

Searcy City Council – Special Session
March 6, 2014 5:00 p.m.
Minutes

Mayor David Morris called to order a Special Session of the Searcy City Council. Searcy Fire Chief Bill Baldrige gave the Invocation, with the Pledge of Allegiance following, led by Alderman Steve Sterling. City Clerk Jerry Morris called the roll with the following Aldermen answering “present”: Logan Cothorn, Mary Ann Arnett, J R Howard, Steve Sterling, Dale English, Don Raney, and Mike Chalenburg. Alderman Dale Brewer was not present. Also present was City Attorney Buck Gibson.

Item (3) on the agenda was for discussion/review of the qualifications of the firms that had submitted a response to the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) that the City of Searcy had sought in June of 2013. The RFQ was sent out (advertised in the newspaper) and the responses received were to be kept on file for a period of one year, which is in accordance with what state law requires to be done. In response to the City’s request, seven (7) submissions detailing the qualifications of the responding firms were received. Responding firms were instructed to supply three (3) sets of their responses to the city. The seven (7) firms that submitted responses are as follows:

- Thomas F. Black, P.E.
- ETC Engineering and Architects, Inc.
- Garver
- McClelland Consulting Engineers, Inc.
- SCM Architects
- Terracon Consultants, Inc.
- Whitlow Engineering Services, Inc.

On February 26, 2014, after the February 11, 2014 Special Election in which the temporary (8-year) one percent sales and use tax was approved by voters, the members of the Searcy City Council were asked to schedule a time to come in individually to City Hall and review/discuss the RFQ responses received from the seven aforementioned firms, with the assistance of City Engineer Mark Lane if so desired.

City Attorney Buck Gibson explained that the City Council is authorized to retain professional services in a way that is different than the procurement of certain other goods and services. It does not have to be simply the lowest bidder. The purpose of issuing a Request for Qualifications is to gather information from a firm or firms that can, in this case, provide assistance in the development and implementation of the planned use of the revenue generated by the temporary one percent sales and use tax. The Council will use the RFQ information to provide direction in the selection and/or ranking of the firm/firms to enter into negotiations with. The Council may also choose to ask for further information from one or more of the responding firms.

Mr. Raney asked the question of Mr. Lane, 'is it preferable, considering the different projects/uses that have been proposed to be funded with the revenue generated, to deal with a single firm or multiple firms?' Mr. Lane explained that neither is really preferable with the only advantage in selecting a single firm for all projects is a possibility of receiving a 'better' percentage rate in the cost of their professional services if they are assured of multiple projects. But, that is part of the negotiation process and may not necessarily be the case. Mr. Lane stated that there are several firms among the respondents that are capable of providing assistance for all of the projects that have been proposed. Mr. Chalenburg and Mr. Raney both stated that they felt it would be advantageous to be able to deal with a single firm for all of the projects, but that decision should be made as a consensus of the Council.

A motion was made by Mr. English, seconded by Mr. Sterling, to set up interviews of selected firms for March 13, 2014 beginning at 5:00 p.m. This time and date is tentatively set unless there is a conflict with a firm or firms' schedule and cannot appear. A voice vote was entertained by Mayor Morris with the stipulation that if any opposition was heard, then a roll call vote would be taken. Motion carried with no opposition being heard.

A motion was then made by Mr. Raney, seconded by Mr. Sterling, to select ETC Engineering and Architects, Inc., Garver, and McClelland Consulting Engineers, Inc. as firms to be interviewed on March 13, 2014 beginning at 5:00 p.m. Approximately thirty minutes will be given to each firm for their presentation. This time and date is tentatively set unless there is a conflict with a firm or firms' schedule and cannot appear. A voice vote was entertained by Mayor Morris with the stipulation that if any opposition was heard, then a roll call vote would be taken. Motion carried with no opposition being heard.

Mr. Gibson stated that in light of the Council's actions there should not be any consideration of the resolution [authorization to enter into negotiations with the selected firm(s)] that was listed on the agenda as item (5).

Mayor Morris stated that the order in which the interviews on March 13, 2014 will take place needed to be determined since they are being done on thirty minute intervals. It would be unfair to ask the firms to wait while the others are being interviewed. The order in which the three selected firms would be interviewed was drawn randomly by Searcy Police Chief Jeremy Clark. The order drawn being: 1) McClelland Consulting Engineers, Inc. 2) Garver 3) ETC Engineering and Architects, Inc. A motion was then made by Mr. Sterling and seconded by Mr. English to accept the order in which the interviews will take place as were randomly drawn by Chief Clark. Motion carried with the following voting "yes": Arnett, Howard, Sterling, English, Raney, Chalenburg, and Cothorn

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn.

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Minutes Approved: April 8, 2014

/s/ David Morris
MAYOR

ATTEST:

/s/ Jerry Morris
CITY CLERK

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