

Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes

October 8th, 2014

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission held a special meeting on Wednesday, October 8th, 2014 at 4:15 p.m. in the Basement Conference Room at the Merrill City Hall.

Members Present: Dave Sukow, Ralph Sturm, Dorwin Harris, Brian Artac, Melissa Schroeder, Ralph Sturm

Department Staff Present: Dan Wendorf

Visitors: Dave Johnson, Ryan Schwartzman, Candy Peterson, Mayor Bialecki, Dean Mueller (Water Technology Inc), Melody Hamlin (Becher Hoppe), Jeremy Ratliff, Kortney Pike, Rick Schroeder (Becher Hoppe)

Chairperson Harris called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

The meeting began with public comment period. No public comment was received.

The next item on the agenda was to review the summary from Aquatic Design Firms that presented at the regularly scheduled meeting on October 1st. A spreadsheet was provided before the meeting, along with a narrative to easily explain (and compare) the proposals from each firm. Administrator Johnson summarized the major differences between the three and pointed out Burbach Aquatics three (3) phase approach. The RFP called for a two phase approach.

Harris informed the Commission (and handed out materials) that he had been talking with Burbach Aquatics to get better information. After Harris handed out the materials he gathered from Burbach Aquatics, Wendorf stated that we should use the information that was included in everyone's initial proposals, Johnson concurred. Wendorf stated that it is not fair to allow one firm to change their information after the proposals were presented and submitted. It creates an unfair advantage once all of the information has been made public. Schroeder asked if there was a contingency included with these proposals. Johnson said there was not, but contingencies are typically written in once there is a clear cost on the construction.

Willman stated that he was concerned with the number of visits that Water Technology Inc provided on their proposal. Johnson stated that he shared the same concern but it was not a deal breaker. Mueller (WTI) stated that this is standard for them and could add more in if needed, as they want the project to be done the right way and make the community feel at ease. Hamlin (BH) echoed Mueller's sentiments and said they too have a similar schedule of visits, but they add more in their proposal to stay on top of every phase of the project. Sukow stated that it is important to have someone on site to make sure things go right at all times, and referenced the Fire Station Construction Project as being a prime example. Sukow mentioned again that it was essential to have someone to watch over a \$4 million dollar project. Harris asked how much it would cost to have someone on site 3-4 days per week. Mueller estimated the cost to be \$1,000 per day for WTI to be on site, but that they would rely on Clark Dietz (their engineering partner from Wausau) more for this portion due to their proximity and estimated that their cost would be closer to \$400 per day if additional visits were required. Sturm said he talked

with Burbach in the parking lot after the meeting last week and they build the best pool. Sturm said the large spread in the proposals is because not everyone is bidding off the same page. Wendorf stated that everyone was given the exact same RFP at the same time, and all three firms were comfortable with the RFP.

Sturm questioned the Iowa Pool concept and if we were stuck with just that. Johnson answered that it was used as a baseline for the firms to formulate a proposal. We will now work on final design that suits our needs and wants. Harris asked if the Commission was going to have any input on the design. Mayor Bialecki said yes you can come up with anything you would like and encouraged the Commission to be involved and involve the community as well to give everyone the best results, as this pool is for the community and is a very important project. Schroeder stated that she was still bothered by the spread in prices from the proposals. Harris mentioned it might be because they are all built differently by different companies. Johnson mentioned there was almost a 50% difference on high and low bids on the fire station and that it is not out of the ordinary to have large differences. Wendorf stated that there was a much larger difference in proposals for the Smith Center rebuild after the tornado and has observed this before as well. Johnson stated that all three firms are very reputable and can all build a quality pool. It all comes down to how much you want to spend on engineering versus your level of comfort with a firm.

Johnson stated that he would like to save as much money as possible to spend on the pool itself. Willman questioned why Burbach was showing their own standard design towards the end of their presentation. He asked if we were going to be allowed to build the pool we want or is Burbach selling their cookie cutter plan. Mayor Bialecki stated that by selling a cookie cutter plan it allows a firm to charge same rates for project but make more because it is already engineered. Schroeder asked if the two firms present were friendly to using local contractors. Both answered yes and both mentioned that they would use the bidding process to select a general contractor (3-4 good pool builders in Wisconsin) and the general contractor would most likely use pre-qualified local bidders (if they chose to bid) to ensure quality work.

