

Approval of the Selection of the Design-Build Firm – PBS North Carolina

ISSUE OVERVIEW

The University of North Carolina Board of Governors has the authority to approve the final selection of design-build firms that are selected using a qualifications-based selection process for the University of North Carolina's affiliates.

The Current Operations Appropriations Act of 2023 (S.L. 2023-134) authorized \$49.5 million from the State Capital and Infrastructure Fund (SCIF) for public safety communications upgrades for PBS North Carolina. PBS NC has identified the upgrades to the emergency power systems as the highest priority with a total estimated project cost of \$39.5 million. The project scope includes replacing the existing backup generator with two new parallel generators and a flywheel uninterruptable power supply (UPS) at 14 locations to ensure the broadcast stations can maintain full operation during power outages.

The design-build project delivery method was chosen given the highly specialized and technical nature of the project. PBS NC advertised a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) on the University of North Carolina System's website, which was also posted on the North Carolina electronic Vendor Portal (eVP). The advertisement was posted on February 26, 2024, and closed on March 28, 2024. PBS NC received nine submittals in response to the RFQ. The selection committee included (1) Fred Engel, chief technology officer, (2) Casey Jennings, director of field operations, (3) Donald Smith, director of new technologies, compliance, and planning, and (4) Sarah Towles, P.E., SCIF capital projects manager at the UNC System Office. After reviewing all submittals for their qualifications, the selection committee shortlisted three firms to be interviewed.

The selection committee ranked the interviewed firms in priority order: (1) LeChase Construction Services, LLC; (2) Balfour Beatty; and (3) J.M. Thompson Company. The selection committee recommends award to LeChase Construction Services, LLC, as the selected firm based on the following:

- LeChase Construction Services, LLC's design partner, Salas O'Brien, provided the most experienced and largest electrical engineering team.
- LeChase Construction Services, LLC, demonstrated the strongest project approach including a strong understanding of early procurement strategies for equipment, site and permitting challenges, approach to minimizing of power outages, and consideration of operating and maintenance requirements after construction.
- LeChase Construction Services, LLC, presented steps to maximize opportunities for HUB participation.

PBS NC requests the Board's approval of the selection committee's recommended firm, LeChase Construction Services, LLC, for the project. Approval is required to proceed with negotiation and award of the design-build contract.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the selection of the design-build firm, LeChase Construction Services, LLC, for the Emergency Power Systems Upgrades project.