

Memo



To: Mr. Kazi Reza, Town of East Hartford

From:  John McGrane, PE;  Michael Flynn, PE

Date: 8-10-2021

Re: Main Street Closure Structure Repairs (Bid #21-12)
Review of References for B&W Paving and Landscape, LLC
DRAFT - For Town Review

Recap of Main Street Bids

B&W is the second low bidder for the Main Street Closure project and is now being considered due to the reluctance of the low bidder, Waters Construction Company, to execute the contract.

As a recap, bids were received by the Town on May 5, 2021 from the following 3 contractors:

- Waters Construction Company, Inc., of Bridgeport, CT Bid: \$1,119,430
- B&W Paving and Landscaping, LLC, of Waterford, CT Bid : \$1,213,320
- Arborio Corporation of Cromwell, CT Bid: \$1,261,440

During the initial review, GEI tabulated the unit prices for each of the 3 bids in a spreadsheet to check for mathematical accuracy, and to allow for comparison of unit prices against the engineer's estimate. All 3 bids were found to be mathematically correct, and all 3 bids were found to complete with respect to the forms required to be included with their bids.

Following the response by Waters indicating that they were unwilling to execute the contract, GEI reviewed the bid results again with a focus B&W's bid. In reviewing the unit prices the B&W bid, there were no anomalies that would suggest an unbalanced or incomplete bid. Overall, it is our opinion that the bid submitted by B&W is complete and is considered a responsible bid.

Review of Technical Qualifications and References for B&W

The following is a summary of the reference checks performed for B&W Paving and Landscaping, LLC, of Waterford, CT On August 9, 2021, John McGrane of GEI was able to connect with 4 current references for B&W which were listed on B&W's project experience as submitted with their bid. The results of these phone discussions are summarized in the attached "Contractor Reference Check Forms". The form also retains 2 additional references that were obtained in 2020 for the Toe Drain Project. Voice messages were left for these 2020 references, however, we were unable to discuss their current opinion of B&W.

In reviewing the list of current and prior projects provided in B&W's bid, they have presented numerous projects involving state and local roadways of a similar nature to the East Hartford Main Street Closure project. Based on these project examples, and in discussing B&W's performance with the references as noted below, it is our general opinion that B&W has the project experience and technical qualifications to perform the Main Street project. There is no specific experience on the levee closure systems per se, however, this is a very specialized type of work which none of the bidders noted prior experience with.

Although B&W's qualifications for the project indicate an ability to perform the work on the Main Street project, their actual performance on similar projects varied according to the references noted. The majority of the references expressed a positive opinion about B&W's performance, however, there were some negative experiences reported.

As common themes, B&W was reported to be cooperative to work with and very reasonable with respect to change orders and negotiated work. Work product was mainly reported as good. A weakness reported by two of the respondents was that project management and scheduling coordination were lacking on their project.

Summary of 2021 References

For the 2021 reference checks, the following responses were received:

1. The **City of Hartford DPW** expressed that B&W performed acceptably on the \$10 M Bushnell Park North project despite challenges experienced with underground utilities, traffic control, and other logistics inherent with working in congested urban areas. The project was not without problems, however the City Engineer reported that they "got the job done" and the final work product is good. DPW did not express any reservations in hiring B&W for future work.
2. The **Town of Seymour** reported good results on the Industrial Park Roadway reconstruction project. It was reported that they were cooperative to work with and there were minimal change orders. The Town reported that they would hire B&W for future work
3. The **Town of Windsor** reported acceptable results with respect to the work product on the Deerfield Road reconstruction project, however the project was not completed on time, and the punch list remains open. Project management was reported as inconsistent and required additional Town effort to coordinate their work. B&W was reported as being cooperative and not inclined to seek change orders. The Town indicated that B&W remains an eligible bidder.
4. The **City of Torrington** expressed concerns they had with B&W on a road reconstruction program in 2020. The City Engineer expressed that the quality of the final paving was problematic in some locations which required investigation and rework. It is not yet known whether the paving problems were the result of defective asphalt material provided by the local supplier, or if they were the fault of B&W's workmanship. The City went on to state that they felt that B&W's project management and field supervision was "inconsistent" on the project. The City Engineer expressed that B&W was cooperative and fair with change orders, but that schedule adherence and coordination were unacceptable. Overall, the Town Engineer stated he would prefer not to hire B&W for future work.

Summary of 2020 References

Two additional references from the **2020 reference check** for B&W are also listed in the attached Contractor Reference Check form and include the responses received in 2020. At that time, both references (**Town of Manchester and Town of Waterford**) expressed positive experiences with respect to B&W's performance. Voice messages for both references were left on 8-9-21, but as of this date, we have not received an updated response.

General Summary and Opinion of B&W's Abilities

In the Contractor Reference Check forms attached, we have provided the detailed responses from the individual references contacted and their comments received regarding B&W's performance on their respective projects.

From the perspective of technical proficiency, the majority of the reference feedback indicates that B&W is qualified for the Main Street Closure Repairs Project and has the experience to complete this type of project. The negative feedback reported by two of the references does point to potential project management and scheduling issues that have affected some of their projects.

For the Main Street Project, coordination and scheduling will be a key factor. Therefore, if B&W is to be hired, a strong commitment will need to be obtained at time of award to ensure that proper on-site supervision, project management, and schedule controls will be in place for the project. To accomplish this goal, GEI recommends that a staffing plan be submitted by B&W that specifies the key staff who will manage the project (including detailed resumes) and a detailed project schedule. GEI further recommends that the Town carefully review the staffing plan and schedule, and obtain a commitment from B&W given some of the weaknesses reported in the area of project management and scheduling.

Perhaps most importantly, the Town does have some direct experience with B&W on previous projects and GEI would suggest that the Town evaluate its own experiences with B&W as a further point of reference in deciding the acceptability of B&W for the Main Street Closure project.

Attachment: Contractor Reference Check Forms (B&W Paving and Landscape, LLC)