Town of White Springs, Florida
Purchasing & Procurement Policy

1. Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform, fair, and cost-effective procedures for acquiring goods, materials, supplies, equipment, and services for the Town of White Springs. The policy is intended to:

- Ensure compliance with applicable Florida Statutes, Town Ordinances, and Council directives.
- Promote fiscal responsibility and stewardship of public funds.
- Provide clear roles, thresholds, and documentation standards for purchasing.
- Encourage fair and open competition where practicable.
- Support sustainability and efficiency in procurement practices.

This policy applies to all Town officials, employees, and agents engaged in purchasing on behalf of the Town, regardless of funding source. Where purchases involve federal or state grant funds, procurement shall also comply with applicable grant regulations and requirements.

2. Definitions

Emergency: A sudden and unexpected occurrence requiring immediate action to protect life, health, property, or essential Town services.

Purchase Requisition: A department's request to initiate a purchase, confirming need and funding availability.

Purchase Order (PO): An authorization issued by the Clerk/Bookkeeper for the purchase of goods or services.

Quote: A price offer from a vendor (verbal, email, or written) describing item/service and price; must be documented.

Bid/Solicitation: A formal competitive process (Invitation to Bid, Request for Proposals, Request for Qualifications) used for written, sealed competition.

Responsive/Responsible Vendor: A vendor that complies with solicitation requirements and demonstrates the capability to perform successfully.

Sole Source: Goods or services that can only be reasonably obtained from a single vendor due to uniqueness, compatibility, or prorietary restrictions.

Piggyback Purchase: Use of another government entity's competitively awarded contract when in the Town's best interest.

Blanket Purchase: A recurring purchase arrangement for routine, low-dollar items, subject to monthly and annual limits.

3. Authority & Responsibility

Department Heads (Fire Chief, Utility Director, or other designated supervisors): Identify needs, prepare requisitions, and confirm budget availability with the Clerk/Bookkeeper.

Town Manager: Oversees all procurement activities; approves purchases up to $10,000 if within the budget and up to $5,000 if not within budget; administers contracts; may authorize emergency purchases; ensures compliance with policy; and reports exceptions or emergencies to the Town Council.

Town Council: Approves all purchases exceeding $10,000 if within the budget, and $5,000 if not within budget; authorizes competitive bid awards; approves contracts and significant change orders; and adopts amendments to this policy.

Town Clerk/Bookkeeper: Maintains official procurement records; verifies available funds; issues purchase orders; assists with bid tabulations; and processes payments upon confirmation of receipt of goods/services.

Town Attorney: Reviews contracts for form and legal sufficiency, particularly for purchases exceeding $10,000 or involving specialized services.

4. Dollar Thresholds & Approvals

The following thresholds govern approval, authority, and required competition:

Total Contract Value	Competition Requirement	Approval Authority
$0 – $1,000	Discretionary; competition encouraged when possible	Department Head or Town Manager

Exceeding $1,000 up to $10,000 if within the budget or Exceeding $1,000 up to $5,000 if not within the budget	At least one documented quote	Town Manager
Exceeding $10,000 up to $25,000 if within the budget or Exceeding $5,000 up to $25,000 if not within the budget	Minimum of three documented quotes	Town Council
Over $25,000	Formal written solicitation is the preferred method if possible (sealed ITB/RFP/RFQ)	Town Council

Additional Rules:

- Purchases shall not be artificially divided to avoid thresholds.
- All approvals must be obtained prior to purchase unless an emergency is declared.
- Exceptions (e.g., sole source, piggyback, utilities, legal services) must be documented and retained in the procurement file.

