



# Agenda Item Request Form

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**ITEM:** Consideration for approval to enter into contract negotiation with a design firm for the Architectural / Engineering (A / E) services necessary to establish the new Panama City Performing Arts and Events Center (PAEC).

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was advertised in July 2021 by the City to invite competitive proposals for the role of A / E for execution of the PAEC project. The A / E will be responsible for the design and construction administration for the new PAEC facility. This RFQ's scope included A / E services for the entire PAEC project. Ten A / E proposals were received and evaluated by the City Evaluation Committee in compliance with the evaluation process and criteria defined in the RFQ. Four of the proposals, DLR Group, Smallwood, Stantec, and Wilson Butler / Fentress were assessed to be clearly more qualified and experienced than the other six proposals. These four proposals were short listed and delivered team presentations in a public meeting including the Mayor, City Commissioners, Community Arts Group, and City staff. Each presentation was live streamed, recorded, and posted to the City's website. Based on each proposal, presentation, reference checks, and background checks, and consistent with the evaluation process and criteria in the RFQ, the City Evaluation Committee evaluated and recommend the order of and differentiators in qualifications for the four finalists. The attachment provides details on the A / E proposals and presentations evaluation, and comparisons among the proposers. Given the above, I am seeking your approval to negotiate a contract with the first firm: Wilson Butler / Fentress. If negotiations are not successful, I will proceed in order with subsequent firms until a successfully negotiated contract can be achieved and returned to the City Commission for approval.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval

## Budget Impact

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Budgeted? Yes:  No:  How Much budgeted? [Click here to enter text.](#)

If more, where do you suggest funds come from?

Funds will be reimbursed through FEMA, insurance, Triumph Fund grant, private and corporate donations, and other eligible project funding delivery programs.

Cost Center Affected: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Personnel \$ [Click here to enter text.](#)

Operating \$ [Click here to enter text.](#)

Capital \$ [Click here to enter text.](#)

Revenue \$ [Click here to enter text.](#)

Requested By: Mark McQueen

Date: 1/5/2022



*Dedicated to Excellence . . .*

*People Serving People*

Project Management Office  
A Division Reporting to the City Manager

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*Approved.  
Mark McQueen  
5 Jan 2022*

## **MEMORANDUM**

### **RECOMMENDATION TO CITY MANAGER FROM EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

To: Mark McQueen, City Manager, City of Panama City  
From: Tim McGuffin, Director, Project Management Officer, City of Panama City  
Date: January 5, 2022  
Re: Evaluation Committee Recommendation for RFQ No. PC21-053 Professional Services for Design of the Panama City Performing Arts and Events Center

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## **BACKGROUND**

This memorandum serves as the Evaluation Committee's ranked recommendations of qualified Architectural / Engineering (A/E) firms for the Panama City Performing Arts and Events Center (PAEC). The PAEC will be an "Events Center" which shall include a Performing Arts and Entertainment Center as well as a Convention Center with shared amenities and will represent one of the largest single project investments in Panama City's history. The PAEC will both restore and enhance the community's once vibrant and thriving cultural arts community, as well as positively impacting Panama City's economy, tourism, and educational opportunities for many decades. As more thoroughly delineated in Sections 2.4 and 3.5 of the RFQ, a Successful Proposer should have experience in Theater/Convention Center Design as well as experience in Theater/Convention/Event Center Technology design. The Successful Proposer should also have all the necessary licensure for architects and engineers to be able to conduct business in the State of Florida. In addition, the Successful Proposer shall have as a part of their team of professionals the following: Architects, Civil Engineers, Structural Engineers, Mechanical/Electrical/Geotechnical/Plumbing (MEP) Engineers, Landscape Architects, Cost Estimators, Project Schedulers, and Construction Specialists. Finally, Section 2.3 of the RFQ requires Successful Proposers to be able to present the project in phases as well as insure compliance with a project receiving Federal funding, including but not limited to FEMA funding.

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## **EVALUATION/SELECTION PROCESS**

A Request for Qualifications (RFQ), PC21-053, was publicly posted beginning July 1, 2021 on the City of Panama City's website, Dodge Data & Analytics at Construction.com, GovDirections.com, BidNet.com and the Panama City News Herald. A pre-bid meeting was held on July 27, 2021 at City Hall with 25 potential proposers / interested parties attending in person and approximately 92 attending by Zoom video conference link. Ten proposals were submitted properly on the due date of Friday August 20, 2021.

