

ITEM #:	17
DATE:	01-13-26
DEPT:	FIRE

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: NEW FIRE STATION NO. 2 - DESIGN CONTRACT

BACKGROUND:

Ames Fire Station #2 is located at 132 Welch Avenue, at the intersection of Chamberlain Street and Welch Avenue. The station, which was built in 1966, is a single story, 5,500 square foot, three apparatus bay station. The current facility presents significant operational challenges including access difficulties for fire apparatus and outdated facilities that no longer meet fire service requirements. The size of the lot and corresponding design of the fire station do not allow for drive through access into the station, requiring apparatus to back into the fire station upon returning to the station. Therefore, it is now appropriate to take steps to replace this station with a modern facility that incorporates the best practices for emergency response services and improves fire department response times.

Staff identified land owned by Iowa State University on the west side of State Avenue as an appropriate site for a relocated Station #2. To accomplish this project, the University entered into a long-term lease for the land on which to construct a new fire station. The specific location of the new fire station will be coordinated with the University to avoid unnecessary impacts to the property. This location will also improve the Fire Department's overall average response times to the total city.

On April 22, 2025, the City Council approved an agreement not to exceed \$78,800 with Brown Reynolds Watford Architects (BRW), College Station Texas to provide schematic design and design development services for the construction of a new Fire Station No. 2. The scope of work included a conceptual design with floor plans and elevations, a preliminary project cost estimate based on City metrics (including a Net-Zero Ready option), and a project timeline with key milestones. The purpose of this phase was to develop sufficient information to support consideration of a bond referendum, which was subsequently approved by voters in November 2025.

After approval of the bond referendum on November 4, 2025, staff solicited a proposal from BRW to proceed with the remaining design steps in the project. **Staff believes there is significant value in maintaining continuity with the current design team. Continuing with BRW minimizes project risk, preserves institutional knowledge gained during the early design phases, avoids duplication of work, and supports schedule efficiency as the project proceeds toward final design and construction.**

The proposal from BRW includes design development, construction documents, bidding phase, and construction administration. **BRW has submitted a fee of \$806,300 for these services. An amendment to BRW's initial AIA contract has been prepared to incorporate this additional work.**

Based on the preliminary project cost estimate of \$10,456,128, architectural and engineering fees represent approximately 8.35% of the total project budget. This percentage is consistent

with national norms for public sector and public safety facilities, where combined A/E fees typically range from approximately 7% to 10%, depending on project complexity, sustainability objectives, and specialized operational requirements. **Given the inclusion of Net-Zero Ready design elements and the functional complexity of a modern fire station, the proposed A/E fee percentage is reasonable and within industry standards.**

Moving forward with this amendment will allow for construction specifications and drawings to be completed. Proceeding with the amendment will also allow the project to move towards bidding and construction. The budget is shown in the following table:

EXPENSES		FUNDING SOURCE	
ISU Lease for Land on State Ave.	\$0		
Conceptual Design and Site Plan	\$78,800		
Amendment No. 1 for Detailed Design/ Construction Specs (This Action)	\$806,300		
Construction (including Net Zero Ready upgrades and contingency)	\$8,864,074		
Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment	\$88,554		
3rd Party Testing/Geotechnical	\$98,000		
Project Management	\$400,000		
Utilities Connections and Station Alerting System	\$153,000		
		G.O. Bond Proceeds	\$10,500,000
Totals	\$10,488,728		\$10,500,000

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve Amendment No. 1 to Brown Reynolds Watford Architects, College Station, Texas for Architectural and Engineering Services for the New Fire Station No. 2 Project in an amount not-to-exceed \$806,300.
2. Do not approve Amendment No. 1 for the New Fire Station No. 2 Project and direct staff to solicit proposals for the next phases of the New Fire Station No. 2 Project design process.
3. Refer this item back to staff for further information.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Architectural and Engineering Services are required to develop the New Fire Station No. 2 project and prepare construction documents for bid. BRW has successfully developed the preliminary design for the facility and understands the City's interest in the development of a completed project. The firm has demonstrated a strong understanding of the City's operational needs, project goals, and budget considerations. Their experience in the Midwest with public safety facilities, familiarity with the City's expectations, and collaborative approach have been instrumental for the project. While the company's headquarters is in Texas, they have partnered with an

engineering firm with offices in Des Moines for this project. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative No. 1 as described above.