5. Procurement Methods & Process

A. Procurement Methods:

- **Informal Quotations:** For purchases exceeding $10,000 up to $25,000, if within the budget, or exceeding $5,000 up to $25,000, if not within the budget, a minimum of three quotes is required. Quotes may be verbal, email, or written but must be documented in the procurement file.
- **Formal Sealed Bids/Proposals:** For purchases over $25,000, the Town must issue a formal Invitation to Bid (ITB), Request for Proposals (RFP), or Request for Qualifications (RFQ)**.** Bids/proposals shall be sealed, opened publicly, and evaluated according to established criteria.
- **Sole Source Purchases:** Allowed when only one vendor can provide the required goods or services; must be justified in writing and approved consistent with thresholds.
- **Piggyback/Cooperative Purchasing:** Permitted when another government entity has awarded a contract competitively, provided terms are favorable and documentation is obtained.

- **Emergency Purchases:** Permitted when immediate action is required to protect life, health, property, or essential services. See Section 6.

B. Step-by-Step Process:

1. Identify Need & Funding – Department confirms need and budget availability with Clerk/Bookkeeper.
2. Select Method – Determine procurement method based on thresholds and circumstances.
3. Solicit Quotes/Bids – Obtain quotes or issue formal solicitation with clear specifications and due date.
4. Public Notice (if formal) – Post on Town website, email known vendors, and advertise as required.
5. Receipt & Opening – Quotes may be opened upon receipt; formal bids must be opened at the advertised date and time.
6. Evaluation – Prepare a bid/quote tabulation; award to lowest responsive/ responsible vendor or highest-ranked proposer.
7. Approval & Award – Town Manager or Town Council approves as required.
8. PO/Contract – Clerk issues a purchase order or prepares contract; confirm insurance or bonds if applicable.
9. Receipt & Payment – Department verifies delivery; Clerk matches invoice to PO/contract and processes payment.
10. Recordkeeping – Clerk maintains complete procurement file including quotes, bids, tabulations, approvals, contracts, and invoices.

6. Emergency & Exception Purchases

Emergency Purchases:

- The Town Manager may authorize emergency purchases of any amount when immediate action is needed to protect life, health, property, or essential Town services.
- The Town recognizes that maintenance and repair incidents occur which may reach the threshold for a Formal Sealed Bid/Proposal. However, the urgency does not allow for a Formal Sealed Bid/Proposal process. In that case, the Staff is directed to proceed with the Informal Quotation process, if possible. If the nature of the emergency does not allow that, then the Town Manager may authorize the purchase.
- The department initiating the emergency purchase must prepare an **Emergency Purchase Form** documenting:
    - Nature of the emergency

- Goods or services procured
- Vendor used
- Amount spent
- Consequences of delayed if purchase had not been made

- Emergency purchases must be reported by the Town Manager to the Town Council at the next regular meeting.

Exceptions to Competition: Certain items and services are not subject to normal competition requirements. Examples include:

- Utilities (electric, water, sewer, telecommunications)
- Professional services (legal, engineering per F.S. 287.055, etc.)
- Proprietary software, equipment, or technology with no substitutes
- Real estate transactions

Exceptions must be documented in writing with justification retained in the procurement file and approved consistent with thresholds.

7. Solicitation Types & Evaluation

Solicitation Types

- **Invitation to Bid (ITB):** Used when detailed specifications are available and award is made to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.
- **Request for Proposals (RFP):** Used when factors other than price must be considered. Award is made to the proposer whose offer is most advantageous to the Town.
- **Request for Qualifications (RFQ):** Used for professional services; selection is based on qualifications then fee negotiation.

Evaluation Criteria

When determining the lowest responsive and responsible bidder or best value proposer, the following factors may be considered in addition to price:

- Ability, capacity, and skill of the vendor to perform
- Past performance with the Town or other agencies
- Delivery schedules and timeliness
- Financial stability of the vendor
- Quality, warranty, and life-cycle cost of goods/services
- Compliance with laws, licensing, and insurance requirements

Evaluation Documentation

- For informal quotes, staff must prepare a simple **Quotes Log** documenting the vendors contacted and prices received.

- For formal bids/proposals, staff must complete a **Bid/Proposal Tabulation Sheet** and retain it in the procurement file.
- Selection committees may be appointed for RFPs or RFQs, consisting of at least three members designated by the Town Manager.

