



**TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH
63 MAIN STREET
NORTHBOROUGH, MA 01532**

Town Offices Feasibility Study Committee

MEETING MINUTES

September 13, 2023

6:30 p.m.

TOFC 2nd Meeting
September 13, 2023

Present:

Aaron Hutchins, Diane Wackell Interim Assistant Town Administrator, Scott Charpentier DPW Director, Shawn Thompson Facilities Manager, Dario DiMare, Kristen Wixted, Ashley Davies, Judy Boyle, Linda Brenkle

Meeting started at 7:03

Kristen Wixted read the remote meeting introduction.

Dario DiMare conducted roll call. All present except Bill Pierce.

Motion to accept minutes from last meeting by Kristen Wixted and 2nd by Judy Boyle.

Kristen Wixted abstained.

Motion approved.

Scott Charpentier reviewed how TOFC committee received applications and staff review. Staff review resulted in similar reviews for each applicant.

Dario DiMare asked to review applications before receiving staff reviews.

Dario DiMare reemphasized his note from 1st meeting that the most important piece is the person(s) the town will be working with.

Scott Charpentier recommended reviewing each applicant one at a time with the committee.

Dario DiMare asked to start with BH+A.

Aaron Hutchins asked Dario DiMare to start the reviews.

Dario DiMare looked at the individual and exact building type. Dario DiMare doesn't want a company that hasn't previously done a town hall work. And if they did, who was the person who managed it?



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Dario DiMare said BH+A has done a fair amount of town hall work. Rachel Young was project manager. Rachel hasn't done a town hall. She's done other town building work. Joel Bargmann is the one who has experience with town hall work, but he's not the pick for project manager. How does Joel's knowledge get to Rachel? Dario DiMare's personal company hired BH+A within the last 3 years. Doesn't feel like there's a conflict of interest. Dario DiMare would want Joel involved if the town moved with BH+A.

Linda Brenkle agreed with Dario DiMare and further indicated one other BH+A employee has only one town project.

Aaron Hutchins asked Dario DiMare what it meant that BH+A identified Rachel Young as the prospective project manager?

Dario DiMare opined that it might be that Joel was too busy or that they twisted the language of public work as inclusive of a town hall even if there was no history of town hall work. BH+A did submit paperwork showing Joel as having done many town halls but still elected to recommend Rachel.

Linda Brenkle wondered if the multi-use town buildings were part of the rationale behind recommending Rachel.

Dario DiMare said that a town hall is nothing more than offices as opposed to other town buildings which might include housing or social spaces, etc. Senior Center is much different than a town hall.

Linda Brenkle asked whether it mattered who the project manager was if the object was only a feasibility study.

Dario DiMare said the most important part of a building is the initial decisions.

Ashley Davies was least impressed with BH+A of all applicants.

Judy Boyle asked Dario DiMare if Joel was the suggested project manager would Dario DiMare feel differently?

Dario DiMare would never hire BH+A, even with Joel identified as a person in charge, unless he had confidence that Joel would be the project manager.

Linda Brenkle offered that none of the applicants met the criteria for auto insurance.



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HKT was reviewed next.

Dario DiMare says HKT hid the organization chart way in the back of their submission. Amy Dunlap was identified as project manager. Amy has never done a town hall. She's done police, fire station, public safety projects.

Dario DiMare couldn't find any town halls.

Linda Brenkle said she found one town hall HKT had done within the last five years. Asked how critical an architectural license was.

Dario DiMare said license was not critical, experience is.

Linda Brenkle asked how we would know if the architectural was disbarred.

Dario DiMare said to ask them directly in the interview.

Judy Boyle felt HKT was capable based on other projects.

Dario DiMare emphasized that the projects are applicable, but who was the project manager for the projects? We need to have the right person involved.

Scott Charpentier suggested that prior to interviews the committee sends the proposed firms receive a letter in advance letting them know what the committee is interested in.

Linda Brenkle wants to know whether we're looking for a firm that has done feasibility studies or renovation work?

Dario DiMare said both, but in the venue of town halls.

ICON was 3rd reviewed.

Dario DiMare said Ned Collier was principle in charge and Paul DiGiandomenico was project manager proposed. Dario DiMare wants to switch them. Considers Ned the "town hall king" of all applicants. Feels ICON is pricey but good. Ned trumps Joel in Dario DiMare's opinion.

Ashley Davies liked their experience. Felt they were the most well-rounded.



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Judy Boyle felt biased in her review because town staff did not recommend ICON to advance. Wondered if work on Northborough Crossing was problematic? Judy Boyle notes they don't have worker's comp insurance. ICON had a lawsuit settled in mediation.

Kristen Wixted liked the multiple town hall experience presented.

Dario DiMare has hired an ICON principle in the past for his personal company.

Aaron Hutchins inquired whether we could ask town counsel for an opinion on Dario DiMare's ability to be a voting member after interviews.

Scott Charpentier said town council would be asked to view this meeting's recording.

Dario DiMare said all applicants are competitors of his personal company. Dario DiMare comfortable not voting if town counsel determines there's a conflict of interest.

Aaron Hutchins asked if the town staff would share their grading.

Scott Charpentier said staff had HKT, BH+A and ICON in descending order. Scott Charpentier said an email would go out from the committee to applicants asking them to bring a project manager who has town hall experience.

Scott Charpentier suggested at least 3 weeks before interview date.

Committee agreed to 10/10 at 6:30PM, in person.

Motion to adjourn at 8:06PM by Aaron Hutchins, 2nd by Kristen Wixted
All votes in the affirmative.

Meeting ended at 8:07PM.