

**Town of Watertown
School Building Committee
Three Elementary Schools Projects and High School Project
Wednesday, May 20, 2020
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Meeting held via Zoom**

M I N U T E S

Committee Members Present: Mark Sideris, (chair), John Portz (vice-chair), Paul Anastasi, Deanne Galdston, Lori Kabel, Lindsay Mosca, Kelly Kurlbaum, Heidi Perkins, Tom Tracy, Leo Patterson and Vincent Piccirilli

Members Absent: Steve Magoon

Others Present: Scott Dunlap, (Architectural team, Ai3 Architects), Vivian Varbedian, Tom Finnegan and Alana Forbes (OPM, Hill International), Christy Murphy and Tim Bonfatti (Compass Project Management), Erin Moulton, Mena Ciarlone

1. Call to Order: Mark Sideris called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

2. Meeting Minutes Approval

Chairman Mark Sideris asked for a motion to approve the Elementary School meeting minutes for February 5, 2020 and March 4, 2020. Vincent Piccirilli informed the School Building Committee that the minutes were not received therefore minutes were tabled.

Mark Sideris asked for a motion to approve the High School meeting minutes for January 29, 2020 and February 27, 2020. Vincent Piccirilli made a motion to approve the minutes as written. All were in favor on a roll call vote seconded by John Portz.

3. Elementary Schools Project Status Update

- Vivian Varbedian informed the School Building Committee about the status update of the Elementary schools. The target move completion date for both Hosmer and Cunniff Elementary schools is June 1, 2020. The move service contractor is scheduled to complete the move around mid-June (approximately 2 weeks).
- The asbestos abatement for Cunniff is scheduled for June 15, 2020. Hosmer's asbestos abatement is scheduled for June 22, 2020. The abatement is anticipated to last (4) weeks from start date to completion.

- The School Building Committee was also updated on the bid results for both the Filed Sub-Contractors and General Contractors. The Filed Sub-Contractor bid results were received on April 16, 2020. The General Contractor bid results were received on May 6, 2020.

4. Filed Sub-Contractor Bid Results

The bid result was presented to the School Building Committee by Scott Dunlap indicating the bid results for the Filed Sub-Contractors. The results were presented as a comparison between contractors and also between contractors cost estimating and project budget. The results showed that both contractors came in within budget. The (70) Filed Sub-Contractors bids were received over (14) different categories of work.

5. General Contractor Bid Results

Scott Dunlap also presented the General Contractor bid results. Scott explained that out of (4) Pre-qualified General Contractor bids, (2) bids were received; Brait Builders Corporation and Bacon Construction Company. Both Brait Builders and Bacon Construction came in within budget. The base bid budget is \$99 million. The Alternate 1 (PV for Site and Building) is estimated at \$4.5 million. The total bid w/Alternates is \$103.5 million.

- Brait Builders base bid results came in at \$92.3 million. The Alternate (1) results came in at \$2.6 million w/Total Bid Alternates at \$94.5 million. The Total GC Work (GC Bids Only) came in at \$57.2 million and Total Sub-Trade (GC Bids Only) came in at \$35.1 million.
- Bacon Construction base bid results came in at \$97.2 million. The Alternate (1) results came in at \$2.6 million w/Total Bid Alternates at \$99.9 million. The Total GC Work (GC Bids Only) results came in at \$62.1 million and Total Sub-Trade (GC Bids Only) came in at 35.1 million.