8. Advertising & Timelines (Construction & Formal Procurements)

- **Formal Solicitations:** All formal sealed bids, proposals, or qualifications (over $25,000) shall be publicly noticed.
- **Posting Requirements:** Solicitations must be posted on the Town's website, distributed to known vendors, and advertised in a local newspaper when required by Florida law.
- **Construction Projects:**
    - For projects estimated at **more than $200,000**, Florida Statutes require public advertisement at least once in a newspaper of general circulation in Hamilton County **at least 21 days prior** to the date bids will be received, and at least 5 days prior to any scheduled pre-bid conference.
    - For projects estimated at **more than $500,000**, the advertisement must run **at least 30 days prior** to the bid date and at least 5 days prior to any scheduled pre-bid conference.
- **Other Notices:** In addition to statutory requirements, the Town may post notices at Town Hall or on regional vendor networks to ensure adequate competition.
- **Amendments and Addenda:** Any changes to a solicitation must be issued in writing and distributed to all vendors who obtained bid documents.

9. Purchase Orders & Requisitions

- **Requirement:** A purchase order (PO) is required for all purchases of goods and services except petty cash transactions, credit card purchases within limits, or emergency purchases authorized by the Town Manager.
- **Initiation:** Departments submit a **purchase requisition** to the Clerk/Bookkeeper identifying the item(s) to be purchased, vendor information, estimated cost, and budget account number.
- **Review:** The Clerk/Bookkeeper reviews requisitions for accuracy, completeness, and available funds.
- **Approval:**
    - Requisitions up to $10,000, if within the budget, or up to $5,000, if not within the budget, are approved by the Town Manager.
    - Requisitions above $10,000, if within the budget, or above $5,000, if not within the budget, require Town Council approval.

- **Issuance:** Once approved, the Clerk/Bookkeeper issues a numbered PO. The PO must include:
    - Vendor name, contact, and address
    - Description of goods/services
    - Unit price and total price
    - Budget account to be charged
    - Authorizing signature(s)
- **Documentation:** No invoice shall be processed for payment without an associated PO, except for petty cash, credit card, or emergency purchases.

10. Petty Cash & Credit Cards

Petty Cash

- Petty cash funds may be used for incidental, low-value purchases not exceeding $100 per transaction.
- Each petty cash reimbursement must be supported by a vendor receipt and approved by the petty cash custodian.
- Reimbursements above $100 require Town Manager approval.
- The Clerk/Bookkeeper reconciles petty cash periodically.

Credit Cards

- Town-issued credit cards are governed by the adopted **Town of White Springs Credit Card Policy**.
- Credit cards may only be used in accordance with that policy and are strictly limited to official Town business.
- All purchases made by credit card must also comply with the thresholds and procedures outlined in this Procurement Policy.
- Unauthorized or personal use is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action, reimbursement obligations, or legal prosecution.

11. Blanket Purchases & Change Orders

Blanket Purchases

- The Town Manager may authorize **blanket purchase orders** for recurring, routine, low-dollar purchases from a single vendor (e.g., fuel, office supplies, maintenance materials).
- Blanket purchase orders shall not exceed **$3,000 per month per vendor** and must be monitored to ensure compliance with budget limits.
- Blanket purchase orders are not to be used to circumvent competitive bidding thresholds.

- The Clerk/Bookkeeper shall maintain a log of all blanket purchase orders and reconcile usage monthly.

Change Orders

- Change orders are permitted to adjust the scope, quantity, or price of an existing purchase order or contract.
- **Town Manager Approval:** Change orders within the original budget appropriation and below $2,500.
- **Town Council Approval:** Change orders that cause the total contract value to exceed $2,500 or that materially alter the scope of work.
- All change orders must be in writing, signed by the vendor and the approving authority, and retained in the contract file.
- Change orders shall not be used to avoid competitive procurement requirements.
- **Not-to-Exceed Limit:** A contract originally awarded by the Council may not be increased by more than **25% of its original value** through change orders without further Council authorization.

