

ITEM # 19
DATE August 12, 2008

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR WATER PLANT INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

BACKGROUND:

The FY 2008/09 Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) includes the initial evaluation of the infrastructure and capacity needs for the Water Treatment Plant project. This assessment is the initial concept development phase for an anticipated Water Treatment Plant expansion, renovation, and/or replacement.

On April 8, 2008, staff presented Council with a formal consultant solicitation and selection process. Because of the potential scope of work that could follow the assessment phase in later design and construction phases, the consultant selection process was much more structured than would ordinarily be used for smaller-scoped projects. A nine-person selection team was assembled, consisting of operations, maintenance, engineering, and management employees.

Statements of Interest were received from six firms. After reviewing the introductory qualifications provided, staff were concerned that two of the firms did not appear to have sufficient resources to complete the work. Staff shared these concerns with the firms, and gave them the option of continuing in the selection process. One of the two firms elected to withdraw, and one chose to continue.

The next step was for the five remaining firms to submit formal written Statements of Qualifications. Staff used a formal scoring rubric, that was shared with the firms in advance, to rate and compare the qualifications of the firms. Following this evaluation, staff concluded that two firms fully met the desired qualifications; two firms marginally met the desired qualifications; and one firm (the firm that staff had already flagged in the first step) did not possess the depth of experience to be successful.

Staff invited the four remaining firms to participate in formal interviews with the city's selection team. In advance of the interviews, staff shared very candid feedback with the remaining firms about their perceived strengths and weaknesses. Each firm was asked to bring to the interview two sealed envelopes. One envelope was to contain a detailed description of their proposed scope of work, identifying the tasks they would perform as well as a proposed schedule. The second envelope was to contain their proposed fees for the assessment phase and their proposed contract language.

During the interviews, firms were allowed 45 minutes to give a presentation on their qualifications, experience, and proposed approach to the project. Then another 45 minutes were spent answering questions from the selection team. Each member of the selection team had a rating sheet similar to what is commonly used during formal scored employee interviews.

After all interviews were completed, the selection team met to compare scores and discuss relative strengths and weaknesses of each firm. At the conclusion of that discussion, the selection team identified a clear top choice and a strong second choice. At that point, the envelopes were opened that contained the proposed scope of work and the proposed fees. After comparing the proposed scope from the preferred firm to the scopes offered by the other firms, staff concluded that the preferred firm's proposed fee was reasonable for the level of work offered.

The preferred consultant is a joint team consisting of FOX Engineering Associates of Ames, HDR Engineering of Omaha, and Barr Engineering Company of Minneapolis. The main reasons that led to the FOX team being selected as the preferred consultant include the following:

- Depth of resources
- Expertise in demand projections and the impacts of demand-side management
- Familiarity with numerous treatment technologies
- Successful design and implementation of projects similar in size and scope to Ames (both rehabilitations and new plants)
- Familiarity with the Ames Water Treatment Plant
- A clear plan to gather input from the front-line employees of the department
- The use of a concept advisory team made up of representatives from local business and industry as well as technical resources from Iowa State University and surrounding water utilities
- A public-involvement concept that mirrors the City's desire for early and open engagement of our citizens

Staff recommends that Council award a professional services contract to FOX Engineering Associates of Ames, Iowa in an amount not to exceed \$243,000 for the Water Plant Infrastructure and Capacity Needs Assessment. The current year CIP includes \$250,000 for this assessment. The proposed work plan anticipates having rough preliminary cost projections ready by the time the five-year CIP plan is updated at the end of this calendar year. A Council Workshop is envisioned for next spring to present recommendations for the future of the existing treatment facility.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Award a professional services contract for the Water Plant Infrastructure and Capacity Needs Assessment to FOX Engineering Associates of Ames, Iowa in an amount not to exceed \$243,000 without prior approval.

2. Do not award a professional services contract for the Water Plant Infrastructure and Capacity Needs Assessment at this time.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff has undertaken a comprehensive evaluation of firms interested in performing this work. The selection process placed priority on the values and mission of the City of Ames as well as the technical strength of the firm. The selection process was specifically designed to select the firm most capable of providing a thorough, comprehensive, and unbiased evaluation of the future of the existing treatment facility. The selected firm is highly qualified, has provided a scope of work that offers a comprehensive evaluation, and the proposed fee is reasonable and appropriate for the work being provided.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby awarding a professional services contract for the Water Plant Infrastructure and Capacity Needs Assessment to FOX Engineering Associates of Ames, Iowa in an amount not to exceed \$243,000 without prior approval.