6. Alternate # 1

Brait Builders and Bacon Construction were asked to submit a price as part of the bid for Alternate #1. Alternate #1 includes furnishing and installation of complete Photovoltaic (PV) Systems at both Hosmer and Cunniff. Further breakdown as follows:

- Furnished under section 26 00 00 (Electrical Sub-Contractor)
- Includes labor, materials, equipment, transportation, appurtenances, and related services
- Includes arrays, mounting hardware, terminal boxes, inverters, disconnects, circuit breakers, panel boards/switchgear

Alternate 1 was presented in further detail. Cunniff will have 1,169 solar panels with an estimated production of 559 KWh and Hosmer will have 1,920 solar panels with an estimated production of 943KWh. The Design and OPM team recommends incorporation of Bid Alternate #1 into the construction contract for the following reasons:

1. Alternate #1 allows the Committee to take a definitive and significant step toward the established goal of achieving Net-Zero on these projects.
2. The bid price of \$2,620,000 is SUBSTANTIALLY less than the estimated costs of \$4.5 million.
3. The General Contractor total bid price of \$92.335 million is substantially less than the established budget of \$99.0 million and affords the Town the capacity to incorporate the Solar panels into the construction and take ownership of the panels. This can be done without committing any of the discretionary funds (\$2.558 million), construction contingency (\$7.4 million) or owner contingency (\$1.1 million) previously identified in the budget.
4. Ownership of the solar panels allows the Town to reap the benefits of all energy generated by the panels.
5. Although the Design and OPM team recommended the Committee to evaluate the possibility of a Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA), this recommendation was made when it was unclear if the project budget could support the full costs of the solar panels. The purpose of including the solar panel alternate in the construction bid was to identify the exact costs of the panels. The result is the solar panels can be purchased within the established project budget.
6. The Construction Contract Award, including alternate #1, must be made within 30 days of receipt of bids.

7. Public and Committee Comments/Questions

- **Question 1** - Does Scott have any comments or input and know anything about Brait Builders?
Response - Scott Dunlap responded that Brait Builders have been in the school construction business exclusively since the late 80s. The first project with Ai3 was in 1999 plus they have been the low bidder for several of the projects. A few school projects that Brait have constructed is Natick High School, Marshfield High School and Abington Middle High School. Brait Builders has many positive references and reports. Vivian Varbedian added that Hill Intl. has worked with Brait Builders in the past and has had great success with them.
- **Question 2** - The size of the solar array design was reduced slightly. How do you see this affecting the ability to attain Net-Zero?
Response - Scott elaborated that currently, the energy modelers are working on an updated projected energy use on both the Cunniff and Hosmer which is based on the 100% bid documents. Upon modeling completion in (2) weeks, we will have updated information to share with the Committee.
- **Question 3** - John Portz of the School Building Committee asked if the General Contractors were instructed to account for the total power needs as part of their bid for the solar panel component.

Response - Scott replied that the General Contractors were not instructed to put in for the solar bid component as it was a very specific detailed set of documents that identified every panel and component provided to them by Ai3.

- **Question 4** - Kelly Kurlbaum of the School Building Committee asked if the 2.6 million includes the panels and infrastructure.

Response - Scott confirmed that all the cabling, conduits, underground wiring and structural support systems for the exterior canopies was part of the General Contractor bid. This alternate includes the actual panels and installation of the panels.

- **Question 5** - The building was designed to operate to high efficiency which could mean it may not be able to provide adequate fresh air for infectious disease requirements. With Covid-19 energy efficiency has taken a back seat to health and safety. Have you discussed ventilation requirements with an engineering firm?

Response - Scott replied that there were discussions with engineers about COVID-19 and enhanced focus on ventilation within buildings. During design, steps were taken to create a system which would have enhanced air filtration and high efficiency which are also part of the Net Zero and LEED requirements. An example was presented with regards to the classroom units being on independent systems as compared to being on one central air handling unit.

- **Question 6** - Beyond the physical building changes, are we adding in expanded technology for website, software, equipment and training for both teachers, children and families?

Response - Vivian Varbedian noted that several dialogs were held with the Superintendent and that the Design team was making sure there are some potential changes to accommodate distance learning in the future.

- **Question 7** - Is there a prospect of more efficient solar panels becoming available within the timeframe for construction and making changes if so?

Response - Scott Dunlap established that the panels have changed while out to bid. The bid was structured in a way that the contractor does not have to commit to a particular panel until a year from now. The technology can evolve to a point that a 10% increase can be given in the capacity of the panels based on the evolution of the technology.

