky, Michigan.

PROCESS:

Vendor Name and Address:

Ball Equipment
 600 S. Sandusky Road
 Sandusky, MI 48471

Reason for Selection:

Lowest, responsive, responsible bidder

Method of Purchase:

Purchase Order

BUDGET:

Funding is included in the FY 2026 Adopted Budget

Fund Name	Department Account No	Account No. Description	Budget Amount	Cost	Remaining Budget
Fleet	661.977000	Capitalized Equipment	\$34,000	\$34,000	\$0

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that City Council authorize the award of two (2) Ferris Zero-Turn Commercial Lawn Mowers in the amount of \$34,000.00 from Ball Equipment, Sandusky, Michigan.

APPROVALS:	SIGNATURE	DATE
Department Review		
Department Director		
Budget Content: Chief Financial Officer		
Purchasing Process: Procurement Manager		
Mayor		
City Clerk		

Contract Reviewed by City Attorney

Yes

N/A