Pursuant to the requirement in the RFQ, Section 5.1 #4, on Friday, August 20 and Monday, August 23, 2021, a preliminary review was conducted by the City's PMO office in conjunction with the City's Purchasing Staff to determine whether or not the submissions received by August 20, 2021 complied with the requirements of the RFQ including whether or not all documents required were included in the Proposal. The proposals deemed to comply with the RFQ were then vetted in more detail by the City's PMO staff and Evaluation Committee appointed by the City Manager to insure that the Proposers were qualified to render the required services according to State regulations.

The City Manager appointed the following individuals to the Evaluation Committee: Tim, McGuffin, Director of the Project Management Office (PMO) for the City of Panama City, Sean DePalma (City of Panama City Quality of Life Director), Dr. Kesia Blenn (City of Panama City Quality of Life), Randy Plank (City of Panama City PMO Project Manager), Scott Waldroff (City of Panama City PMO Architect), and Jared Jones (City of Panama City Assistant City Manager). Dawn Kirkland (City of Panama City PMO Acquisition Specialist), Brittany Melo (City of Panama City PMO Contracts Administrator), Lawrence Pickle (City of Panama City PMO Project Accounting Specialist), and Joy Marler Masters, Esq. (Burke Blue as legal council for the City of Panama City) served as non-evaluating Technical Advisors to the Evaluation Committee.

## **EVALUATION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

On September 2, 2021, the appointed Evaluation Committee met at City Hall and reviewed the ten (10) qualified proposals (Qualified Proposals) which were submitted on or before the August 20, 2021 deadline and were deemed to be compliant with the requirements of the RFQ, were provided by the City's Purchasing Staff and PMO office. The ten Qualified Proposals listed in alphabetical order included:

- ASD / SKY and REX
- Bjarke Ingels Group
- DAG
- DLR Group
- FLA
- OTJ
- Smallwood
- Stantec
- TVS
- Wilson Butler / Fentress

The Evaluation Committee narrowed the list of firms with Qualified Proposals from ten to four finalist firms. This “Short List” were deemed by the Evaluation Committee to be the most highly qualified firms with Qualified Proposals to be able to perform all required services. The Evaluation Committee made the determination to hold oral presentations and interview sessions on Friday, October 15, 2021, in person or via Zoom. All firms with Qualified Proposals chose to attend in person. The four Short List Qualified Proposals, listed in alphabetical order, were: :

- DLR Group
- Smallwood
- Stantec
- Wilson Butler / Fentress

Oral presentations and interview sessions with all four Short List firms with Qualified Proposals was held on Friday, October 15, 2021, in the City Commission Room. This open forum included the Mayor, City Commissioners, City Manager, Community Arts Group, City staff, Project Management Office staff, City legal counsel and was open to the public. The A/E team presentations were live streamed and recordings were posted on the City’s website.

After the live oral presentations and interview sessions, the Evaluation Committee members took several weeks to individually re-review the Qualified Proposals, review the information presented at the October 15, 2021 live oral presentations and interviews, check all references and background information on the Short List firms with Qualified Proposals, and take note of the five evaluation criteria laid out in the RFQ. On Wednesday, December 1, 2021 the Evaluation Committee met to reevaluate the Proposals and discuss the information provided by the firms with Qualified Proposals at the oral presentations and interview sessions. All four Short List firms with Qualified Proposals demonstrated the overall experience and capability to complete the Panama City PAEC project. Each firm presented different strengths and weaknesses and each of the four Short List firms demonstrated varying degrees of competency for projects specifically similar to the Panama City PAEC project.

After much discussion, the Evaluation Committee unanimously agreed that Wilson Butler/Fentress surpassed the other three Short List firms with Qualified Proposals. The Committee unanimously ranked the remaining three Short List firms with Qualified Proposals based on the criteria found in Section 5.2 of the RFQ. The Criteria is as follows:

- The Proposer's Qualifications and Experience;
- The Proposer's Lead Architect/Engineer's Qualifications and Experience;
- The Proposer's Teams' Qualification and Experience;
- The Design Philosophy and Process of the Proposer; and
- The Proposer's Technical Capabilities and Approach/Capacity.

The rankings are as follows:

First Selection: Wilson Butler/Fentress

Second Selection: Smallwood

Third Selection: Stantec

Fourth Selection: DLR Group

The Evaluation Committee's evaluation, reasons for the ranking and recommendations based on the above criteria, along with what the Evaluation Committee believed were the important differentiators among the Short List firms with Qualified Proposals are presented below.