8. Elementary Schools Project Vote for General Contractor & Alternate #1

Comments: Tom Tracey informed the School Building Committee that the bid information received was forwarded to Beth Greenblair of Beacon Integrated Solutions who has done bid analysis and concluded that it is beneficial to the town to own the solar panels. Chairman Sideris then added that the General Contractor bid came in significantly under budget and believed that by adding Alternate #1 would be a prudent step to take advantage of ownership benefits associated with the solar panels.

- **Question 1** - Kelly Kurlbaum inquired if there was feedback from the contractor of any additional cost outside of what they bid? Also, where are we in the design phase as far as

discussion with any changes dealing with social distancing? Kelly does not want to proceed if it does not align with the new regulations and requirements for COVID 19.

Response - Vivian Varbedian informed her that the bidding process was completed prior to COVID 19. Additional funds has been set aside to address additional costs related to COVID 19. Costs will be tracked separately. Ai3 team are evaluating some additional design changes as to address COVID-19 scope changes bearing in mind that drawings for both Cunniff and Hosmer is 100% complete. Chairman Sideris also informed Kelly that the budget will be revised and a COVID 19 line item will be added starting at \$1 million. This will be the town's responsibility.

- **Question 2** - Leo Patterson inquired about contractor/subcontractor schedule impacts due to lack to productivity as a result of COVID-19 setbacks.

Response - Scott Dunlap added that Brait Builders is very aggressive in terms of implementing safety procedures related to COVID 19 and was also listed as an example by the Governor of a contractor leading the way. With still a lot of unknowns, the team will be monitoring weekly to mitigate any impacts associated with COVID-19.

Vincent Piccirilli made a motion to vote to accept bids and request that the Town Manager take necessary steps to execute an Owner/Contractor Agreement with Brait Builders in the amount of \$92,335,000. The motion was seconded by Tom Tracy. All were in favor on a roll call vote.

Vincent Piccirilli made a motion to vote to request that the Town Manager also include Bid Alternate 1 in the amount of \$2,620,000 within the Owner/Contractor Agreement such that the total value of the contract is \$94,955,000. The motion was seconded by Tom Tracy. All were in favor on a roll call vote

Chairman Mark Sideris thanked all the Committee members and Project team for having the project come thus far. Since money is needed for the project, there will be a first reading in front of the Town Council on May 26th (Tuesday) and a Public Hearing with a presentation from Hill and Ai3 at the Town Council meeting on June 9th (Tuesday).

9. Request for Proposals: Testing & Inspection

Vivian Varbedian briefly gave an update for Construction Testing/Inspection by owner.

- Request for Proposals (RFP) for Testing and Inspection Services have been advertised.
- Testing and Inspection proposals are due June 4th.
- Seeking two volunteers to join in the review of RFPs process.

10. Elementary Schools Website Update

Vivian Varbedian spoke about the status of the school website.

- The three elementary schools new website is scheduled to be substantially completed by May 22nd.
- Hill will work with the Town to get the website up and running live by May 29th.

11. Approval of Elementary School Invoices (All Projects)

Summary of Elementary School invoices are as follows:

- Hill International - (4) Invoices for (4) months totaling \$229,035.00
- Ai3 Architects – (9) Invoices for (3) months totaling \$1,093,934.07
- Beacon Integrated Solutions – (3) Invoices for (3) totaling \$4,577.26
- Colliers International – (3) Invoices for (3) months totaling \$28,137.60

Tom Tracey motioned to approve all the Elementary school invoices. The motion was seconded by Vincent Piccirilli. All were in favor on a roll call vote.

Summary of High School Invoices are as follows:

- Compass Project Management – (4) Invoices for (4) months totaling \$37,469.50
- Ai3 Architects – (6) Invoices for (3) months totaling \$190,871.10

Tom Tracey motioned to approve all the High School invoices. The motion was seconded by Vincent Piccirilli. All were in favor on a roll call vote.

