

From the Mayor...

February 1, 2019

The city often enters into contracts for the acquisition of goods and services and public works projects. Lets talk about how the city handles the selection of vendors and contracted services.

The purchase of all equipment, goods, materials, and services, is regulated by extensive state statutes (Indiana Code 5-22-1) and corresponding local ordinances.

First, the city understands that many goods and supplies are available locally and offer the advantages of such. Purchases under \$50,000 do not require a bid or quote and can be directly purchased by departments with authorization from the board of works. Purchases greater than \$50,000 require separate quotes or sealed bids. Indiana Code 5-22-15 allows for preference to be given to local (within the county and adjacent counties) vendors with certain limits.

Goods and supplies can also be purchased directly through state authorized collective purchasing programs contracts. The state bidding for road salt and police vehicles are two examples of this.

Indiana Code 5-22-6 guides the purchase of services (engineering, accounting, architectural, information system consultation, etc.). It gives the municipality authority to procure these services by procedures it considers appropriate.

I require that department staff makes the selections of service providers, often with input from the City Engineer. They are the ones to work with the consultant and understand the scope and specifications of the work. The selections are made based upon among other things, past performance of work quality, responsiveness, knowledge of issues in question, recommendations from peers, communication, availability, follow up, ability to resolve unforeseen circumstances, and value of service as a function of cost. Contracts for those services are submitted for approval publicly at regularly scheduled Board of Works meetings.

Public Works projects involve construction, remodeling, and alteration of structure that affect public property or structures (roads, buildings, bridges, utility projects etc.). Those services and materials are governed by Indiana Code 36-1-12.

Similar to public purchases, public works projects are subject to extensive quoting and sealed bid requirements depending on the type and total cost of the project.

Contractors are selected based upon the following process. Generally, a project between \$50,000 and \$150,000 requires the solicitation of quotes. Projects over \$150,000 require sealed bids. This applies to all construction services and materials costs for public works projects.

Design and engineering services for public works projects are the same as mentioned above for public purchases however some projects involving federal funds may require a specific selection process. Road projects that involve federal funds (INDOT projects) like Husky Trail, Market Street, Anchorage Road, and Lincoln School Neighborhood safe routes to school project require a Request for Qualifications process. City officials and INDOT grade the engineering consultants and make their selection based upon the highest cumulative score. The city then has the ability to negotiate fees with the top candidate and move down the list if necessary before awarding the contract.

I know that looking through the above cited state code would be less than exciting reading material but it will fill in details well beyond this discussion. It will also help you understand how complex and sometimes not specific enough the code is. While a challenge, our city staff works hard to meet the material needs of our community.