

2021 FEB -5 PM 4: 01


Town Clerk

TOWN OF NEWINGTON
ANNA REYNOLDS SCHOOL PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

February 4, 2021, Zoom Event

- 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, Cindy Stamm, Carol Duggan and Jeremy Whetzel. 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; Jason Smith, Principal, Anna Reynolds School; James Krupinski, Town Clerk; and Jeff Baron, Director of Administrative Services.
- III. Take Action on Prior Meeting Minutes – Mr. Camillo made a motion that the minutes of the Committee’s January 28, 2021 meeting be approved as presented. A second to the motion was made by Ms. Stamm. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 7 YES to 0 NO.
- IV. Public Participation – None.
- V. Select Four Firms for Project Architect Interviews – Mr. Woods stated that the subcommittee took the list of seven firms and interviewed all of them on the morning of the previous day. Many members were in and out of these interviews (listening for a while and then leaving for a while), some listened to the whole set. The interviews were pretty enlightening. As was mentioned previously, all the respondents are qualified. It was clear from the previous day’s interviews that two or three firms stood out. In no particular order, the top three would be Kaestle Boos Associates, Kenneth Boroson Associates, and Tecton Architects. Mr. Woods and Mr. Camillo (who was also on the subcommittee) went back and forth as to who the fourth firm should be. JCJ Architecture is who Mr. Woods is recommending. He then turned the meeting over to Mr. Warrington. Mr. Warrington stated that the informal interviews held were an extra step in the process and he hoped that it was a good step to take, to hear from them and to get their ideas verbally. He felt that the chance to speak with the firms was beneficial. His office had given all of them a brief overview in advance of their interview. They were told that the subcommittee was interested in how they did business and what their philosophy was. It was interesting to see who did more research on Reynolds School. It showed in a couple of firms the subcommittee spoke to. All of them know the OSCG&R (State Office of School Construction Grants and Review) process. Some firms were interested in the culture of the school, not just what was in the Education Specifications. It was refreshing to hear. Several firms wanted to give presentations but they were not allowed to. The Building Committee will get a great team, no matter what way they go. Dr. Brummett stated that she thought the process was good. She agreed with the top three choices (Kaestle

Boos, Boroson, and Tecton); the last candidate could be moved around. Councilor Camillo reiterated the top three; the next two were aligned with each other. Mr. Woods asked the rest of the Building Committee to weigh in now. He would suggest that the Committee go with four firms. Sometimes the weak link can become the star. Ms. Duggan stated that she appreciated the opportunity to listen to the interviews. She liked the top three but wasn't sure about the fourth firm. Tecton showed that they were interested in the school and what they had to say. This is so important. Ms. Stamm also agreed with the top three selections. Sources at the High School had good things to say about JCJ. She now has a better understanding about the firms that will be finalists. Mr. Silvia said that he agrees with the top three. He also appreciated the opportunity to listen to the presentations. He was not sure it was necessary to evaluate a fourth firm. Mr. Whetzel stated that he had lots of confidence in the top three firms. It was important to identify the needs of the school. The Committee knows what the "big ticket" items are. It will come down to the minute details. He would like the security and IT concerns considered.

Councilor Camillo made a motion that the Committee accept the recommendation of the subcommittee to continue to consider the firms of Kaestle Boos Associates, Kenneth Boroson Associates, JCJ Architecture, and Tecton Architects, to move forward with issuing a Request for Proposals to them, to interview them, and to accept pricing from them. A second to the motion was made by Councilor Miner. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 7 YES to 0 NO. Mr. Woods told the Committee that it would have an architect selected in the next few weeks.

Mr. Warrington stated that the next step is a formal Request for Proposals (RFP). The Committee also needs a timeframe for interviews. He would like to get approval of the RFP from the Committee. His office could have a draft of the RFP ready by the following Tuesday. If the Committee were to approve it next Thursday, it could be distributed on February 12th. The Committee would want to give the firms two-three weeks to allow them to prepare. Mr. Woods stated that there was no issue with having a Special Meeting on February 11th. Interviews would be held at the Regular Meeting on March 4th. Councilor Miner asked about receiving references from clients in the various stages (pre-schematic, schematic, through closeout) of a project. Would these be requested in the RFP? Mr. Woods felt that this would be the next step after the RFP. Mr. Warrington stated that the RFP would be much more detailed than the Request for Qualifications (RFQ). It would include three contracts and allow the firms to submit their exceptions; it would include a control budget, including both construction and FF&E (Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment); and any schedules. Interviews (with fees) would then be held. An appointment recommendation could be made that is contingent upon a successful reference check, or a second interview could be held with the school Principal if the Committee was down to two firms. Councilor Miner stated that he would rather see the references up front. He also asked about a scoring matrix. Mr. Woods stated that formal questions would be asked of each firm, with follow up questions as appropriate, and then the firms would be scored based on their answers. He asked Colliers to put that together. Mr. Warrington stated that the Committee can tweak the criteria, such as exceptions to the contract. Mr. Woods noted that having exceptions up front can save months of painful negotiation. Mr. Warrington stated that his office would reach out the following day to ask for references. Mr. Miner reiterated that this would be three to four references for the whole process, from start to finish.

- VI. Any Other Business Pertinent to the Committee – Colliers agreed to get the draft of the RFP out on February 9th. The next meeting of the Committee will be on February 11th at 5:15 PM.

Mr. Baron stated a member of his office had a blood relative employed by one of the four remaining firms. He was told that it was not necessary to recuse himself from the rest of the process as he did not have a vote for the architect to be selected.

VII. Public Participation – None.

VIII. Comments by Members – Mr. Silvia asked at what point would the Committee evaluate qualified contractors? Mr. Woods stated that his would occur after the bids had been opened. This project would be performed by a Construction Manager, who would then go out to bid for the trade subcontractors. Mr. Silvia stated that if there was to be a Construction Manager, he was less concerned.

IX. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 5:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Baron

Jeff Baron
Director of Administrative Services