



City of Rochester Hills
AGENDA SUMMARY
FINANCIAL ITEMS

1000 Rochester Hills Dr.
Rochester Hills, MI 48309
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Legislative File No: 2026-0227

TO: Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Tracey Balint, P.E., Interim Director, Department of Public Services
DATE: May 11, 2026
SUBJECT: Thrust Boring Machine

REQUEST:

City Council is requested to waive the competitive bidding requirements of Section 2-271, under Section 2-281, which allows City Council the authority to waive any regulation or procedure pertaining to purchasing, deeming it to be in the best interest of the City to award a sole source contract to Power Mole Trenchless and Utilitronics, Lancaster, New York for a PD-4 Thrust Boring Machine and associated equipment in the amount of \$50,980,56.

REASON FOR PURCHASE:

The Department of Public Services (DPS) requires a specialized trenchless installation system for horizontal boring. After an extensive market evaluation of various trenchless technologies, the Power Mole PD-4 was identified as the only system capable of meeting the City's specific operational and environmental requirements.

While other boring technologies were evaluated, they were excluded based on the following technical deficiencies:

- TT Technologies (Grundopit): This unit requires drilling fluids to operate. These "wet" systems present significant complications in freezing winter temperatures and is something that can be avoided by using a hydraulic ram unit.
- Directional Boring Machines: These machines are unsuitable due to the high cost of bentonite and the logistical burden of slurry disposal. More importantly, the use of water-based fluids in winter applications creates a high risk of equipment failure and operational downtime due to freezing.
- Roddie Underground (Pipe Ram): This technology is limited to a 30-foot range. The City consistently requires a boring range of 40 to 60 feet, with occasional needs reaching 100 feet.
- Hammerhead Trenchless (Portaburst/Moles): These units are either air-driven (which lack the power and versatility for sandy soils) or limited strictly to pipe-bursting. The City requires a "ramming" unit that can bore new lines where no existing pipe is present.

Power Mole Trenchless LLC is the Original Equipment Manufacturer and the exclusive designer and supplier of the PD-4 system. The determination for a sole source award is based on the following:

1. The PD-4 incorporates proprietary design features and performance characteristics not available from any other manufacturer. The original design was developed under U.S. Patent No. 4,502,665.

2. There are not authorized distributors, resellers, or third-party manufacturers. Power Mole Trenchless LLC. is the only authorized source for new equipment, OEM Parts, and factory technical support.
3. No other vendor can supply equipment that meets the same specifications and steerability without requiring substantial and costly changes to the City's operational procedures.

PROCESS:

Vendor Name and Address:

Power Mole Trenchless & Utilitronics
 1400 Commerce Parkway
 Lancaster, NY 14086

Reason for Selection:

Sole Source

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
W/S Capital	593.977000	Capitalized Equipment	\$60,000.00	\$50,980.56	\$9,019.44

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that City Council waive the competitive bidding requirements of Section 2-271, under Section 2-281, which allows City Council the authority to waive any regulation or procedure pertaining to purchasing, deeming it to be in the best interest of the City to award a sole source contract to Power Mole Trenchless and Utilitronics, Lancaster, New York for a PD-4 Thrust Boring Machine and associated equipment in the amount of \$50,980,56.

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