SUMMARY STATEMENT

ITEM NO.: PATCO-11-016  SUBJECT: PATCO Transit Ambassadors

COMMITTEE: Operations & Maintenance

COMMITTEE MEETING DATE: August 17, 2011

BOARD ACTION DATE: September 21, 2011

PROPOSAL: That the Board authorizes staff to exercise the first one year option of the contract with Service Group Incorporated (SGI) whereby SGI will provide Transit Ambassadors for the PATCO system.

Amount: $630,160

Firm: Service Group Incorporated
40 Lloyd Avenue, Suite 101
PO Box 70
Malvern, PA 19355

Other Proposers: None

PURPOSE: To retain uniformed Transit Ambassadors to provide a presence in PATCO stations, parking lots, concourses, and on trains primarily in the evening hours. The Ambassadors will assist customers and enhance their travel experience on PATCO.

BACKGROUND: When the PATCO system was designed in the mid 1960’s, one of the primary goals was that the system be a model of operational efficiency. This goal was achieved through the use of automated systems on the trains and in the stations. As a result, trains, regardless of the number of cars, are operated by one train operator in the lead car. Fare collection is accomplished through an automated fare collection system that allows customers to load value to their smart cards or purchase tickets at the automated vending machines and fares are automatically deducted at the gates. As such, station attendants are normally only present in the New Jersey stations during the morning peak periods to assist customers as needed. The efficiency of an automated system has resulted in PATCO’s ratio of fare collection to operating expense as being among the highest in the transit industry.
Because PATCO is so automated, there are times of the day when there is a very limited official PATCO presence throughout the system. This is not particularly an issue during morning commuting periods and during the normal business day because there is a fairly high level of activity throughout the system as a result of repair and maintenance activities, revenue collection operations, custodial effort, and Public Safety presence. Customers using the system feel safe because of the PATCO presence and because of the general high level of customer activity in the stations, parking lots, and on the trains. However, after the afternoon peak commuting period, most of PATCO’s maintenance activities are concentrated in the maintenance shop, along the right-of-way, and generally in non-public areas. As a result, customers using PATCO to return home from work and to attend dining, entertainment, sporting, and other leisure venues (a market PATCO is trying to develop) encounter a very limited PATCO presence throughout the system. If customers are going to use PATCO during these late evening and nighttime hours, they must feel comfortable in doing so; because of the limited official presence, this is not always the case.

Issues of customer comfort are not unique to PATCO and many transit agencies, downtown areas, and business districts have recognized that increasing an official presence is essential to their success. Locally, the City of Camden, the Center City District area in Philadelphia, the University area in Philadelphia, and Atlantic City have enhanced customers’ feeling of safety and security through the use of programs that provide service personnel to create an official presence, meet and greet customers, answer questions, and generally create a more customer friendly environment. In the City of Camden, the Greater Camden Partnership created a Special Services District (CSSD) that employs Clean and Safe Teams to improve the environment in the Central Business District.

In July 2007 and again in September, 2010, the Board approved the award of contracts to Service Group Inc. (SGI) to provide Transit Ambassadors in PATCO stations. Transit Ambassadors have provided a uniform presence in the stations, parking lots, concourses, and on the trains primarily in the evening hours. They are equipped to assist customers with information, ticket, card and gate issues, or simply alert appropriate PATCO personnel if a situation should arise. Over
this time period, the Transit Ambassador program has been a favorite of the public who travel on PATCO in the evening and late night hours. Based on an on-line survey, 81% of the respondents indicated that they found the presence of an Ambassador in the station helpful or somewhat helpful. Oftentimes, PATCO’s Customer Service receives comments of appreciation for the assistance that the Transit Ambassadors provide customers while traveling on PATCO. The presence of Ambassadors in the stations provides a sense of security for passengers, especially females traveling alone in the evening on transit. This program by no means replaces the presence of police in the PATCO stations; it simply compliments the mission of providing the public a safe and secure travel experience on PATCO. Public Safety fully supports the program. In fact, PATCO and Public Safety coordinate on the assignment of Transit Ambassadors to stations, especially during special events such as concerts and sporting events.

On September 15, 2010, the Board authorized the Authority (PATCO-10-003) to negotiate an Agreement with Service Group Incorporated for one year with two one-year options at an amount not to exceed a 3% increase over the previous year.

The award in 2010 followed a Request for Proposals to which SGI was the only firm to offer a proposal. Their proposal was very responsive to the RFP and demonstrated significant experience in providing the services prescribed in the RFP. SGI has experience in providing similar services around the country in areas including Camden, NJ; Philadelphia, PA; Denver, Colorado; Jacksonville, FL; Lancaster, PA; and several cities in California including Los Angeles and San Diego to name a few. The cost quoted includes labor, benefits, training and uniforms. SGI’s 2010 price proposal for the services was $611,806 which includes one Supervisor, one Manager, 9 fulltime Transit Ambassadors and 9 part-time Transit Ambassadors.

It is recommended that the Board authorize staff to exercise its option for a one-year extension of the Agreement with Service Group Incorporated in an amount not to exceed $630,160 to provide Transit Ambassador services to PATCO. This $630,160 reflects a maximum of three percent increase over the previous year. This cost will be from the PATCO Operating Budget.
SUMMARY:

Amount: $630,160
Source of Funding: PATCO Operating Budget
General Fund: $630,160
Capital Project #: N/A
Master Plan Status: N/A
Other Fund Sources: N/A
Duration of Contract: 1 year
Other Parties Involved: N/A
RESOLUTION

RESOLVED: That the Board authorizes the proper officers of the Authority to exercise the first one year extension of the existing Agreement with the Service Group Incorporated whereby SGI will provide Transit Ambassadors for the PATCO system for one year in an amount not to exceed $630,160, as per the attached Summary Statement; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Chair, Vice Chair and the President must approve and are hereby authorized to approve and execute all necessary agreements, contracts, or other documents on behalf of PATCO. If such agreements, contracts, or other documents have been approved by the Chair, Vice Chair and President and if thereafter, either the Chair or Vice Chair is absent or unavailable, the remaining Officer may execute the said document(s) on behalf of PATCO, along with the President. If both the Chair and Vice Chair are absent or unavailable, and if it is necessary to execute the said document(s), while they are absent or unavailable, then the President shall execute such document(s) on behalf of PATCO.

SUMMARY:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount:</th>
<th>$630,160</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source of Funding:</td>
<td>PATCO Operating Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Fund:</td>
<td>$630,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Project #:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Plan Status:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Fund Sources:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of Contract:</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Parties Involved:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>