

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
CITY OF RAMSEY  
ANOKA COUNTY  
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, January 28, 2020, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor John LeTourneau  
Councilmember Nadine Heinrich  
Councilmember Mark Kuzma  
Councilmember Jeff Menth  
Councilmember Debra Musgrove  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Dan Specht

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
Fire Chief Matt Kohner  
Police Chief Jeff Katers  
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer  
Deputy City Administrator Timothy Gladhill  
City Engineer Bruce Westby

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor LeTourneau called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m.

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Interview Architectural Firms for Design and Engineering Services for the New Public Works Facility**

Public Works Superintendent Riemer reviewed the staff report.

Andrew Cooper, Oertel Architects, introduced the members of his team present tonight, Thomas Stomsodt and Mike Aaron. He reviewed the overall design approach, noting that his company focuses on public works facilities, which are 95 percent of their work. He provided information on how their number of hours and fee was determined. He stated that they have proposed an aggressive schedule with overlapping phases and provided additional details on that process. He explained that they based their design process on the ability to meet the City's 2021 construction objective.

Thomas Stomsodt, Oertel Architects, explained that they began by reviewing the City's studies and would then use their tools to further review the programming and schematic needs for the new facility, providing additional details on that process. He noted that those details are used to create the floor plan for the facility.

Mike Aaron, SRF Consulting, reviewed some of the critical information that would be necessary but was not included in the scope.

Mr. Cooper provided details on the construction administration process, which would start early in the process to ensure what has been scoped in the initial documents and program worksheets would be usable for RJM in the construction documents and bidding process. He stated that working together early on helps to make the process smoother when it is time to bid the project. He reviewed some of the greatest challenges with the project including project scoping and budgeting, and the project timeline. He reviewed some of the lessons his firm has learned through past projects and highlighted some of the recommended additional services.

Brad Barickman, RJM, stated that the firm proposes continuous programming and a tight timeline and asked if there would be any risks with that strategy.

Mr. Cooper replied that one risk could be not identifying all the possible spaces early on. He explained that their goal would be to quickly move through the programming phase in order to ensure that the risks and programming are identified early in the process to ensure something does not come up halfway through the design process that was not planned for.

Mr. Stomsodt explained that the continuous programming would not be continuously adding space but adding more details on those spaces throughout the process.

Councilmember Menth asked how detailed and complete the construction documents would be.

Mr. Cooper provided additional details on the information that would be included in the bid documents. He explained that their early onset focus on detail and extensive experience has allowed them to be more prepared going into bidding and react to things that may come up. He stated that they have integrated real-time document updating and modeling.

City Administrator Ulrich asked how the firm would help the City stay within the desired budget.

Mr. Cooper stated that they estimate a project at the programming phase using their experience and knowledge from recently bid projects. He explained that using that knowledge they can tell during that programming phase if the project is going above the budgeted amount and can guide things that could be scaled back and perhaps phased in the future.

Mr. Stomsodt stated that they are always looking at opportunities to eliminate redundancy and increase flexibility.

Mr. Cooper agreed that they provide input on elements that are perhaps “would be nice if” items to identify items that could be eliminated in order to meet the desired budget.

Dan Lind, HCM Architects, stated that his team has been working together on this type of project since 2012. The members of his team introduced themselves: Scott Vander Heiden, Emanuelson

Podas; Mike St. Martin, Loucks; Jill Isola Johnson, Isola Design; and Dan Lawrence, HCM Architects.

Mr. Lawrence provided information on their recent experience. He stated that they would recommend a dedicated project manager and leadership team to work with Mr. Barickman and the architect. He recognized the City's aggressive schedule to begin in 2021 and stated that they are confident that they could deliver on time and perhaps even one month early. He provided details on the construction administration process, noting that they would go through design and construction administration, continuously from beginning to end to ensure the vision of the City is met.

Mr. St. Martin provided details on the site analysis and design.

Mr. Lind stated that it does not appear that soil borings or a site survey have been completed. He noted that those are two critical items that would be necessary.

Mr. Lawrence explained that they would begin by reviewing the 2015 study and updating that information. He provided details on the schematic design, and existing building review.

Mr. Vander Heiden provided details on the review of the mechanical and electrical systems and needs. He noted that those elements were not included in the City's 2015 study. He stated that they would want to ensure that their drawings match the needs of the intended uses. He explained that they will bring sustainable design elements to the City, with the pros and cons, for the City to make the decisions.

Mr. Lind noted that Connexus also has great energy design programs that they can work with the City on.

