



Scarborough Board of Education

Finance Committee

Meeting Notes

March 14, 2023

3:30 - 4:30 pm

Prepare by reading the agenda and any supporting documents provided.

Objectives:

- Follow up review of Track Renovation bid/co-op process

Track Renovation bid/co-op process

After review of Q&A and opportunity for additional conversation, we have decided to proceed with soliciting two co-op proposals from the two vendors recommended by Woodard & Curran. Kate will reach out to them a.s.a.p. and get the process started.

KB notes for SBFC following March 6 meeting:

As you know, the turf renovation was completed in late summer of 2022, while the track portion of the project was deferred due to discussion of that area as a potential building site for the Unified Primary School. After the turf renovation, we had a balance of \$1,151,455 remaining from the \$1,900,800 original budget approved.

Once it was clear the building project would not be using the athletic complex area, we got back together with Woodard & Curran to plan for the track. We now have an updated estimate of the projected cost of the track replacement portion of the project, and W&C are preparing construction design documents and specifications. Up to now we had been planning for a traditional bid process, but the specialists on our Woodard & Curran team have suggested another avenue to pursue.

The turf was purchased from Geosurfaces through the TIPS co-op, and the installation pricing was also covered under the co-op contract. TIPS is a national purchasing cooperative developed to serve public schools districts; municipalities and non-profits may also become co-op members. TIPS solicits RFPs and RFQs for various products and services commonly needed by public entities; they score and rate the proposals, and issue contracts to qualifying vendors. Co-op members can then select a TIPS vendor and enter into an individual agreement with the confidence that their qualifications and pricing have been vetted by industry experts. If you have a moment to look around the [TIPS website](#) I think you'll find it very informative concerning the co-op purchasing approach in general.

Because the track renovation will necessarily involve having Geosurfaces return to detach the new turf edges and reshape the oval (using the certified installer so we don't jeopardize our warranty), the engineers at W&C suggested that we could also contract with them through TIPS to finish the track portion of the project. They are one of the top vendors in the US for track renovation as well as turf (their track department head acts as an advisor to the NCAA), so there would be no doubt as to their qualifications for our project.

There are three major advantages to contracting with Geosurfaces through TIPS vs. the traditional bid process:



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- Timing - we will be hard pressed to get the project done in the short window between spring thaw and start of fall sports. It would be much faster to get a TIPS proposal than to go through the traditional bid process (by several weeks), and Geosurfaces would have the experience with our project to move forward quickly.
- Negotiation - in a traditional bid process, negotiating the scope of work with the selected vendor after the bids are in could be perceived as a violation of the process. With uncertainty around construction costs, we could be stuck with a qualifying bid we can't afford, with very limited opportunity to change the scope of work after the bids are in.
- Vendor capacity - considering the limited number of companies that would be qualified to do this type of specialty work (more about this below), we are concerned that the traditional bid process would not create the type of competitive environment and pricing benefits that we would ordinarily expect.

As I mentioned in Monday's meeting, I was fully expecting us to go through a traditional bid process, but I've come to believe that in this situation the advantages of the co-op purchase could make the difference between success and failure of the project. My recommendation to Geoff is now to pursue the co-op purchase route under policy DJE (section II par. 3):

The Superintendent may forego the competitive bid or RFP process for purchases less than \$50,000, or when he/she determines that quality, expertise, time factors, or other important considerations outweigh the possible benefits of bidding or requesting proposals. In each such case, the Board shall be informed of the Superintendent's decision and the reasons for it in advance of entering into a contract.

(Informing the Board has historically meant bringing the information to the Board Finance Committee.)

Follow up Q&A - KB responses

How many companies in our area would be qualified to bid on this project?

According to Woodard & Curran's athletic facilities specialist, we will need a track installer and a turf installer to work as a team to finish the project, and as I mentioned above, Geosurfaces is already required to be the turf installer. Besides Geosurfaces there is one other regional vendor, Cape & Island Tennis and Track (C&I), the local certified installer for national track surfacing company Beynon. C&I does not participate in the TIPS co-op, but they do belong to two other national co-ops (the National Cooperative Purchasing Alliance (NCPA) and the Association of Educational Purchasing Agencies (AEPA)), so we could solicit a proposal from them by becoming a member of one of those co-ops.

Is there a reason why we didn't start the bid process sooner so we could ensure a timely completion of the project?



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We resumed working with Woodard & Curran last October, after the turf renovation was completed and as soon as it became clear that the athletic complex was likely to be ruled out as a building site. We have stayed on task with site visits, surveys and planning meetings since that time.

The schedule we mapped out calls for design plans, engineering and permitting to be completed by the end of this month (which is a fast turnaround in a project of this kind) and the bid process to start at the beginning of April, with construction to be underway as early as possible in May. If we go forward with a traditional bid process, this will still be the expected timeline.

As I mentioned earlier, one reason we think that the co-op purchasing approach could be more advantageous is because it is simply much quicker. In traditional bidding, the invitation to bid is generally posted/advertised for two or three weeks before bids are accepted and opened and a contract can be negotiated with the selected bidder. Proposals solicited through a co-op can be received much more quickly, and because the co-op has already conducted the competitive bidding process for that product or service, entering into a contract is also less time-consuming.

I would also add that although co-op purchasing may be less well known to the public, it is an accepted practice that has been used by governments and public school systems across the US for decades. Here in Scarborough we currently use co-op membership to leverage best pricing on food and cafeteria supplies (York & Cumberland County School Nutrition Cooperative Purchasing Group), we purchase our school buses through an approved vendor arrangement with the Department of Education, and both town and school purchase products and services through the Greater Portland Council of Governments.

(From Steve Hanly) How did the project go from a \$600,000 potential overrun last May to being "in the ballpark" of the originally approved amount now? Especially since it appears that construction costs have continued to increase during that year.

The initial estimate of cost for the full turf and track restoration project was based on Woodard & Curran's design and planning work in January of 2022. Their estimates were necessarily conservative and reflective of the economics of that moment, with uncertainty around supply chain and labor constraints at their peak.

The actual cost of the turf renovation portion of the project at completion was \$346,000 less than the initial estimate. A new estimate for the track portion of the project was done in January 2023, and projections for several key material costs were also reduced based on current conditions. Of course there will be other factors to consider, primarily related to the decision to divide the project into two phases creating additional mobilization costs. As noted, receiving quotes more quickly and having the ability to revise the scope of work based on available funds are both advantages of co-op purchasing.

By the way, I obviously did not recall during our meeting that the potential cost overrun was part of the district's communication last year around splitting the project, and I misspoke; thank you for sending along the link.

(From Steve Hanly) What elements of the original projects have been or are being considered for deletion/modification in the proposed contract for the track?



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No changes to the original project plan will be recommended until we receive actual proposals. The first priority, of course, is to rebuild the track base and replace the surface, where we face similar safety concerns to those now solved with the turf renovation.