12. Sole Source & Piggybacking

Sole Source Purchases

- A **sole source purchase** may be made when goods or services are available only from a single vendor due to uniqueness, compatibility, or proprietary restrictions.
- Examples include:
    - Proprietary software or technology systems
    - Replacement parts compatible with existing equipment
    - Services available only from a specific licensed provider
- Written justification must be prepared by the requesting department and approved by the Town Manager or Town Council in accordance with approval limits.
- Documentation shall include:
    - Description of the item or service
    - Explanation of why no other vendor can provide it
    - Evidence of market research performed (if applicable)
    - Estimated cost and funding source
- Sole source purchases must be reviewed at least every **two years** to confirm exclusivity remains valid.

Piggybacking & Cooperative Purchasing

- The Town may purchase goods or services by “piggybacking” on contracts competitively solicited and awarded by other governmental entities (federal, state, county, municipality, or cooperative purchasing consortiums).

- The following documentation must be obtained and retained in the procurement file:
    - Copy of the original solicitation and specifications
    - Tabulation of responses and award documentation
    - Copy of the executed contract with the awarded vendor
    - Written confirmation from the vendor extending the same terms and prices to the Town of White Springs
- Piggyback contracts must be **active and unexpired** at the time of purchase.
- The Town Manager may approve piggyback purchases up to $2,500; the Town Council must approve piggyback purchases exceeding $2,500.
- Piggybacking is permitted only when the terms are **equal to or more favorable** than those available to the original agency.

13. Bid Opening, Award & Protest

Bid/Proposal Opening

- All formal sealed bids and proposals shall be opened at the date, time, and place specified in the solicitation.
- Openings shall be public and recorded by the Clerk/Bookkeeper or designee.
- A **bid tabulation** will be prepared, listing the names of vendors, amounts bid, and other pertinent information.

Notice of Award

- After evaluation, the Town Manager shall prepare a recommendation of award.
- Notice of Intent to Award shall be posted at Town Hall and on the Town's website.
- Vendors who submitted bids or proposals shall be notified by email or mail when feasible.

Protests

- Any vendor who submitted a bid or proposal may file a written protest challenging the award recommendation.
- A protest must be filed with the Town Clerk **within 72 hours (3 business days)** of the posting of the Notice of Intent to Award.
- The written protest must state the specific grounds for the objection.
- The Town Manager shall review the protest and issue a written determination within 5 business days.
- If the protesting vendor is not satisfied, they may appeal to the Town Council by filing a written appeal with the Clerk within **7 calendar days** of the Manager's determination.

- The Council shall hear the protest at its next regular meeting or a special meeting and issue a final decision.

Effect of Protest

- A timely protest shall automatically stay the procurement process until the protest is resolved, unless the Town Manager determines in writing that continuation is necessary to protect substantial interests of the Town.

14. Debarment & Suspension

- The Town Manager may suspend or debar a vendor from doing business with the Town for cause, including but not limited to:
    - Fraud, misrepresentation, or material omission in a bid, proposal, or contract
    - Criminal conviction relating to public contracting
    - Serious or repeated performance failures on Town contracts
    - Violation of ethical standards or conflicts of interest policies
- **Suspension** may be imposed for up to **12 months**.
- **Debarment** may be imposed for up to **3 years**.
- The decision must be in writing, state the reasons, and be provided to the vendor.
- The vendor may appeal the decision to the Town Council by filing a written appeal with the Clerk within **10 calendar days** of notice.
- The Council's decision on appeal shall be final.

