

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

2021 JAN 20 PM 3: 13

ANNA REYNOLDS SCHOOL PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

January 14, 2021, Zoom Event


Town Clerk

- I. Call to Order – Committee Chairperson Stephen Woods called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM.
- II. Roll Call – Members present: Stephen Woods, Chairperson; Michael Camillo, Chris Miner, Steven Silvia, Carol Duggan, Jeremy Whetzel, and Cindy Stamm (participated at 5:30 PM). Others present: Chuck Warrington and John Koplas, Colliers International; Paul Vessella, Newington Board of Education; Maureen Brummett, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools; Lou Jachimowicz, Chief Finance and Operating Officer; James Krupinski, Town Clerk; and Jeff Baron, Director of Administrative Services.
- III. Public Participation – None.
- IV. Project Status – Mr. Woods stated that the project had achieved renovation status with the State and that it was shortlisted with the State. Mr. Warrington added that it was on the State's priority list for 2020-21. There are not a lot of projects on the list. To achieve renovation status at this juncture is a relief. He was asked where the Committee was in the process. He noted that the Committee had published a timeline in the past. It was now slipping a little bit.
- V. Architect Selection Process – Short list for interviews. Mr. Warrington noted that there were quite a few Qualification Statements to look at (16). Mr. Woods felt that it was a great, almost overwhelming, response. It will be a lot of reading to get the 16 down to 4 for interviews. He turned the meeting over to Mr. Warrington for strategy, etc. Mr. Warrington stated that recently another community that went through this process had fees within half a percent. The responses were a great turnout for this project. It was the greatest number of responses that they have seen in quite a while. There are a lot of big firms, a number of representative firms. Colliers has worked with most of these firms on one or more projects. All who responded are qualified. He suggested forming a small subcommittee to make recommendations to get the total number down to six to eight firms for the Building Committee as a whole to pick from; then invite the Principal and the Project Manager to meet with the subcommittee in a preliminary interview. Relationships are important, you will work closely with these folks for 3-4 years. The subcommittee can ask how they envision the project going. This will help the process and provide a better product. This is what they are recommending for a process.

Mr. Woods stated that he is counting heavily on Colliers to work with the Building Committee. He also envisioned the group consisting of Mr. Jachimowicz, Mr. Silvia and himself. They can work to bring back the rationale for selecting the ones they do. It is all

about relationships and the partnership with the firms. Mr. Silvia stated that this put him in an awkward situation. He may have affiliations, he is an architect and would have to abstain from a vote. He felt it was like trying to judge a judge. While honored, he would not be able to accept Mr. Wood's offer to serve on this subcommittee. Mr. Woods stated that he felt that Mr. Silvia would be a great fit. Councilor Miner felt that 16 was a great number. Trying to narrow this down will be difficult. Ms. Stamm felt the Committee needed to get a feel for the architect it wanted to work with. She also felt that it would be tough to get this number down.

Mr. Whetzel stated that he is a data guy. He previously worked with the Vernon Town Council. He would like to see a true comparison on a data point level. He felt it would come down to the firm's reputation and what they could offer the Town. He would like to see thought points and actual data. Councilor Camillo noted that there was not a lot of work out there. He thought it was good to get the number of respondents down to eight, and then to four. He also added that he was willing to help. The question was raised about the number of finalists. Mr. Warrington responded that the State requires no more than four. This is for all professional services. The State does not dictate how you get to the four finalists. He would recommend not bringing in more than eight to the subcommittee. The Town can find out what they understand about the project and about Newington. Once the Committee is down to four it can issue the Request for Proposals document. Going from eight to four will enhance the process. Mr. Miner felt that Councilor Camillo was on the right track. He asked, if the Committee gets down to eight firms, is it acceptable if we tell them they are in a narrow pool and to bring their best game? Mr. Warrington responded that it was acceptable. He feels that the extra steps in the process are warranted. He also recommended limiting the time frame to 20 minutes for the first interview. The first interviews would be conducted over two days by the subcommittee. Then the Committee as a whole would sit down to pick from there. Colliers will be the organizer. Selection can be a fine line. Mr. Miner stated that the Committee would get a feel following the interviews for the styles, capabilities, and strengths of the different firms. It makes the final selection a lot easier.

Mr. Woods added that the Committee needed to meet with the people it will be dealing with. Councilor Miner agreed, it should not be with just the sales team. It is best to know who all the players are, and who will be their team. Mr. Warrington felt that this should include the Principal in Charge, the Interior Designer, the MEP (Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing) Engineer/Consultant, and maybe their technology consultant. Mr. Silvia said that he agreed with Mr. Warrington, evaluate the companies based on their MEP Engineer and their solutions for Reynolds School. Mr. Warrington noted that 3-4 MEP Engineers will have multiple representation. Mr. Silvia added that it comes back to the team they have compiled. His bias is with MEP Engineers. A look at the team composition will quickly get to the eight. The MEP will take you to the final 4. Then subjective questions will come into play of who the Building Committee and the administration thinks they can best work with.

Mr. Woods asked Mr. Warrington to walk the Committee through the process. Mr. Warrington stated that the first step was to develop a working subcommittee. It should include Dr. Brummett, Mr. Jachimowicz, 2-3 members of the Building Committee, and Colliers. They will meet next week and the week after that. If they wanted to the entire Building Committee could sit in on the initial interviews. Mr. Woods said that there should be two members from the Building Committee (he will be on the subcommittee, at least one member needs to be from the other party, although he was not looking to politicize the process). Mr. Miner stated that he agreed with Mr. Woods. MEP was equally, if not more, important to consider on the eight firms, and then on the four finalists. During the Town Hall

project process, the Building Committee toured the project and talked to other Building Committees to determine how their project turned out. They talked with the other project leaders. Mr. Warrington added that references are always vital to the selection process. The Committee can ask who your current clients are, who you are working with, what is your experience, what is the process, and did it go well. Mr. Miner felt that it was critical to implement this into the process. Mr. Woods stated that we had done this in the other school projects. Mr. Warrington also encouraged the Committee to talk with a variety of clients, those who are in the process of design and those who are in the process of construction. Councilor Camillo encouraged the Committee to move forward, not to slow down, this will affect how the State looks at us. Mr. Woods asked that the other member of the Committee who wants in to contact him. One other member will work with the subcommittee next week. Ms. Stamm concluded the discussion by stating that she liked the process.

- VI. Any Other Business Pertinent to the Committee – Mr. Woods asked Mr. Baron to add an Agenda item for future meetings, to take action on the prior meeting minutes. The Committee will meet again in two weeks. The subcommittee meetings will be more informal and will be held through the Colliers Zoom platform.
- VII. Public Participation – None.
- VIII. Comments by Members – Mr. Silvia reiterated that he was available to answer questions and to assist the Committee.
- IX. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 6:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Baron

Jeff Baron
Director of Administrative Services