Ms. Isola provided additional details related to furniture, fixtures, and equipment. She explained that this process includes determining the actual needs of employees and how often those employees are in the office compared to out in the field.

Mr. Lawrence stated that one of the key things for this team is that they listen and respond to owner feedback and requests. He stated that one comment that they heard during the walk through was that the plan from 2015 did not have a drive-through maintenance bay and provided an example of how that could be added to the design from the 2015 study. He stated that they transform the information from the programming phase to ensure that those details are included.

Mr. Lind stated that they provide detailed meeting minutes throughout the whole process to ensure that decisions are documented. He reviewed some of the recommended City provided services.

Mr. Vander Heiden stated that one of the lessons they have learned is that it is important to get the City provided services on board early because of the coordination with the building and building infrastructure.

Mr. Lind highlighted some of the recent public works projects that his team completed.

Councilmember Menth referenced the proposed schedule with the bid packet one proposed for early May. He asked the percentage of the specifications and dimensions that would be provided in the bid documents.

Mr. Lawrence stated that bid pack one would be proposed to be issued in mid to late June and would be a core and shell building set that would include a lot of details.

Mr. Lind stated that the purpose of that set of bids is to ensure you can order the precast panels. He noted that the more detailed construction information would be included in bid pack two.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer asked what opportunity the City would have to purchase equipment off the State bid.

Mr. Lind stated that Wright County looked at purchasing lifts off the State contract but ended up not choosing that option. He identified some items that could possibly be purchased off the State bid.

Ms. Isola noted that some furniture packages are available on the State contract.

Mr. Barickman asked the biggest challenge to stay on schedule, or potential risks with the schedule.

Mr. Lind stated that the biggest challenge is that the schedule is very aggressive. He stated that once a firm is brought on board, he would recommend a meeting to ensure everyone is ready to move and stay on pace. He noted that if the City is ready to go and make decisions, this team would be committed to meeting the desired schedule.

Councilmember Heinrich asked if geotechnical evaluation is included in the bid price.

Mr. St. Martin stated that is not included in the scope and estimated \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Councilmember Riley commended staff for narrowing it down to these two qualified candidates, noting that he would be comfortable with either candidate, and would welcome input from staff.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that both teams mentioned doing site tours and asked if the City would entertain that as they have already toured facilities.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer confirmed that staff would be open to that.

Mr. Barickman noted that one component that he noticed was different from the two proposals was that Oertel did not include furniture, fixtures and equipment while HCM did include that element.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he preferred HCM.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she had an opposite view, believing that Oertel was her preferred choice.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that he thought there was a lot of information related to time management from Oertel. He stated that HCM talked about how collaborative they are, but with an aggressive timeline he believed that Oertel understood the choices of the City without having to go through all the possibilities and therefore leans towards Oertel.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she agrees that Oertel would be more respectful of the City's needs to remove some of the minutia.

Councilmember Specht stated that he believes that both groups would do a great job. He stated that Oertel made a comment that they would review the existing structures to determine if funds would be better spent rehabilitating those buildings or investing into the new facility whereas HCM seemed set on keeping the existing buildings.

Councilmember Menth commented that he was not satisfied with the answer to his question from either group.

Mr. Barickman stated that RJM has worked with both firms and has experienced success with both groups. He stated that with the aggressive timeline, he believes that Oertel will push harder to meet the timeline.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer echoed the comments about Oertel. He stated that the comment from Oertel related to the existing buildings was to leave that for now and design the main building, as the existing buildings could be improved if there are additional funds available.

Councilmember Riley stated that both firms made comments about the aggressive timeline and asked why the City has an aggressive timeline.

Mr. Barickman stated that inflation continues on construction with prices increasing five to six percent each year and therefore they want to attempt to move forward.

Mayor LeTourneau confirmed that the City would not sacrifice quality for time.

Mayor LeTourneau confirmed the consensus of the Council and staff to choose Oertel.

Councilmember Heinrich referenced the five-year budget assumption and asked if the City could consider increasing use of the sewer and water utility fund to decrease debt on the building.

Mayor LeTourneau confirmed that staff could present options to bundle the financing in future discussions.

## **2.02: Fire Service Joint Powers Agreement Update**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report and provided an update to the Council.

Fire Chief Kohner stated that he amended the contract language as discussed at the Fire Board meeting, which is being reviewed by the City Attorney and will then go back to the Fire Board.

**3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION**

**3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar**

Noted.

**4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT**

None.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Kurtis G. Ulrich  
City Administrator

ATTEST:

---

Katie M. Schmidt  
Administrative Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*