

Town of Hartford, Vermont Pool Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 26, 2018

Present: Chris Hamilton, Scott Hausler, Steve Lagasse, Skip Nalette, Hilde Ojibway, David Sherman, Scott Snyder, Mike Vanasse, Joe James, Kim Souza, Dennis Brown (Selectboard).

Unable to attend: Brett Mayfield, Joseph Trottier.

Meeting commenced at 5:35 p.m. in Room 312, Town Hall.

Approval of Minutes

The draft minutes of the meeting June 19, 2018, were amended to note that Scott Snyder was unable to attend—and with that correction duly moved and approved.

Preparation of interview questions

The committee reviewed questions to ask the firms tonight. A printed set of questions for each interview was passed out so folks can make notes as things come up. Brief discussion to reassign questions based on tonight's attendance.

Interviews with engineering firms

SE Group + SSG

Patrick Olstad from SE Group and Harold Tilson from South Shore Gunnite (SSG) arrived a few minutes before 6:00 and presented first. Their presentation, about twenty minutes long, began with history and background of SE Group, planners and landscape architects, highlighting work with municipalities as well as private developers. Okemo resort is among their current projects. Mr. Olstad described strengths of his firm to include open communication, listening as a neutral party, collaborative relationships, public engagement, flexible and organized management of timeline and budget, and understanding of infrastructure, user experience, and regional context. The final report would aim to provide all information the Town would need to make an informed decision on which direction to proceed with the pool, a direction that should become clear through this initial assessment process.

Next, Mr. Tilson described the technical expertise of his firm SSG, the premiere pool contractor in New England and 14th in the country, and how that complements SE Group's planning skills. Mr. Tilson himself has detailed knowledge of the Hartford pool, having been involved in many previous repairs. He described specific failures of the existing pool and some technical challenges that repair efforts might face. His company is highly committed to its pools and prides itself on meeting deadlines, sticking to budgets, and avoiding change orders. They have accurate price data to inform cost estimates.

After their presentation, SE Group + SSG responded to questions from the committee, regarding:

- The process—(1) begins with a kickoff meeting to clarify scope, schedule and goals; (2) analysis phase led by SSG, with SE Group look at high-level concerns, opportunities; (3) a final report that would hopefully make the path forward clear.
- National or regional trends in pool usage—SSG has not seen a decline, but rather many municipal pools being rehabilitated. SE Group would research usage trends further.
- Destructive testing—not included in this initial assessment.
- Personnel leading the project—depends on whether optional community engagement is part of scope; if so, SE Group senior planner, Drew Pollak-Bruce, would lead; Mr. Olstad, with more technical design focus, would coordinate with SSG pool architect Jeff Scimone, and Mr. Tilson would lead cost estimating.
- Community input and engagement offered as an optional service—this would entail (1) an online survey, potentially adding questions to the committee’s survey, and (2) a public workshop led by Mr. Pollak-Bruce who is especially adept at running such events. Mr. Olstad encouraged this optional service, explaining how carefully they listen to the public input to weave together perspectives to create a consensus recommendation.

The committee thanked the presenters and then took a 10 minute break before preparing to meet the presenters from the second firm.

Weston & Sampson

At 7:00 Mr. Hausler ushered in Mark Marino, aquatics engineer, and Ken Bisceglia, civil engineer, both from Weston & Sampson. After passing out business cards and a one-page handout, Mr. Marino gave their presentation, also about twenty minutes long. He explained their approach would closely follow the RFP: (1) to understand existing conditions and to audit the pool shell, pumps, equipment room, bath house, etc., and (2) to analyze and report their findings. As an aquatics engineer his goal is to maximize effective use of the pool area, to put the most programming into the available square footage. Upon conclusion of the assessment study, they would provide a definitive direction—renovate or replace.

Mr. Marino showed slides of the firm’s portfolio that featured pools located in Greenwich, CT, Rutland and Winooski, VT.

Key points made in the presentation and during follow-up questions include:

- Weston & Sampson has a professional staff of over 500 with all necessary disciplines in-house. Only certain specialties would be subcontracted such as core drilling (included in the initial assessment services to measure strength of pool shell).
- Geotechnical and hazardous materials testing are important to do early in the design process (but after the initial assessment phase).
- They have expertise helping with contaminant remediation, securing EPA brownfields assessment grants, and navigating related permitting.
- Operation of the pool is a key consideration, cf. Rutland pool has manual dual pump compared to Winooski’s automated pump system.

- ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance includes pool-specific codes, for example, having over 300 linear feet of pool wall requires two accessible means of entry, either a sloped entry or pool lift.
- Personnel—Mr. Marino would lead the project, drawing on in-house team for support.
- Process— beginning with a kickoff meeting, the initial assessment would seek to understand what the Town wants for its aquatics program.
- Price—Weston & Sampson understands what is appropriate for different communities. Rutland is an example that has similar population and median income to Hartford.
- They want the pool to last for over 50 years and plan for future improvements, e.g., installing anchors during initial construction to accommodate a climbing wall or other features later.

The committee members reconvened after thanking the second group of presenters and taking another short break.

Decision process

Mr. James's query whether committee members felt able to decide on a firm tonight was met by an affirmative response, although it was noted that it would be a difficult selection to make because both firms presented impressive credentials. Vigorous discussion ensued for nearly an hour. The firms were compared on numerous aspects, including technical pool expertise, emphasis on programming, phasing considerations, community outreach services, clarity of proposals, bias towards certain options, etc.

A straw poll was taken among voting members with 4 to 3 in favor of Weston & Sampson.

Ms. Ojibway made a motion: "The Hartford pool advisory committee moves to engage in contract with Weston & Sampson to conduct the pool assessment according to the scope of services as described by the firm in (1) its proposal submitted in response to the RFP, April 2018, (2) its presentation made this evening, and (3) its interview handout headed with today's date, June 28, 2018." The motion was seconded, no discussion followed, and it passed with six in favor and one opposed.

Next meeting

The committee decided it need not meet again until the assessment project kickoff meeting, which it decided to hold on July 24th pending favorable contract negotiations with Weston & Sampson and subject to their availability.

Adjournment

By motion duly made and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Respectively submitted by: Scott Snyder, Recording Secretary.


Draft minutes of the meeting on June 26, 2018, to be reviewed at the next meeting.

Any changes noted and signed by Chair or Recording Secretary.

Minutes were reviewed at the meeting on 8/7/18.

Any changes or corrections:

With the corrections noted above, minutes were approved:

Signature:  _____

Date: 8/7/18