Tom Tracy made a motion for the Chair of the School Building Committee and the Town Auditor may approve invoices and change orders between Committee meetings up to an amount NOT TO EXCEED \$50,000 per invoice and/or change order. The motion was seconded by Vincent Piccirilli. The motion passed 10 to 1 on a roll call vote with Kelly Kaulbaum voting no. The School Building Committee will be notified of this action at the next regular scheduled Committee meeting.

12. Elementary Schools Discussion / Other Business

- **Question 1:** Kelly Kaulbaum had concerns about how Covid 19 and temporary housing of the students during construction might be impacted.
Response: Superintendent Deanne Galdston responded that it isn't specific to temporary housing but more about all of the schools. If a hybrid was conducted, there will be no impact of where the swing spaces will be. It is a district wide consideration not a building project specific consideration.
- **Question 2:** Will there be a final design document posted for public review prior to Town meeting presentation regarding the Elementary Schools?
Response: Chairman Mark Sideris shared information that there will be a packet of items that will be linked to the agenda that will go with the low and order. Scott Dunlap added that Ai3 can make the entire 100% bid document packet including any adjustments or addenda's that was issued available to the public.

- **Question 3:** Is Construction starting in June? If so, will there be a plan shared with the public or is there a public meeting regarding details for the neighbors?

Response: Vivian Varbedian informed the public that there is a plan in place to have construction begin at the end of June or the beginning of July. More zoom meetings will be available to the neighboring areas of each elementary school and all will be informed of the different components of the construction phases.

13. High School Project Update

Tim Bonfatti provided an update regarding the High School project. Due to the meeting suspension caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the project timeline has been revised to reflect a required extension to the MSBA Feasibility Phase. As a recap, this introductory Phase is comprised of three stages:

- Preliminary Design Program (PDP),
- Preferred Schematic Report (PSR) and
- Schematic Design (SD).

Each of these involves a submission to the MSBA for review and comment, culminating in approval at Town Meeting and funding via Ballot Vote. Currently, the project is in the PSR stage, and was scheduled for submission to the MSBA in September of this year. This has now been pushed to February 2021 to allow for robust public engagement, as is typically done when narrowing down options to a “Preferred Schematic”, which will be reflected in the final submission of the current stage. Tim Bonfatti expressed that the Chair, along with the entire Committee, rightfully postponed this next step to ensure proper community involvement. With this bump in the schedule, the revised plan now includes PSR submission early in 2021, with submission of the Schematic Report in Fall of 2021. This would necessitate a late Fall 2021 Town Meeting and Ballot Vote initiative, rather than the previous schedule of a Spring 2021 vote. If the Committee votes to accept this revised timeline, a six-month extension of the Feasibility Phase would be requested of the MSBA to accommodate the unprecedented circumstances that many communities in the Commonwealth are facing. Tim Bonfatti alerted the Committee of his discussions with the MSBA regarding this extension, and of approval not being an issue.

- **Question 1:** Lindsay Mosca asked about a comparison to the previous schedule, specifically start of construction, and if there is a risk of any further delays.
Response: Tim Bonfatti responded that the delay in this PSR stage of the Feasibility Phase essentially means a debt exclusion vote in the fall rather than in the spring of 2021. Regarding construction, the previous schedule was targeting summer 2022 start as opposed to Summer 2023 as adjusted due to the recent COVID suspension. However, it is important to note that these dates are always finally determined by what Preferred Schematic is selected, which affects the final stages of project planning. The biggest hurdle in progressing was the community engagement piece, but now with meetings moving to remote platforms, often participation has increased. The team remains engaged and is moving forward with these tools, with the hopes of no further adjustments required.

- **Question 2:** Kelly Kurlbaum asked again about a further clarification regarding the possible one-year delay in start of construction.

Response: Tim Bonfatti explained that while the project was suspended over the last few months, the overall six-month extension in schedule relates to the timing in occurrence of Town funding votes. Both Tim Bonfatti and Chairman Mark Sideris reiterated that this may not translate to a full year change to start of construction; this remains tentative and is only a projection as the project continues to develop. Opportunities will be sought to advance the schedule as possible. Christy Murphy also pointed out that these next submissions will require MSBA Board votes, which adds some time for coordination with their meeting schedule.

