



REQUEST FOR DECISION (RFD)

Date: May 23, 2023
To: Mayor Milligan and Members of Council
From: Jenny Weir, Manager of Engineering
Subject: Firehall Project Update and Planning Services Contract Award

RECOMMENDATION

THAT a contract for the City of Fernie Firehall Project be awarded to Arcadis Architects (Canada) Inc. for \$178,965, and that Council authorize the Mayor and Corporate Officer to execute any necessary contract documents.

PURPOSE

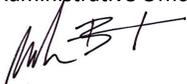
The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a brief project history on the Firehall and update on the status of the Firehall replacement project progress including a summary of the proposal submissions in response to the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the planning services, and a recommendation to award the contract.

BACKGROUND

The Fernie Fire & Emergency Services Department (FFESD) was established before the City of Fernie Fire of 1904 with a contingent of 100% volunteer members. Since that time, the Service has grown to include over 30 paid on call / volunteer members, a full time Fire Chief, a Deputy Chief, and eight full-time fire fighters. The FFESD responds to over 400 emergency calls per year and serves over 10,000 residents.

The City's Fire Hall was originally located on the site of the existing Seniors Drop-In Centre. Over 30 years ago, the original Fire Hall was demolished, and the Fire Hall was relocated to 692 3rd Avenue. The 3rd Ave Fire Hall had a long history of known hazards related to the facility structure and function. The following provides a brief history of the progression of reports surrounding the 3rd Ave Firehall that led to it being decommissioned, and the FFESD temporarily relocated to operate out of the Operations Facility at 1492b Railway Ave, where it resides today.

- 1997 Report by Armstrong and Associates – Noted design load issues and cracking in the block walls in some of the bearing points for joists and beams.

Reviewed by:			
Chief Administrative Officer 	Director of Corporate Administration Services 	Director of Finance 	Other:  

- 2011 WorkSafe BC Orders for air quality and 2013 follow up indicated air quality controls for pollutants were inadequate, interim safety measures were adopted
- 2012 Johnson Davidson Architecture (JDa) was commissioned to complete a preliminary analysis of the site and schematic design of a new fire hall
- 2012 902 2nd Ave, Geotechnical Report: Prepared by Groundtech Engineering Ltd concluded that the construction of a building at this site is considered suitable with surficial material and groundwater conditions considered to be fair
- 2013 Council authorized the purchase of lands at 902 2 Avenue for the site of a new Fire Hall
- 2013 Report by building official for City of Fernie – renovation to 692 3rd Ave building for the deficiencies will require entire building to comply with the current BC Building Code including post disaster structural design
- 2016 Report by Indoor Quality Management – ventilation issues at 692 3rd Ave building that contribute to unsafe conditions for occupants
- 2016 Report by Kassian Dyck Associates – 692 3rd Ave found roof did not meet the original BC Building Code requirements from 1970
- 2018 Report by Johnston & Davidson Architecture found the fire station was broadly non-compliant with BC Building Code. Eight possible sites for a new fire station were evaluated, and the site at 902 Second Ave was selected as the best option.
- 2019 Report by ISL Engineering reaffirmed roof structure at 692 3rd Ave is not capable of meeting minimum snow load requirements and noted visible damage and cracking to un-reinforced concrete block walls and various structural elements
- 2020 Council Presentation by Director of Operational Services indicated the total estimated project cost to address the know safety concerns at the Existing 3rd Ave Fire Hall was \$2.41M dollars. Council directed staff to proceed with the project plan for the development of a multi-use site at 902 2nd Ave
- 2020 Health & Safety Report by the City of Fernie Safety Manager concluded staff safety continues to be compromised while working at 692 3rd Ave
- 2021 Report by Firewise Consulting, Fernie Fire Station Condition Assessment recommended the City of Fernie immediately implement their interim measures plan to relocate the fire department to temporary facilities at the Operations Facility, and begin the process of replacing the fire station with a new facility that meets operational requirements of the department and complied with all applicable Fire and Building Codes and effectively supports the needs of the community.
- 2022 Fernie Firehall Needs Assessment, report by Firewise Consulting – the assessment frames the requirements for a fire hall and anchors them to standards, regulations, legislation, and industry best practices such as BC Building Code, WorkSafe BC and Nation Fire Prevention Association Standards and highlights the discretionary and non-discretionary streams of inputs that will inform the design and siting principles to deliver desired levels of service

