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**PARKS, RECREATION & FACILITIES
MANAGEMENT**

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TO: Finance Committee

FROM: Dean R. Gazza, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities Management

DATE: 3/8/2021

RE: Action Item: Award contract to Skidmore, Owings & Merrill for design and engineering services for the Appleton Public Library for a contract of \$2,721,389 and a 5% design contingency of \$137,744 for a contract not to exceed \$2,857,459 and approve the related 2021 Budget amendment.

On February 4, 2021, Proposals were received from 11 architectural firms for design and engineering services to redesign the Appleton Public Library (APL). After review of the proposals by an 11-person panel of City staff, elected officials and citizens, two of those firms were chosen and subsequently interviewed on February 23, 2021. Upon conclusion of the interviews, reference calls, and discussion among the panel, the firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) was unanimously selected by the review team to be recommended for award of the contract.

The process to get to this step began during the 2020 city budget process when the Common Council approved funding to begin the design to address the community's longstanding library. This was after a dozen years of planning and studies that provided valuable information to help define the needs of the Library. Since the adoption of the 2021 budget, which included \$26.4M for the overall Library project spread across three fiscal years, the following events have occurred:

- December 9, 2020 – Public Listening Session conducted to obtain input into the Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a consultant for architectural and engineering services. Holding a public listening session at the RFP stage was a new addition to the City's standard process.
- December 15, 2020 – RFP Draft reviewed with the Library Board.
- December 16, 2020 – RFP Draft reviewed with the Common Council.
- December 17, 2020 – Final RFP released and advertised including updates based on feedback provided by the public, Library Board and Common Council.
- February 4, 2021 – Proposals received from 11 firms.
- March 3, 2021 – 11-member review team recommends Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill upon reviewing proposals and performing reference checks.

The Proposal review team consisted of City Departmental Directors, Deputy Directors and staff representing Facilities & Construction Management, Library, Community & Economic Development and Public Works Friends of the Library, Library Board, Common Council and the Mayor.

Proposals were evaluated based on the terms put forth in the RFP: relevant experience, project success, project team, project understanding/study methodology, project schedule, and cost. It was important that the firms clearly demonstrated experience in the design of libraries as well as an understanding of and ability to articulate the important role of the public library in our community. Additionally, the firms had to present a commitment to listening and the ability to foster strong, representative public engagement throughout the design process resulting in meaningful input into the eventual library design.

Specifically, SOM demonstrated an understanding and approach to the project that illustrated their depth of experience, knowledge in library design and construction, listening skills and importance of garnering meaningful public input and building trust throughout the process. In addition, they have significant experience in building re-use, equity and inclusion, sustainability, technology, operational efficiency, and many important key factors necessary for a successful library.

SOM is a passionate collective of architects, designers, engineers, and planners, dedicated to designing treasured public buildings and have significant experience in library design. Established in 1936, SOM brings a global perspective with Midwest roots. They are known as a leader in design with extensive experience and is often selected for significant projects. Currently, SOM is the selected firm to design the Mulva Cultural Center in DePere, WI. SOM made the decision to propose on our project realizing Appleton is a vibrant community and this a unique project that combines a newly updated facility that will have a significant impact on the neighborhood and residents.

SOM is a firm with a significant depth of skills and experience and the team they have assembled for Appleton is highly skilled and experienced in award-winning design. In addition to their impressive credentials, they have demonstrated an open, curious and down-to-earth style that was reinforced in conversations with their references. They are known for balancing design, functionality, and the technical needs of a project to provide spaces that serve generations.

Therefore, based on a careful review of the information provided, and subsequent personal interviews of firm representatives, the review team respectfully and unanimously recommends awarding a contract to the architectural firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill for \$2,721,389 with a design contingency of 5% for a contract total not to exceed \$2,857,459. Note that both reimbursable and contingency expenses are only utilized as needed and allowed per contract and authorization by the project manager.

The fees provided by the firms interviewed averaged \$2,612,533. Though the request for proposal was very specific, firms varied in what was included and/or did not meet completely meet the requirements in the RFP. SOM's proposal was very extensive and included all services requested which is reflected in their pricing.

The 2021 Budget includes \$2,400,000 for library design services. It was anticipated design would begin in 2021 and construction would begin in 2022. This contract also includes construction administration services to be completed in 2022. Rather than creating two separate contracts, it is standard practice to issue one contract to include all services. In order to provide the additional spending authority for the anticipated cost of this contract, a 2021 Budget amendment is also being

proposed for \$457,459, which will be deducted from the existing project total of \$26.4 million as approved in the 2021 Budget and Service Plan. It is anticipated that any budgeted funds related to this contract that are not expended in 2021 would be carried over to 2022.

Please feel free to contact me at 832-5572 with any questions, or by email at dean.gazza@appleton.org.