

Enrollment Sub-Committee Recommendation for PreBond Architectural Consulting and Design

Enrollment Sub-Committee:

Anne Wake-DePasquale, HSB Committee Chair
Gina Berksaug, Superintendent-elect
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April 25, 2025

On March 31, 2025, the SAU administrative team sent out a [Request for Proposals](#) for the architectural consulting services approved by the Town of Hollis in Warrant Article 6 at the 2025 Hollis School District Town Meeting. The RFP was sent directly to the following architecture firms:

[Windy Hill Associates](#)

[Banwell Architects](#)

[Lavallee Brensinger](#)

[Harriman](#)

We received formal proposals from all four firms (linked above). After careful consideration of their proposals and a 30-minute Zoom interview with each firm, we came to the conclusion that Banwell Architects will be the best fit for our project at Hollis Primary School.

All four firms submitted professional, detailed proposals, and all four came to their respective interviews well-prepared, having read not only the RFP, but also meeting minutes from the Enrollment Committee. All were also familiar with the warrant article passed in March. The sub-committee agreed that any of these firms would be qualified to produce a good result for our town, so we based our final decision on weighing the following criteria:

- **Project History**—we were specifically looking for a history of projects similar to the anticipated size and scope of our project.
- **Proven record of an economical mindset**—we looked for evidence of a history of staying within and even under budget on comparable projects.
- **Personal connection**—we recognize we will be working with this team for several years, therefore a good rapport and collegial working relationship is paramount.
- **Team approach**—all members of the sub-committee agreed that with a project of this potential scope we need redundancy in the level of knowledge and familiarity with the project across a team of professional architects.
- **Consultants**—equally important to the architects are the consultants they choose to work with. We examined the engineering consultants that each firm included in their proposals.
- **Value**—the associated fees ranged in cost from \$85,000- \$46,950. The March warrant article planned for \$85K as this amount was estimated by our consultation with Windy Hill. We were not looking for the least expensive proposal per se, but rather one that offered the greatest value for the Hollis taxpayer and the Hollis Primary School.

Banwell came ahead for a number of reasons. Firstly, we have a standing relationship with Banwell. Banwell has done a commendable job renovating the basement of RMMS into a library and classrooms.

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The administrative team commented that Banwell's vision for the space exceeded their own imagination. Banwell is also currently working with administration on projects at the COOP. All three of the architects that would be working on the project were present at the meeting and able to answer all of our questions competently. The administrative team's experience with Banwell has proven them to be responsive, reliable, and easy to work with. Banwell often concludes within or under budget on their projects and is generally mindful of the costs to taxpayers. Additionally, Banwell invited two representatives from their engineering consulting firm, EEI, to attend the meeting. EEI has been on site for all of the projects Banwell has completed with SAU 41 and have themselves proven to be dependable and efficient. Additionally, they are currently working with administration to complete the HVAC upgrade at HBMS and the solar project at the COOP. Finally, their estimated fee of \$52, 491 was the second lowest bid of the four. This provides a significant savings for the Hollis taxpayer while still guaranteeing superb services.

This recommendation comes to the full Enrollment Committee and to the Hollis School Board with unanimous support. All members of the sub-committee ranked Banwell's proposal number one of the four proposals available.