



Board Action Report

File #: 20-191, **Version:** 1

Commissioner Philbeck - Public Works - To Authorize the County Manager to Execute an Architect/Engineering Design Contract with Stewart Cooper Newell Architects for the Child Advocacy Center at a Cost Not to Exceed \$151,975

STAFF CONTACT

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BUDGET IMPACT

Design Estimate - \$151,975

BUDGET ORDINANCE IMPACT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The Child Advocacy Center (The Lighthouse) is located on the lower level of the Highland Health Center at 609 North Highland Street, Gastonia, North Carolina. The current 1,000 square foot space is not adequate to provide the services that are needed. In 2018, The Lighthouse conducted 390 forensic interviews of children who are victims of sexual abuse, physical abuse, domestic or family violence, neglect, or human trafficking. To meet the growing needs of The Lighthouse, the Bethlehem Baptist Church of Gastonia has agreed to lease a parcel of land to Gaston County to accommodate the construction of a new facility. This land is located at 3100 Bethlehem Church Road, Gastonia, North Carolina 28056. The new facility will allow space for law enforcement, social services workers, prosecutors, counselors, and Child Advocacy Center staff to help children and families heal.

North Carolina General Statute (NCGS) 143-64.31 requires the initial solicitation and evaluation of firms to perform architectural, engineering, surveying, construction management-at-risk services, and design-build services (collectively "design services") to be based on qualifications and without regard to fee. NCGS 143-64.32 authorizes units of local government to exempt contracts for design services from the qualifications-based selection requirements of G.S. 143-64.31 if the estimated fee is less than \$50,000. However, the design fee for this project will exceed the \$50,000 cap for exemption thereby requiring the architect/engineer to be selected through the qualifications based process. Building Inspections staff developed a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) packet on December 20, 2018 in accordance with the statutory requirements and publicly advertised the project beginning December 20, 2018. Statements of Qualification (SOQ) submittals were received on January 24, 2019. One firm submitted an SOQ. The RFQ was reissued publicly with the intent of gaining greater interest in the project and additional SOQ's. Two SOQ's were received on March 1, 2019.

After reviewing the SOQ's submitted, as well as in-person presentations by the two firms to the Child Advocacy Center Steering Committee, the architecture firm of Stewart Cooper Newell of Gastonia, North Carolina was deemed to be the best qualified for this project. Approval of this Board Action by the Gaston County Commission officially selects Stewart Cooper Newell Architects as the designer of record for the Child Advocacy Center (The Lighthouse) project. Further, approval of this Board Action authorizes the County Attorney to draft the necessary contract documents for the work and authorizes the County Manager or her designee to negotiate and execute said contracts at a cost not to exceed \$151,975.

POLICY IMPACT

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

N/A