Motion by Vincent Piccirilli to request a six-month extension from the MSBA to complete the Feasibility Phase, second by John Portz. Vote was unanimous, 11-0 on a roll call vote.

Christy Murphy presented an update on the High School Project Website. This informational DRAFT web page was created by Compass using Google sites, and is ready to go live to keep community members up to date on project progress. The site includes a home page with:

- most recent “Current Events”,
- a “Presentations” tab,
- a “Design” tab,
- a “Financials” tab,
- a “Schedule” tab and
- a tab for “FAQs” (Frequently Asked Questions).

Each tab has, and will continue to be updated with, links to corresponding project documents. There is also a “Contact Us” tab, which allows correspondence through the HSPProject@Watertown.K12.ma.us email address to the District and Compass.

- **Question 1:** Christy Murphy asked the Building Committee if they would like to have this project site linked to the Town’s “Building the Future” website only, or if they would also like it to have its own simple domain name for ease of communicating out to the community.

Response: Lindsay Mosca commented that she would like to see both the link to the Town’s site, along with the new site having its own domain. She also asked about the status of the Communications Subcommittee, which will be important for getting site traffic generated using social media. Vincent Piccirilli agreed and responded that the Communications Subcommittee is comprised of himself, Superintendent Deanne Galdston, Lindsay Mosca and Paul Anastasi. He added that once the website is live, the Subcommittee will begin to meet to discuss options for moving forward with outreach and directing those interested to the information posted. Paul Anastasi agreed that a separate, and simple, domain name should be purchased for ease of distribution.

Superintendent Deanne Galdston added that a social media campaign was prepared pre-COVID, and now that project work has resumed, the District is ready for the website launch and to promote via this plan. Chairman Mark Sideris tasked the Communications Subcommittee with the domain name setup and reiterated linking the new high school webpage back to the Town site and the “Building the Future” site.

- **Comment from the public:** The new high school webpage looks plain, and perhaps all the Watertown Public School sites should have a similar “look”.
Response: Christy Murphy explained that Compass is creating and maintaining the site in-house, and if a more complex site was desired, a web-designer could be procured.
- **Comment from the public:** The new High School webpage should be its own site as planned as this will be the biggest recent project for the Town to fund.

Motion by Vincent Piccirilli to authorize the High School project website to go live, second by Heidi Perkins. Vote was unanimous, 11-0 on a roll call vote.

Motion by Vincent Piccirilli to authorize purchase of a specific domain name for the High School project (to be selected by Superintendent Deanne Galdston), second by Heidi Perkins. Vote was unanimous, 11-0.

- **Question from the public:** Given COVID, is the Town concerned about a vote to raise taxes?
Response: Chairman Mark Sideris responded that this has been a concern from the outset, and especially now during the pandemic. He added that the outreach is critical to let the community know why we need this project, and how the Town is going about the process.

14. Meeting Updates

Neighborhood Meeting Updates

- Cunniff and Hosmer Elementary School – Chairman Mark Sideris informed the Building School Committee that Zoom meetings will be schedule in June.

Public Input Meeting Updates

- Watertown High School – Chairman Mark Sideris pointed out that the Community Forum for the High School Project scheduled for March 26th had to be cancelled. However, the School Building Committee is also planning to resume meeting on the High School Project in June, which will be on Zoom. Many of the in-person Forums in the past were well-attended, and this type of participation is important, specifically on the High School project as options are now being narrowed down to the preferred choice of the Town. In conjunction with the Architect, OPM, School Superintendent and Steve Magoon’s office (Asst. Town Manager and Director of Community Planning & Development), notice will be sent out for these upcoming virtual Community Forums to encourage as much participation as possible.

15. Adjournment

Chairman Mark Sideris made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded. All were in favor.
Meeting adjourned at 8:23p.m.