#### **Top Ranked Proposer – Wilson Butler / Fentress (WBF)**

- **Qualifications and Experience:** WBF's Qualified Proposal and subsequent oral presentation and interview, demonstrated to the Evaluation Committee that this firm's qualifications and experience in all five of the evaluation criteria required under Section 5.2 of the RFQ, specifically on projects similar to the Panama City PAEC far exceeded the qualifications and experience of the other three Short List firms with Qualified Proposals for the same types of projects. Therefore, the Evaluation Committee ranked WBF the highest in the category of Qualifications and Experience.
- **Lead Architect/Engineer Qualifications and Experience:** WBF demonstrated overall superior excellence in the number of years' experience as well as in the qualifications and experience of the Lead Architect/Engineer for projects similar to the Panama City PAEC. All four Short List firms with Qualified Proposals demonstrated that their Lead Architect/Engineer and Team members had extensive years of experience in planning, designing, and providing construction administration services to build successful Performing Arts and Event Centers. However, WBF stood out to the Evaluation Committee as demonstrating that their Lead Architect/Engineer who would be working on this project had vast experience specifically in designing Performing Arts and Event Centers that combine the components of Performing Arts, Events, and Convention Center aspects into one venue on a similar scale to that requested under the RFQ for the City of

Panama City. This factor distinguished WBF to the Evaluation Committee and resulted in the Evaluation Committee ranking WBF higher than the other Short List firms.

- **Team Qualifications and Experience:** WBF demonstrated overall superior excellence in the number of years' experience as well as in the qualifications and experience of the firm's team members who will be dedicated to this Project per their Qualified Proposal. WBF also demonstrated in their Qualified Proposal, Oral Presentation/Interview, that like the Lead Engineer/Architect, the Team of individuals who would work on the Panama City PAEC had extensive experience in projects of similar scale and design as that outlined in the RFQ for the Panama City PAEC. The WBF experience as a team, as well as their ongoing relationship with the sub-designers proposed for the PAEC project exhibited to the Evaluation committee that WBF is positioned for success as there will be a minimum amount of time spent on familiarizing the team with their role and responsibility in the project. As evidenced in their presentation, the WBF corporate team and all their consultants demonstrated a positive, comfortable familiarity as if they'd been working together on this project proposal for some time. Their synergy as a team was evident and relaxed. This familiarity is indicative of a grounded and focused group of proven professionals and will result in overall economy and efficiency in services. Therefore, WBF was ranked higher than the other three Short List firms for this category by the Evaluation Committee.
- **Design Philosophy and Process:** From the Qualified Proposal and Oral Presentation/Interview, the Evaluation Committee determined that WBF's focus as a company is primarily based on the pursuit of the design and delivery of complex cultural, performing arts and event facilities that incorporate a convention center component. The specific design philosophy and process demonstrated by WBF to focus on complex designs of facilities similar to what the City of Panama City desires for the PAEC, along with their approach and capacity which is demonstrated by their size, and specific focus on projects similar to the PAEC, caused the Evaluation Committee to rank WBF higher in Design Philosophy and Process than the other Short List firms with Qualified Proposals.
- **Technical Capabilities and Approach/Capacity:** Based on the Qualified Proposal, oral presentation and interview of WBF, the Evaluation Committee determined that WBF would insure that the project will be afforded an unusually high commitment of personal care, exceptional design philosophy and process, exemplary technical capabilities, an exceptional and distinguished approach and desired capacity, along with desirable and invaluable dedicated attention by WBF's Lead Architect/Engineer. This commitment is extraordinarily important in helping to expedite and control the decision-making process as major decisions will need to be made quickly and with a consolidated overview of all

the effects a decision may cause. The overall track record of this comprehensive team on Technical Capabilities as well as Approach/Capacity is significant and consistent with the results needed for the Panama City PAEC project. For the above reasons, the Evaluation Committee ranked WBF higher than the other Short List firms on the criteria of Technical Capabilities and Approach/Capacity.

- Based on the WBF Qualified Proposal, Oral Presentation/Interview, the Evaluation Committee concludes that pursuant to the five factors delineated in the RFQ, Section 5.2 as the applicable Evaluation Criteria, the WBF consolidated team can complete the project with the highest degree of success and will be best suited to meet and exceed all criteria under the RFQ for the PAEC Project.

