



M E M O R A N D U M
CITY OF LEESBURG, FLORIDA
Electric Department

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Date: February 4, 2013

To: Mr. Ray Sharp, Interim City Manager

From: Paul Kalv, Electric Director

Subject: **Use of City owned “Light Towers” for community events by not-for-profit organizations**

Background

“Light towers” that are the subject of this memorandum are trailer mounted diesel generator powered light sets mounted on a telescoping mast similar to the light tower pictured here. The City owns four light towers that are used primarily by utility crews during emergency repair operations at night. The Electric Department has two light towers and the Water and Wastewater Departments each have one each have one light tower in their equipment fleet.

The City has had a long standing practice to allow not-for-profit organizations to use City light towers at no charge.



Analysis

Equipment rental businesses also offer light towers for rent. Representative rental rates are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Light Tower Rental Rates				
Company	Daily Rate	Weekly Rate	Deposit	Fuel
Sunbelt	\$130.00	\$415.00		\$115.50
Hertz	\$110.00	\$230.00		
Volvo Rent	\$120.00	\$360.00		
ABC Rental	\$121.00	\$387.00	\$60.00	Deposit for fuel
Most rental agreements require full fuel tanks when the rental unit is returned.				

In addition to City sponsored special events, other not-for-profit organizations frequently request city light towers for their own special events. The electric department also receives requests for the use of light towers from not-for-profit organizations; the expenses associated with delivery, retrieval, and refueling of this equipment have been treated as a departmental operating expense and have not been tracked through the use of specific work orders. Public Works, however, has tracked actual expenses and a representative sample of these work order costs is provided in Table 2 below. Costs vary with the number of light towers delivered and set up and whether or not the work occurs during normal duty hours or on overtime hours.

Work Order Number	Payroll Expenses	Fuel Expenses	Other Expenses	Total
WF0806817	\$20.63			\$20.63
WF0810175	\$21.73			\$21.73
WF0812341	\$80.51			\$80.51
WF0812344	\$33.09			\$33.09
WF0813030	\$12.80			\$12.80
WF0814122	\$54.06			\$54.06
WF0818448	\$27.34			\$27.34
Total Cost	\$250.16			\$250.16
Average Cost	\$35.72			\$35.72

Source: Public Works Department

On January 16, 2013 Electric Department staff requested the FMEA survey their 34 municipal electric utility members requesting information regarding their practices related to the lending of trailer mounted light towers. Responses to the FMEA survey are provided in Table 3 below.

	Responses Received	"Yes"	"No"	Fuel \$ by Organization	Fuel \$ by Utility
1. Do you "loan" trailer mounted light towers to non-profit organizations?	11	Williston* Ocala#	9		
2. Do utility employees deliver and retrieve the light towers?		No* Yes#			
3. Do you charge a fee for this service and if so, how much?		No* No#			
4. Who pays for the fuel used? The organization or the utility?				Williston	Ocala
TOTAL	11	2	9		

Source: Florida Municipal Electric Association member survey responses

Additional Information

The following information is provided in response to questions from Commissioners:

Cost to purchase light tower equipment: Ranges from \$6,780 to \$7,947.

Table 5 below provides additional information about city owned light towers.

Table 5. City Light Tower Equipment Information				
City ID	Year Purchased	Hour Reading	Repair Cost	Fuel
419	1999	1,275	\$920	\$2,020
420	1999	1,325	\$443	\$80
370	2001	334	\$1,101	Not recorded
721	2001	1,014	\$2,294	Not recorded

Source: Public Works

A reasonably exhaustive “Google” search was conducted to find relevant existing governmental resolutions, policy statements, or guidelines for the use of municipal, city, government, or utility owned equipment, an abundance of documented prohibitions were found. Two references were found where a city official was given the latitude to allow use of city owned equipment if such use was deemed to be in the public interest.

Lake County Sheriff’s Office (LCSO) has five light towers and does lend them to not-for profit organizations “first come, first served,” where public safety is a consideration and as units are available. Sheriff’s Department personnel deliver and retrieve the light towers and fuel is provided at no cost to the borrowing organization. Requests for light towers are screened and approved by senior staff before they are scheduled. Light tower expense tracking was recently initiated and 188 man hours have been logged to date. In addition to the light towers, LCSO also lends generators and from time to time their mobile command center. A report of expenses is planned to be issued in the future. Contact Ray Nichols (352) 357-6633.

Electric Department staff has also discussed the use of light towers with Joe Shipes and Joe suggested that for the parade events he would only need lights at the following locations:

- Canal and Main
- Magnolia and 11th
- Main and 11th

Electric staff is currently in the process of installing permanent flood lights with lock box controls at these locations.

All Partnership Events are sponsored by the City of Leesburg.

Staff Recommendation

If the City Commission desires staff to draft a policy or resolution addressing the use of city owned light towers, staff recommends that the policy or resolution set forth the following:

1. Public use of city owned light towers will be restricted to use by not-for-profit organizations for sites located in the City of Leesburg and are not available for use by the general public.
2. Requests for equipment usage shall be made in writing to the City Manager at least 14 days in advance.
3. Availability of light towers is on a first come, first served basis.
4. Delivery and retrieval of the light towers to be managed by the Public Works department. Delivery and pickup will be during normal duty hours.
5. At least one operational light tower shall remain at Public Works for use by city emergency crews, if needed.