

Approved November 20, 2013

Taft Library Building Committee Meeting  
Mendon Town Hall  
Mendon, MA 01756  
Thursday, November 7, 2013  
7:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present:

Joe Cronin, Susan Darnell, Amy Fahey, Paul Fitzgerald, Don Morin, Kevin Rudden, Jay Washburn

Others Present:

Mary Bulso, OPM, Lamoureux-Pagano Associates  
Andrew Jenrich, Library Director

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Joe Cronin at 7:01 p.m.

II. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: A motion was made by Jay Washburn, seconded by Kevin Rudden, to approve the agenda.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTED: Unanimous.

III. Review Final Plans for Interview of Responder to RFQ for Designer Services

The Committee interviewed DRA at this meeting. Paul had agreed to contact references for this firm. He intended to speak with a reference from the Norfolk Public Library in Norfolk, MA and the North Adams Public Library in North Adams, MA. He was able to talk with someone from the Norfolk, MA project, but the reference from North Adams was a problem. The contact person listed is no longer with the town and there is currently no Library Director. The acting Director was on vacation and wouldn't be back for over a week. The person Paul spoke with was not involved with the project and could not recommend any one else to talk to. As a result, Paul decided to call the Westbrook, CT Library Director.

Paul mentioned that the Norfolk reference check was favorable in many ways, but unfavorable with regards to communications. The Westbrook reference was positive in every way. A summary of the two reference checks is attached to these minutes.

As with the prior interview with Abacus/Situ, the team agreed that each person would ask a question from the following list, as well as any others that might come to mind.

Questions for the Designer Services Interview

- a. Tell us about your work experience with libraries. You've seen the site and reviewed the documents we have made available. The project is unique in

- that we're renovating a church into a library. Do you have any creative ideas about this project? What excites you about it?
- b. What challenges do you anticipate with this renovation project?
  - c. Tell us about your past library project experiences, specifically for your lead architect.
  - d. How do you manage the general contractor to maintain the project schedule without sacrificing quality workmanship and avoiding change orders and cost over runs?
  - e. Do you understand that we only have \$125.6K for the Designer Services work, which is all inclusive? What is your billing structure/payment frequency?
  - f. Based on what you know today, what do you think the cost of the renovation project should be?
  - g. What type of communication can we expect? What type of reports? Attendance at building committee meetings?
  - h. Describe a time when you hit a major obstacle during a project and what you did to resolve the issue.
  - i. Is there any work that was outlined in the RFQ that you take exception to?
  - j. Do you understand that the total "all inclusive" project budget is \$1,700,000 and that your firm can design a project that will fit this budget, yet incorporate meaningful changes to the building to transform it into a viable library facility for the town on Mendon?
  - k. The library water supply will be by well water, which may be required to be a public water supply, requiring undeveloped space surrounding the well per DEP requirements. With a small site such as we have, 2.8 acres, how can this issue be addressed by your project team, and what alternative resolutions may be available to the project?

#### IV. Interview Responder to RFQ for Designer Services

The Committee interviewed the team from DRA, which consisted of Ken Best and Courtney Southwick, along with John Rebwick, a mechanical consultant. DRA gave a presentation highlighting their experience with over 50 libraries. DRA is cognizant of the intention to work with BVT. They suggest that BVT be used to build furniture, like the circulation desk, cabinets, shelving, end panels, etc. They could also help with stripping and refinishing existing furniture to make it look new. Even if LEED certification isn't pursued, the design team will still take energy efficiency into account.

With regards to the budget, DRA believes that the furniture line item is light, probably only about half of what is desired. DRA suggested that it help with fund raising to help supplement this line item. They worked on one project where interior furnishings were 100% funded by fund raising. DRA would be willing to help with educating the public about what is needed and what items their donations can support on a wish list. Other than this line item, DRA sees no issues with the \$1.7M budget. When asked about communications, Ken Best stated that he would be involved with design development while construction administration will be managed by Courtney Southwick. Ken expects to be in attendance at meetings about once per month, while Courtney will be involved with weekly meetings to provide updates to the Building Committee and Building Inspector. Both he and Courtney will be available by email and cell phone.

When asked about the location of the elevator, DRA stated that it could be put inside the building but it would take up valuable interior space and would also have to break up through the roof, so it isn't practical. A lift is not a practical solution either. When asked about the biggest challenge, DRA felt that the stairs are a pain as they are not up to code, and an ADA variance may be needed as the front entrance isn't accessible, although DRA suggested that the front door be used just for a secondary exit. The lower level duct work limits the height of shelving in some areas. The rectory could also pose a challenge, and it would be best to understand what the town's future plans are for the building.

V. Discussion/Selection of Designer for Recommendation to Board of Selectmen

After DRA left, the Committee began deliberations on which design firm it preferred. It was felt that DRA displayed practicality, was realistic and had more library experience than Abacus, while Abacus presented a vision to change the look and feel of the building so it wouldn't feel like a former church. Mary reminded the group that we posted a Request for Qualifications, not a request for a design. Many felt that Abacus showed much more excitement about the project than DRA. Abacus also has demonstrated experience with working with vocational technical schools, and while they have less library experience, they have been able to remain on budget for many low income housing projects.

MOTION: A motion was made by Jay Washburn, seconded by Kevin Rudden, to select Abacus/Situ as the Designer Services firm to be used for the Taft Library project.

DISCUSSION: No further discussion.

VOTED: Unanimous.

Joe will contact Diane Willoughby to be put on the agenda of an upcoming Board of Selectmen's meeting to present the recommendation of Abacus/Situ as the selected design firm. Mary will contact all three responders on Friday to inform them of the decision. Joe is also planning on being interviewed by Ed Thompson on WMRC radio on Friday, but he will ask that the interview not be played on air until next Tuesday at the earliest.

VI. Items not reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to meeting

Mary mentioned that inmates from the Norfolk County Jail can make furniture, and that the Worcester County Sheriff's office can help with landscaping and painting. The town will just be responsible for supplying materials and food.

When asked about heat for the church and rectory this winter, Joe responded that we have no plans to heat either. Andrew will contact Arcudi Oil to inform them not to deliver oil this winter.

VII. NEXT MEETING

No future meeting was scheduled at this time. After Joe Cronin puts plans in place to introduce the Designer Services team to the Board of Selectmen he will suggest the next meeting day/time based on when a meeting is needed.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: A motion was made by Susan Darnell, seconded by Kevin Rudden, to adjourn. No further discussion

VOTED: Unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

IX. ATTACHMENTS – Reference checks performed by Paul Fitzgerald.



DRA Reference  
Checks - Norfolk and W

Minutes by Don Morin