



Office of the City Manager

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MEMO

Date: September 24, 2015
To: City Council
From: Tammy Mote
RE: Railroad Engineering Services

At the June Council meeting, the Council approved to enter into a Locally Administered Project Agreement with MaineDOT for railroad crossing improvements and signalization on the proposed Forrest Avenue Extension project, which allows for 90 percent of the project costs to be federally funded with the remaining ten percent of the project costs to be locally funded. The City is required to follow strict guidelines to be in compliance with the MaineDOT Local Project Administration Manual which is also guided by appropriate consultation with MaineDOT staff.

Per the LAP manual and MaineDOT guidance, the City issued an RFP for engineering and design services related to the rail crossing project consistent with MaineDOT's Consultant Selection Process through a direct solicitation. Four firms were selected from MaineDOT's list of pre-qualified firms under category 207.20, "Minor Rail Design". The firms included Sebago Technics, HNTB, Stantec Consulting Services, and VHB. The RFP and list of selected firms were shared with MaineDOT for review prior to issuance. Given the use of direct solicitation per the LAP manual, advertising was not required.

The RFP was mailed to the four firms on August 21, 2015, with proposals due on September 11, 2015 (a three week period). On September 9, 2015 the City was notified that there had been a delay in the U.S. Postal Service. Consequently the City notified all firms that the deadline would be extended to September 18, 2015 to provide additional time to respond.

Only VHB submitted a proposal which was received within the stated deadline of 10:00 a.m. on September 18, 2015. The City previously received a letter from Sebago Technics stating that they could not be responsive to the City's needs given their present workload. Stantec also declined to submit a proposal, citing in an email their merger with another engineering firm. HNTB was non-responsive.

The VHB proposal has been reviewed by the City's consulting engineer, Eero Hedefine, the Ellsworth Deputy City Manager/Finance Director and LAP Administrator, Tammy Mote, and Ellsworth Public Works Director Larry Wilson, and all are in agreement that the VHB proposal and qualifications based therein satisfy the City's requirements for engineering services. We do not see value in re-bidding the project, as VHB is well qualified to do the required rail signalization work, and is already working for MaineDOT on the Route 1A highway project in Ellsworth including the signalization at State Street and Forrest Avenue that will accommodate the new entrance to the High School.

There are also concerns about any further delays in getting the rail crossing design process underway, as the rail work needs to go out to bid next spring in coordination with MaineDOT's Route 1A project and the construction of the new intersection cited above.

If the Council approves this request, the suggested motion is as follows:

Move to approve the request of the City Manager to award the railroad crossing engineering services to VHB at a cost of \$35,995. These services will be funded by the Locally Administered Project funds (90% - \$32,395.50) and the local roads capital improvement account (10% - \$3,599.50).