

ITEM # 24 a & b
DATE: 02-12-08

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: STATE HISTORIC SOCIETY GRANT AND ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR REPLACEMENT OF CITY HALL AND COMMUNITY CENTER DOORS

BACKGROUND:

When City Hall was purchased and renovated in 1988-90, great efforts were taken to recreate the original external architecture of the 1938 Ames High School building. At that time the present wood exterior doors were installed along with many other building renovations. Although Public Works staff has maintained these doors on an annual basis, the condition of the doors has progressively deteriorated due to moisture, temperature extremes and exposure to sunlight. As a result, the doors need to be replaced. Funding for this project has been accumulated over the last several years in the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).

In staff's first effort to get the best value on this project, an architect was employed in 2006. That architect's research showed that the building's double doors would need to be replaced with single doors in order to comply with Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. At that time the cost estimate for replacing the exterior doors in all fourteen door openings with single metal doors was approximately \$120,000.

Due to the negative impact which that alternative would have on the historic building's appearance, staff did extensive research and discovered that the ADA contains limited exemptions for buildings that are designated on the National Historic Registry. Fortunately, City Hall received that designation in 2002. It was also discovered that acquisition of historically accurate doors could be eligible for state grant assistance. One requirement to receive the grant funding was that the current doors must be replaced with wooden doors that match the original high school doors as closely as possible. This includes using double doors wherever possible, which means that approximately twenty-seven individual doors would be needed.

Given the specialized nature of this project, additional architectural services were next sought from RDG Rudi Lee Dreyer, which specializes in restoration of historic buildings and working on projects with similar scopes. Fees of \$7,576.50 have previously been paid for the architectural services required to submit the grant application.

On September 11, 2007, Council authorized submittal of an application for a Historic Site Preservation Grant (HSPG) for partial funding of this project. The maximum of \$100,000 in grant funds was requested. The City has received notification that the full \$100,000 grant was awarded to the City for this project. This grant must be signed and returned to the State Historical Society by February 28.

In September the project expenses were estimated as follows:

Cost of finished wood doors (installed)	\$ 80,400
Cost for door hardware (installed)	\$ 42,000
New door frames, repairs, and painting	\$ 57,200
Door operators and miscellaneous	\$ 8,900
15% Contingency	\$ 28,275
Architectural Services	\$ 20,000
Estimated project costs	\$236,775

Since that time RDG Rudi Lee Dreyer has re-evaluated the original estimate of \$20,000 to complete the construction documents, project bidding, and construction administration and has asked for an increase of \$7,000 to their project fee for the remaining work, which brings **the estimated total project cost to \$243,775**. This request is based on a more accurate understanding of the project requirements from the Phase I study. Additional research required to be in compliance with the "Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation," project coordination required through the Preservation Consultant at the State Historic Preservation Office, and securing a hardware consultant to anticipate future security and technology options also contributed to the increased fee. **The entire City share of \$143,775 is available from 2005-2009 allocations within the CIP's City Hall Improvements project.**

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve a) the grant agreement with the State Historical Society of Iowa for \$100,000 to **install wooden replacement doors** at the City Hall and b) approve a contract in the amount of \$27,000 with RDG Rudi Lee Dryer for architectural services to complete this project. **The estimated net cost to the City for the wooden replacement doors is \$144,000.**
2. Approve the grant agreement with the State Historical Society of Iowa for \$100,000 to install wooden replacement doors at the City Hall, but solicit other proposals for architectural services required for the project.
3. Direct staff to pursue a replacement project with single **metal doors**, and decline the HSPG grant offer from the State Historical Society of Iowa. **The estimated cost to the City for the metal doors is \$120,000.**
4. Direct staff to explore some other approach to replacement of the City Hall doors.
5. Do not replace the City hall doors at this time.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Replacement of the existing City Hall doors has been anticipated for several years and funding has been accumulated to carry out this project. **While the existing local funding would cover the cost of replacing these doors with single, metal doors, that option would detract from the building's historic appearance. The Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the proposed project prior to submission of the grant application and believes that replacement with wood, double hung doors is the preferable option.**

As designed by RDG Rudi Lee Dryer, the new doors would be custom made from hardwood. **On the negative side, the replacement wood doors would continue to need a high level of maintenance and would eventually be subject to the same deterioration as the current doors. On the positive side, custom wood doors would complement the historic building's exterior appearance, would still provide an acceptable level of ADA compliance, and could be fitted for future installation of more technologically advanced security systems.** The plans will also call for the addition of new automated door openers at both the night Police entrance and the Auditorium entrance.

This project's large cost estimate has led to questions about the appropriateness of such a significant investment for replacement doors. It is true that it would be less expensive overall if the current wood doors were replaced with single metal doors. However, the metal doors would degrade the historical appearance of the building. Due to the availability of the \$100,000 HSPG grant, the City's cost for the historically accurate wood doors will total approximately \$24,000 more than for fourteen single metal doors.

When the Central Jr. High building was renovated in 1989, an emphasis was placed on restoring the historic character of the building exterior in regards to windows, doors, and limestone features. Assuming that the City Council remains committed to maintaining these historic elements of the building, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby approving the grant agreement with the State Historical Society of Iowa for \$100,000 in matching funds toward replacement of the City Hall doors, and approving a contract in the amount of \$27,000 with RDG Rudi Lee Dryer for architectural services to complete this project. However, if over time a different priority now exists, the Council could opt for Alternative #2.