### **Ranking Position Two: Smallwood**

- **Qualifications and Experience:** The Smallwood team combines the talent of three primary design teams. The combined effort of each team toward the design and delivery of projects like the Panama City PAEC was well demonstrated by the materials they provided. Their proposal and team presentation give confidence and comfort that the representatives selected by each team are their “A team” members who have demonstrated their professionalism and personal commitment to past projects. The Evaluation Committee ranked Smallwood slightly lower than WBF because the overall Qualifications and Experience of Smallwood in projects similar to the Panama City PAEC was only very slightly less remarkable than that demonstrated by WBF.
- **Lead Architect/Engineer Qualifications and Experience:** As with the WBF team, the Smallwood team’s size allows for the lead principals for each firm to provide their focused attention to our project. However, unlike the WBF team, this group may experience some learning curve at the start of the project as the roles and responsibilities are determined. Additionally, the Smallwood team did not demonstrate the same level of experience of the Lead Architect/Engineer in projects which were similar to the Panama City PAEC project, and therefore the Evaluation Committee ranked them slightly lower than WBF in this category.
- **Team Qualifications and Experience:** The Smallwood team’s combined overall successful experience on projects comparable to the Panama City PAEC is both impressive and formidable. However, the Evaluation Committee ranked Smallwood lower than WBF in this category because the Smallwood Qualified Proposal and Oral Presentation/Interview did not demonstrate that the Smallwood team members exhibited the same level of familiarity with each other and synergy as a group as did the WBF team.



- **Design Philosophy and Process:** The Smallwood team included their own architect plus two consultant architects, one a theater specialist and another an events/convention center specialist, all to be working together on the development of the PAEC design. Compared to the WBF team and design philosophy and process, the Evaluation Committee considered the Smallwood proposal to have a more complicated structure and did not demonstrate to the Evaluation Committee that there would be a timely coordination of three architects' work to keep the timing of the project on track.
- **Technical Capabilities and Approach/Capacity:** Based on the Smallwood Qualified Proposal and Oral Presentation/Interview, the Evaluation Committee believes that the Smallwood consolidated team would be competent to complete the Panama City PAEC project with a high degree of success. The Evaluation Committee ranked Smallwood lower than WBF in this category because the Proposal and Oral Presentation/Interview presented by WBF demonstrated a higher level of competence, technical capabilities and a more cohesive approach/capacity than Smallwood.

#### **Ranking Position Three: Stantec**

- **Qualifications and Experience:** The Stantec team's overall Qualifications and Experience were exemplary and in line with all four Short List firms with Qualified Proposals. One unique aspect of the overall qualifications and experience of Stantec noted by the Evaluation Committee was their experience internally of assisting clients with pursuing funding sources to help identify possible funding sources for projects of this type.
- **Lead Architect/Engineer Qualifications and Experience:** The Stantec Proposal and subsequent Oral Presentation/Interview demonstrated that the Lead Architect/Engineer identified who would be responsible for this project had excellent qualifications and experience in the overall field of Performing Arts and Events Centers internationally. However, the Evaluation Committee noted that the types of projects shown to highlight the experience were on a much larger scale than the Panama City PAEC project and were located in large metropolitan areas compared to the size of the Panama City area. The lack of documentation showing the Lead Architect/Engineer's experience in projects similar to the Panama City PAEC project is the reason Stantec was ranked lower by the Evaluation Committee in this category.
- **Team Qualifications and Experience:** After reviewing the Proposal and Oral Presentation/Interview, it was evident to the Evaluation Committee that the Stantec team members presented to be the team which would work on the Panama City PAEC had not worked as a consolidated team on projects similar to the Panama City PAEC.

However, the combined team's polished presentation adequately demonstrated they have an existing relationship with their internal team members and could work as an efficient and cohesive group. The Evaluation Committee ranked Stantec lower than WBF and Smallwood in this category because of the lack of evidence supporting that the team which would be dedicated to this project had experience working together as a cohesive team in the past.

