
TO: Electoral Area Services Committee **MEETING:** September 9, 2020
FROM: Catherine Morrison
 Manager, Emergency Services **FILE:** 7380-20 DFH
SUBJECT: Dashwood Fire Hall Architectural Services

RECOMMENDATION

That the Regional District of Nanaimo enter into a contract with Praxis Architecture Company in the amount of \$273,503 excluding GST.

SUMMARY

In May 2020, the Dashwood Fire Hall construction project was put on hold to be re-assessed in September 2020 in order to consider the tax implications and confirm details of the Canada Infrastructure funding that may have provided grant support for the project. Details of the Canada Infrastructure grants was released on June 24, 2020 and firehalls do not qualify. After consultation with the Dashwood Fire Department Society and Fire Chief on July 17, 2020, it is recommended to proceed with the project.

The Dashwood Fire Hall replacement project preliminary conceptual design was completed by Praxis Architecture Company. This design will be also be used for future Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Halls. Praxis has knowledge of the RDN's requirements for this project and has assembled a team of engineering consultants who demonstrate a high degree of experience with similar fire hall projects.

The proposal received from Praxis has been reviewed and is supported by the Dashwood Fire Department Society and Fire Chief. The Praxis proposal outlines a schedule that will meet the needs of the Dashwood Fire Department, as well considers the RDN Green Building Policy B1-16. The fees proposed by Praxis, as a percentage of the overall project cost, are in line with the Budget Guidelines for Consulting Engineering Services, as published by the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies in British Columbia. It is recommended that the project be sole sourced to Praxis due to their prior involvement in the project. The Purchasing Policy A2-09 requires that purchases exceeding a single or cumulative value of \$150,000 must be approved by the RDN Board. The total value of the proposed contract is \$273,503 excluding GST.

BACKGROUND

In June 2018, the RDN Board endorsed the standardization of fire halls project. A Request For Proposals (RFP) was issued to hire a consultant to provide a conceptual fire hall design for the eventual replacement of the Dashwood Fire Hall.

Zeigler Architecture and Praxis were the selected consultants and with input from the six fire departments and the RDN, conceptual design plans were developed. The conceptual design and cost estimate considered the Green Building Policy with pre-wiring and plumbing for future energy saving opportunities but did not include costs for Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) certification.

The RDN Wood First Policy B1-20 was also reviewed, and it was determined that a wood construction would not be practical. The Board endorsed pre-fabricated engineered steel frame building, similar to the Meadowood Fire Hall, which requires less maintenance by the volunteer members who maintain the building and would provide considerable savings for an area with limited tax base. The standardized design is expected to reduce architectural and engineering costs for future fire hall projects. On September 18, 2018, the RDN Board endorsed the conceptual design.

On April 23, 2019, the RDN Board endorsed proceeding with an Alternative Approval Process (AAP) and public open houses in the Dashwood Fire Protection area for the community's input and approval to move forward with the construction of the Dashwood Fire Hall. The AAP for the Dashwood Fire Protection Area was successful and on September 17, 2019, the RDN Board adopted the AAP for "Dashwood Fire Hall Service Area Establishment Bylaw No. 1785, 2019" and "Dashwood Fire Hall Loan Authorization Bylaw No. 1789, 2019".

During the 2019 conceptual design process, Praxis was open and knowledgeable, worked well within budgets, requested functional design needs for the project and completed a conceptual design that meets the needs of all the six fire departments. In January 2020, the RDN Engineering department requested Praxis to submit a cost estimate for detailed drawing plans for the fire hall layout, engineered plans for the electrical, mechanical, structural and civil that meet current building code requirements and to meet the Green Building Policy B1-16 with a target of LEED Silver certification. Praxis submitted a proposal for \$385,603 that is aligned with the percentage guidelines for the overall project cost published by the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies in British Columbia.

The initial proposal by Praxis to meet these requirements exceeded the budget and the RDN was advised by the sustainability consultant in Praxis' proposal that the costs associated with LEED may not be the best approach for a project of this size. It was noted that the cost estimate used for the AAP did not plan for a LEED certified building but instead to be designed with options for future renewable energy sources. The Green Building Policy B1-16 indicates that new constructions over 500 square meters with the majority of floor space devoted to tenant use and occupation should aim to achieve minimum LEED silver or equivalent. In this case, the floor space is mainly devoted to house the fire apparatus and working area which will be open to the outdoors much of the time. Praxis submitted a second proposal removing the LEED certification requirements but still applying consideration to the Green Building Policy. The second proposal came in within budget at \$273,503 with green initiatives that ensure modern, efficient mechanical and electrical equipment is specified for the building and can accommodate the future addition of solar panels or other renewable energy sources. Designing to a LEED Silver standard would cost an additional \$112,100 or a 40% increase over the second design proposal.

A sole source contract with Praxis is recommended as a result of their involvement and significant experience in the project. The design is a continuation of work previously completed by Praxis with the standardized fire hall design. Moving forward with Praxis as the architect for

this project will allow the RDN and the Dashwood Fire Department to proceed in a timely fashion with a proponent who has knowledge and experience of this project. Following a meeting on February 27, 2020, the Dashwood Fire Department Society confirmed their support for a contract with Praxis Architecture Company.

In 2012, a seismic assessment was completed outlining the potential seismic risks and upgrade requirements. The Dashwood Fire Department Society and RDN have collaborated together for the replacement of the fire hall as result of the seismic assessment, the space needs requirements of the department and to meet WorkSafe guidance for clean spaces. The current hall does not contain a separate area for gear storage, cleaning and for members to decontaminate after calls as part of efforts to reduce the risk of job-related cancers. A new hall is required to meet building standards, seismic requirements, improve interior air quality and provide space needs for training and to separate smoke contaminated surfaces for volunteer health and safety. Further delay of the hall risks seismic damage and increases exposure to contaminants.

ALTERNATIVES

1. That the Regional District of Nanaimo enter into a contract with Praxis Architecture Company in the amount of \$273,503 excluding GST
2. That the Dashwood Fire Hall replacement project be designed to LEED Silver and that a contract be entered into with Praxis in the amount of \$385,603.
3. That alternate direction be provided.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposal by Praxis Architecture Company as a percentage of the overall project cost, is in line with the Budget Guidelines for Consulting Engineering Services, as published by the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies in British Columbia and the approved budget for the project. The proposal to include LEED Silver Certification during the design and construction would exceed the total budget.

As the Dashwood Fire Hall construction project is not anticipated to be completed until 2021, the first loan repayment will not occur until 2022 temporarily delaying the tax increase associated with the project until 2022.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Social Wellbeing - Make the Region a safe and vibrant place for all, with a focus on children and families in programs and planning.



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August 19, 2020

Reviewed by:

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