15. Bonds & Insurance (Construction/Services)

- **Payment & Performance Bonds**
    - For construction projects with a contract value greater than **$200,000**, the contractor shall provide payment and performance bonds in accordance with Florida Statutes.
    - Bonds must be issued by sureties licensed to do business in Florida and meeting financial strength requirements.
    - For projects under $200,000, the Town Council may waive bonding requirements if determined to be in the Town's best interest.
- **Insurance Requirements**
    - All contractors and vendors performing work on Town property must provide certificates of insurance prior to commencing work.
    - Minimum insurance coverage shall include:
        - General Liability: $1,000,000 per occurrence / $2,000,000 aggregate
        - Automobile Liability: $1,000,000 combined single limit
        - Workers' Compensation: Statutory coverage in compliance with Florida law
        - Professional Liability (if applicable): $1,000,000 per claim

- The Town Manager may set minimum coverage levels appropriate to the project or service.
- Certificates must name the **Town of White Springs** as an additional insured where appropriate.

16. Contract Administration

- **Oversight & Enforcement**
  - The **Town Manager**, or a designee appointed by the Manager, serves as the Contract Administrator for all Town contracts.
  - Responsibilities include:
    - Ensuring the contractor/vendor performs in accordance with contract terms and specifications.
    - Monitoring timelines, deliverables, and budgets.
    - Approving invoices only after verifying satisfactory performance.
    - Coordinating with the Clerk/Bookkeeper to ensure proper recordkeeping.
- **Amendments & Renewals**
  - All amendments, extensions, or renewals of contracts must be in writing.
  - Amendments must be approved by the same authority that approved the original contract.
  - No contract may be extended or renewed beyond its original term without express approval.
- **Closeout**
  - Upon completion of a contract, the Town Manager shall ensure:
    - All goods or services have been delivered and accepted.
    - All payments have been made in accordance with the contract.
    - Any retainage, warranties, or performance obligations are documented.
  - The Clerk/Bookkeeper shall maintain the official contract file, including all amendments, insurance certificates, bonds, and closeout documents.

17. Ethics, Conflict of Interest, & Gifts

- All Town officials, employees, and agents engaged in procurement shall comply with applicable provisions of **Florida Statutes, Chapter 112 (Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees)** and other applicable laws.
- No Town official, employee, or agent shall:
  - Solicit or accept gifts, favors, or anything of monetary value from vendors or contractors doing business with the Town.
  - Participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract if a conflict of interest exists.
  - Use inside information or position for personal gain.

- Any actual or potential conflict of interest must be disclosed in writing to the Town Manager and, if necessary, to the Town Council.
- Vendors and contractors must certify that no gratuities, kickbacks, or conflicts of interest are involved in the procurement process.
- A **Vendor Conflict of Interest / No Gifts Affidavit** shall be required as part of all competitive solicitations and contract awards.
- Violations may result in disciplinary action, contract termination, disqualification from future bidding, or referral for legal action.

18. Public Records & Transparency

- All procurement records are **public records** subject to disclosure under **Chapter 119, Florida Statutes (Public Records Law)**.
- Records include, but are not limited to: solicitations, advertisements, quotes, bids, proposals, evaluations, contracts, purchase orders, invoices, and related correspondence.
- The Clerk/Bookkeeper shall serve as the custodian of procurement records and ensure that records are maintained in a manner that facilitates timely public access.
- All contracts entered into by the Town shall include the following **public records clause** (or substantially similar language):

- *Pursuant to Section 119.0701, Florida Statutes, the contractor shall comply with Florida's public records laws. Specifically, the contractor shall: (a) keep and maintain public records required by the Town to perform the service; (b) provide the public with access to public records on the same terms and conditions as the Town; (c) ensure records that are exempt or confidential are not disclosed except as authorized by law; and (d) transfer to the Town, at no cost, all public records in possession of the contractor upon termination of the contract.*
    - Failure of a contractor to comply with public records requirements may result in contract termination and other penalties allowed by law.