The Fernie Fire & Emergency Services Department has now been operating out of the temporary location at the old public works offices adjacent to the Operations Facility since May 2022. The temporary location does allow the Fire Department operations to continue and provide safer working conditions than those at the former 3rd Ave Fire Hall, but comes with a host of issues related to providing an adequate level of service to the community including but not limited to:

- Requires firefighters to be housed in two separate buildings separated by a code-locked gate and door in a poorly situated facility that inhibits the efficient deployment of fire department resources.
- The City's fire response system is now housed on the south side of the railroad tracks, creating deployment challenges to and from the station due to a busy rail line potentially impeding access to the fire station by firefighters and deployment of apparatus back into the city
- Occupies spaces required for public works fleet functions, restricting those operations
- Not providing adequate facilities for training, decontamination of gear, and appropriate amenities to attract and retain fire fighters
- Lacks adequate automated emergency backup power to maintain facility operation during a power outage, service requires manual intervention.
- The old firehall located at 692 3rd Avenue is being used for storage for public works and parks and recreation equipment which is preventing the City from stewarding this land asset in the interest of the community

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: FIREHALL PLANNING SERVICES

To advance this project, staff prepared and issued a public request for proposals to procure a consultant with expertise in the areas of architecture, public engagement, community planning and mixed-use design, and costing and funding strategy development.

The RFP for the Firehall Planning Services was posted on April 18, 2023, and closed on May 10, 2023. The opportunity was publicly advertised on BC Bid. The scope of work, as indicated in the RFP, included the following:

- Developing and implementing a Terms of Reference that outline how an internal staff project team and community advisory committee will be created and involved in advising on municipal and community priorities with respect to this project.
- Development of a community education strategy to build understanding on the Firehall requirements, and effectively facilitate the public, community advisory committee, and internal staff project team engagement.
- Supporting staff in identifying and engaging potential stakeholders and finding alignment with our municipal facility use and asset goals – examples include Search & Rescue and the Regional Emergency Operations Center, currently operating out of City of Fernie facility, BC Housing, Columbia Basin Trust and Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation.
- Development and issuance of a public Expression of Interest to provide an opportunity for any interested partners to identify themselves – such as other protective services, private land developers etc., and guidance on formalizing potential partnerships.
- Review of the City's existing work on site selection, identification of any additional possible sites to be considered, application of formalized site selection criteria for informed recommendations for final site selection.
- Review work to date on Firehall Needs Assessment, legislated requirements, best practices, and municipal space needs related to business continuity, to update the Space Programming Requirements, develop a conceptual facility layout and cost estimate report, and assist Staff with funding strategy development.

- Advance this project in alignment with the City of Fernie Asset Management Policy and Strategic Organizational Objectives.
- Develop a communications strategy for the overall project that considers the City's current operating context.

An evaluation committee was formed consisting of the Manager of Engineering, the Director of Asset Management, and the Fire Chief, who evaluated the submissions based on the following criteria and weighting:

- Project Understanding and Methodology (35%)
- Firm Experience and References (10%)
- Key Team Members Roles, Responsibilities & Related Experience (30%)
- Fees (25%)

The evaluation committee received and reviewed 4 proposals. The following is a summary of the evaluation committee's findings for the proposals:

Firm	Average Evaluation Score
Arcadis Architects (Canada) Inc.	78%
B&A	64%
Sahuri & Associates	62%
Nick Bray	62%

The proposal prices ranged from \$54,043 to \$178,965. The significant range in pricing was reflected in the proposals based on the varied level of detail, included deliverables and staff expertise by each of the proponents.