Mayor Bialecki asked if this was a white sheet job. Johnson answered yes that it was due to the magnitude of the project. Harris asked Mueller (WTI) if they were affiliated with Neumann Pools. Mueller said they were separate companies. Harris said if you are not why are you referenced in the Manitowoc Project. Mueller stated that they bid on the project and that the winning bidder used their expertise for portions of the project. He mentioned it happens fairly regularly on certain projects depending upon certain companies and their capabilities. Sukow again mentioned he wants a firm on site as much as possible to look out for us. Hamlin (BH) stated she wanted to make the Commission aware that they have no lawsuits/claims against them and that their proposal Phase II is all inclusive and at 6.5%. Johnson said there is no right or wrong answer here today, vote based on your comfort level with the firms and their proposals. Schroeder asked if it was appropriate to field a motion then discuss, Johnson stated yes.

***Motion by Sturm to accept the bid from Burbach Aquatics, Inc., seconded by Harris

Discussion: Sukow mentioned that he was not completely comfortable with Burbach as he thought their proposal came off a little too "used car salesman-like". Harris said he was voting for Burbach because of the research he did this week and the conversations he had with Burbach since last week's meeting. He said they design/build a good pool. Willman stated that he will vote no to this motion because they are double the price and he was concerned with the last portion of their presentation where they were showing their own design, not ours. Sturm said the only part that is cookie cutter is the pool vessel, the

rest of the toys we can add how we would like. Sukow stated his concern also for the price being way too high compared to the others. Sturm said yes they are but they are front loaded on their charges, he and Harris talked with Burbach in the parking lot after the meeting last week and they go to great lengths to take care of our project. They will be there more than anyone else and also put cameras up to ensure site safety and security.

***Sturm amended his motion to stick with Burbach Aquatics, Inc. and go with a \$4 million dollar project turn-key.

***Motion fails due to lack of a second

Discussion Continues on original motion: Sukow asked why Burbach is so much more expensive if everyone was using the same RFP. Harris again referenced his correspondence with Burbach throughout the week pointing out their new numbers. Johnson mentioned those numbers should have been included in the initial proposal, as the other two firms haven't been given an opportunity to adjust their prices either. Schroeder said she struggles with the thought of voting for Burbach because of the cost and is concerned that we are setting ourselves up to fail with the new numbers provided by Harris from Burbach.

Schroeder then called the question. . . . Sukow requested a roll call vote on the original motion:

Sukow – No
Artac – No
Harris – Yes
Sturm – Yes
Schroeder – No
Willman – No

***Motion fails (4 no 2 yes)

***Motion Sukow to accept bid from Water Technology, Inc. , seconded by Willman

Discussion: Schroeder asked WTI what percent outdoor versus indoor pools they design and build. Mueller (WTI) said overall 50/50. Harris asked Mueller about this climate. Mueller said in this climate 75% outdoor versus 25% indoor. Willman asked if donation has to be in place before we can do anything at all. Johnson informed the Commission that the donation is ready and will pay as we need starting now. Schroeder asked if the firms would have any problems with Commission involvement. Both answered none at all, that they prefer more involvement form Commission and public. Harris asked firms if they have any public forums. Both present answered yes as part of their process, and both are aware of our tight timeline and have no concern over meeting deadlines. They both indicated they are used to working this way. Harris asked WTI if they have concerns with soil borings and geotech on this timeline. Mueller (WTI) said not at all, very typical and they are used to this. Artac stated that it was important that both companies were well represented and very reputable and he appreciates all of their efforts.

Sukow called the question . . . and requested a roll call vote on the motion:

Willman – Yes

Schroeder – Yes

Sturm – Yes

Harris – Yes

Artac – Yes

Sukow – Yes

***Motion carries unanimously.

Next item on the agenda was public comment.

Hamlin (BH) wished the Commission and everyone best of luck on the project. Mayor Bialecki encouraged everyone to get involved and to involve the public on this project.

***Motion Sukow, seconded by Sturm, to adjourn at 5:17 p.m.

***Carried unanimously.

Dan Wendorf
Recording Secretary