19. Records Retention

- All procurement records shall be maintained in compliance with **Florida's General Records Schedule for Local Government Agencies (GS1-L)**, as issued by the Florida Department of State, Division of Library and Information Services.
- Minimum retention periods:
    - **Quotes, Bids, and Proposals (Unsuccessful):** 4 fiscal years after award.
    - **Contracts, Purchase Orders, and Amendments:** 5 fiscal years after completion, termination, or expiration.
    - **Invoices, Receipts, and Payment Records:** 5 fiscal years after transaction.

    - **Protest Records:** 5 fiscal years after resolution.
- If a longer retention period is required by law, grant conditions, or litigation hold, the longer period shall apply.
- Records shall be maintained in both **hard copy and/or electronic format** in accordance with Town procedures and must be accessible for audit and public inspection.
- The Clerk/Bookkeeper is responsible for ensuring compliance with retention schedules and for the secure destruction of records that have met their retention period.

20. Review & Amendment

- This policy shall be reviewed at least once every **three (3) years** by the Town Manager in consultation with the Town Clerk/Bookkeeper and Town Attorney.
- Recommendations for revisions shall be presented to the Town Council for consideration and adoption.
- The Town Council may amend this policy at any time by resolution or ordinance, as appropriate.
- Amendments may be necessary to:
    - Ensure compliance with changes in **Florida Statutes**, federal regulations, or grant requirements.
    - Address audit findings or recommendations from the Florida Auditor General or independent auditors.
    - Reflect changes in best practices for small municipalities.
    - Improve efficiency, transparency, or accountability in Town purchasing.
- Once adopted by the Town Council, amendments shall take effect immediately unless otherwise specified.

Appendix A – Quotes Log

This form is used to record informal quotations for purchases between $2,501 and $10,000.

Vendor Name	Contact Info	Date	Price Quoted	Notes

Appendix B – Bid/Proposal Tabulation Sheet

This sheet is used to compare bids or proposals received in response to formal solicitations.

Vendor Name	Bid/Proposal Amount	Responsive?	Responsible?	Comments

Appendix C – Emergency Purchase Form

This form documents emergency purchases authorized by the Town Manager.

Date:	
Department:	
Nature of Emergency:	
Vendor / Amount:	
Consequences if delayed:	

Appendix D – Sole Source Justification Form

This form is used to justify procurement when only one vendor can provide the required goods or services.

Description of Item/Service:	
Vendor:	
Estimated Cost:	
Reason Sole Source:	
Department Head / Approval:	
Date:	

Appendix E – Piggyback Checklist

This checklist ensures compliance when using another government entity’s competitively awarded contract.

☐ Copy of original solicitation and contract obtained.

☐ Verification that contract is active and unexpired.

☐ Vendor confirmation that same terms and conditions apply.

☐ Town Council approval documented (if required).

Appendix F – Vendor Conflict of Interest / No Gifts Affidavit

Vendors must certify that no gratuities, gifts, kickbacks, or conflicts of interest are involved in the procurement process.

I hereby certify that neither I, nor my company, have offered or given any gift or gratuity to any Town official, employee, or agent; that no conflict of interest exists; and that we are in full compliance with Florida Statutes Chapter 112.

Vendor Name: _____

Authorized Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix G – Purchase Requisition Form

Department:	
Requested By:	
Vendor:	
Description:	
Estimated Cost:	
Budget Account:	

Appendix H – Blanket Purchase Order Log

This log tracks recurring purchases under blanket purchase orders.

Vendor	Monthly Cap	Purchases to Date	Balance Remaining

Town of White Springs – Procurement Compliance Log

(This log serves as the official record of procurement activity, approvals, receipt verification, and compliance documentation pursuant to the Town's Purchasing and Procurement Policy.)

No.	Date	Vendor / Contractor	Description of Goods or Services	Fund / Department	Procurement Method	Total Cost	Approval Authority	PO / Contract #	Verified Receipt (Name / Date)	Invoice–Contract Match Certified (Name / Date)	Emergency or Exception Justification	Quarterly Review (Town Manager / Clerk Signatures)	Comments

Town Manager: _____ Date: _____

Town Clerk: _____ Date: _____