

TOWN OF BRISTOL SELECTBOARD POLICY REGARDING PURCHASING

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Purchasing Policy is to obtain the highest quality goods and services for the Town of Bristol 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, to encourage the use of local vendors whenever possible and to provide for public confidence that tax dollars are being spent wisely and effectively.

DEFINITIONS:

1. Major Purchases: Those purchases calling for delivery of goods or services in an amount of \$5,000 or greater.
2. Regular Purchases: Those purchases calling for delivery of goods and services in the amount of \$1,501 to \$4,999.
3. Incidental Purchases: Those services calling for delivery of goods and services in an amount of less than \$1,500.

PROCEDURES:

1. Major Purchases: All purchases over \$5,000 shall be subject to approval by the Selectboard and will require a formal bid process unless such process is waived by the Board. The formal bid process will be overseen by the Town Administrator who may delegate responsibility for specific purchases to an appropriate department head. Generally, formal bidding means a publicly advertised invitation to bid, written bid specifications and/or description of performance standards, a public bid opening, with award of contract made by the Selectboard. These requirements may be varied according to the nature of a specific purchase subject to the Selectboard's review and approval of the process followed.
2. Regular Purchases: All purchases between \$1,501 and \$4,999 will be made in accordance with a purchase order procedure. Generally, such purchases should be made through competitive solicitation such as bids, written or verbal quotes from two or more vendors. Purchase orders will be issued through the Treasurer's office and must be approved by the Town Administrator or his/her designee, prior to items being ordered. The purchase order requirement shall apply to all credit card purchases made in this category.
3. Incidental Purchases: Purchases made in this category may be made without formal bid or quotations. However, it is still the intention of this policy to encourage that competitive prices be solicited whenever such would be an efficient use of staff time relative to possible savings. The Selectboard will work with the Town Administrator and Department heads through the accounts payable warrant review process to help guide purchasing procedures made in this range. All credit card purchases in this category in excess of \$200 shall be pre-approved under the purchase order procedure outlined above under Regular Purchases and other guidelines under the Town's Credit Card Policy.

VENDOR SELECTION: It is the intention of the Selectboard that vendors will be selected on a competitive basis. Purchases shall be awarded to the lowest, best qualified and responsible bidder. The following may be considered in selecting vendors:

1. The ability, capacity and skill of the vendor to perform the contract or provide the material or service required, and meet the specifications and other terms and conditions of the solicitation, and to do so promptly or within the time specified.
2. The character, integrity, reputation, experience, financial resources and past performance of the vendor.
3. The quality, availability and adaptability of the service or product being purchased and the ability of the vendor to provide future maintenance if necessary.
4. Purchases will be made through local vendors if all other parameters are substantially equal.
5. The Selectboard 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 reopen the bid process, to negotiate with any bidder, and to make an award which in its sole and absolute judgment will best serve the Town's interest.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. Sole Source Purchases: The Selectboard may authorize a sole source purchase in cases where it determines that there is only one reasonable source for a proposed purchase and may waive the bid process.
2. Emergency Purchases: The Town may award contracts and make purchases for the purpose of meeting a public emergency without following the above procedures. Emergency purchases will be made under the direction of the Town Administrator in consultation with the Selectboard. Emergency purchases 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.
3. 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 Selectboard, in its sole discretion, shall determine when purchase of such services shall be subject to a request for proposal process and when to forego such process.
4. General Exceptions: Items such as but not limited to equipment repairs, utility services (phone, electricity, internet), service contracts, and ongoing repetitive purchases, as determined from time to time by the Selectboard and Town Administrator shall be exempt from the competitive purchasing guidelines above.

This policy is hereby adopted by the Bristol Selectboard this 17th day of October, 2011.