Arcadis received the highest rank in the evaluation by all members of the evaluation committee. Their proposal was the highest price, and therefore as a comparative value to the lowest price, they only received 7.5% of the possible 25% in the evaluation matrix for fees, despite this, their very high scores in all other evaluation categories resulted in their overall scores far exceeding the other firms.

Arcadis's proposal highlights an excellent understanding of the local context and clearly demonstrates how their work would be aligned with the City's strategic objectives and asset management objectives. The description of the tasks and corresponding deliverables to complete the scope of work were clearly articulated, and the value in the proposed process was made evident. They proposed a realistic and appropriate schedule to complete the scope of the project. The team is composed of experts with significant recent experience on relevant projects including Bow Crow Fire Centre Business Case Study, Foothills County Regional Emergency Services Campus Business Case Study, and the design and construction of the Kananaskis Emergency Services Centre. The team included qualified experts in a number of fields other proponents did not such as transportation engineering, stakeholder engagement specialists, mixed-use planning and funding strategy development.

Staff recommends that Council award the contract for Firehall Planning Services to Arcadis for the professional services work as laid out in the RFP and in Arcadis's proposal. If Mayor and Council were to authorize the awarding of the subject contract to Arcadis, to formalize the award, a contract will need to be executed between Arcadis and the Corporation of the City of Fernie which includes a scope of work and schedule of fees and disbursements not to exceed a total cost of \$178,956.

INTERNAL CIRCULATION

This report was prepared in consultation with the Director Fire & Emergency Services and the Director of Asset Management, and circulated among the internal Firehall Project Team.

LEGAL/STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The City's Purchasing and Tendering Policy requires Council approval for procurement in excess of \$100,000.

LEGAL/STATUTORY PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

N/A

COMPLIANCE WITH CORPORATE STRATEGIES & POLICIES

This proposal aligns with the City's Strategic Organizational Objectives of investing in core infrastructure and service delivery as well as committing to timely and compelling community engagement, in that it provides staff the resources to complete a thorough project planning engagement phase which will ultimately increase the long-term success of our operations and financial stability in the provision of Fire and Emergency Services.

FINANCIAL/BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The current budget for this project is \$75,000 which was identified as an estimated value of project planning services during late 2022 as part of the annual budget development process. Since the budget was developed, staff worked to refine and ultimately expand the desired scope of services to meet the City's needs and provide a solid foundation for this project to succeed. Additionally, staff have not retained this type of professionals to complete similar scopes of work in the recent past.

In order to fund the recommended contract, an additional \$103,956 would need to be allocated to the capital project budget. This funding is proposed to come from the Facility Renovation reserve.

The projected ending balance of the Facility Renovation reserve as per the 2023 Financial Plan is \$1,386,394

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

This project was slated for management by the Manager of Engineering. As approved at the April 28th Regular Meeting of Council, resources for project management have been allocated under contract with ISL Engineering. The City's Director of Asset Management will be the City's Project Sponsor to provide leadership and decision-making oversight to the consulting teams and liaise with the internal project team.

EXTERNAL AGENCY/PUBLIC COMMENTS

N/A

COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

All bidders will be informed of the outcomes of the RFP process.

OPTIONS

1. Council award this work to the highest evaluated proponent, Arcadis, as recommended.
2. Council direct staff to revisit the proposals and make an alternate recommendation.

CONCLUSION

Staff's recommendation is that Council award the contract for Firehall Planning Services to Arcadis. Staff feel confident Arcadis' team of architects, planners, engineers and engagement specialists will support a successful project through facilitating stakeholder engagement and aligning visions, goals and needs; assessing existing information and site options from an experienced and fresh perspective; developing strategies for co-uses and potential streams of funding; and designing a concept plan and formulating a cost estimate that will lay the road map for the City to embark onto the next steps of this essential community project.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Weir, P.Eng.