- **Design Philosophy and Process:** Most of the projects Stantec provided as examples of their past work portfolio are well beyond the scope, budget, and schedule of the Panama City PAEC project. Stantec has also performed many smaller projects of our scale and complexity, but did not choose to highlight these smaller projects which would be more similar to the Panama City PAEC. For this reason, the Evaluation Committee ranked Stantec lower than WBF and Smallwood for Design Philosophy and Process.
- **Technical Capabilities and Approach/Capacity:** Although Stantec is one of the largest firms presenting a Qualified Proposal, they have included many excellent external specialized consultants in lieu of depending wholly on internal resources that are diffused throughout their organization. Based on the Stantec proposal and Oral Presentation/Interviews, the Evaluation Committee believes that while the Stantec consolidated team could complete the project successfully, there would be more risk of budget and schedule overruns and a greater need for close supervision by the City therefore the Evaluation Committee ranked Stantec lower than WBF and Smallwood in the category of Technical Capabilities and Approach/Capacity.

#### **Ranking Position Four: DLR Group (DLR)**

- **Qualifications and Experience:** The DLR team's overall Qualifications and Experience were strong and warranted inclusion on the Short List. However, from their projects resume, the Evaluation Committee noted that DLR is a very large company that pursues and performs scores of projects at any given time, including very large billion dollar plus projects of many different scope types. The Evaluation Committee ranked DLR in the fourth ranking position for this criterion due to the fact that the majority of DLR's qualifications and experience provided focused on projects which were not of the same scale of that which was described in the scope of work for the City of Panama City.
- **Lead Architect/Engineer Qualifications and Experience:** While DLR's Lead Architect/Engineer's resume demonstrated that he did have the qualifications and experience necessary for the PC PAEC project, the resume along with the interview was

not as compelling to the Evaluation Committee as the resume's and interview answers when compared with the other three Short List Lead Architect/Engineers.

- **Team Qualifications and Experience:** DLR's team qualifications and experience (especially their specialist consultants), were very similar to the other three Short List firms and were stronger than six non-Short List firms. The Evaluation Committee ranked them in the fourth position because DLR's Qualified Proposal along with the Oral Interview/Presentation, did not demonstrate the same level of much proven successful experience and familiarity working together as did the other three Short Listed firms.
- **Design Philosophy and Process:** The projects DLR showcased as examples of their past work portfolio are far beyond the scope, budget, and schedule of the Panama City PAEC project. DLR's overall resume included some smaller projects, but they clearly concentrate on winning and executing very large projects, and can be expected to deploy their talents, energy, and priorities to that end. Because of the risk of not having DLR's strongest and most experienced designers on the PAEC project team, the Evaluation Committee ranked DLR lower than all the other Short List firms for Design Philosophy and Process.
- **Technical Capabilities and Approach/Capacity:** DLR is clearly a very large and capable firm with the necessary technical capabilities to complete the PC PAEC project. However, the Qualified Proposal along with the Oral Interview/Presentation by DLR did not demonstrate that their approach and capacity were as in line with the specific PC PAEC project as the other three Short Listed firms, and therefore the Evaluation Committee ranked them in the fourth position.

## NEGOTIATIONS – SCOPE OF SERVICES

By way of this memorandum, the Evaluation Committee is seeking the City Manager's approval of the Short Listed firms with Qualified Proposals listed above and authorization to begin contract negotiations. Negotiations will start with the top ranked proposer for the entire scope of services outlined in Section 2.3 of the RFQ and will require the proposer to submit all bid documentation in compliance with all rules and regulations governing bid documentation from any and all potential funding sources. If a successful agreement cannot be negotiated with the Proposer in Ranking Position One, negotiations will begin with the Proposer in Ranking Position Two and continue in ranking order until either a successful agreement is negotiated or all Short List firms with Qualified Proposals are rejected. In the unlikely event that all Short List firms with Qualified Proposals are exhausted without successful negotiation, the Evaluation Committee will meet to

discuss firms with Qualified Proposals who were not on the Short List and provide a recommendation for reevaluation of the RFQ.

Upon successful negotiation with a Short List firm with a Qualified Proposal, a copy of the recommended Agreement(s) will be provided for you as City Manager to approve. Upon your acceptance of the negotiated Agreement(s), the recommended Agreement(s) will be prepared for City Commission approval and award.

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.320(d)(5), the contract award is subject to negotiation of fair and reasonable compensation. To remain in compliance, the City will negotiate for all services as outlined in Section 2.3 of the RFQ which includes two identifiable phases of work as part of the scope of services. The Scope of Services for this Project include (but are not limited to) the following: Project Management Support (Phase 1), Market Study Proforma (Phase 1), Concept Design (Phase 1), Site Selection (Phase 1), and A/E Detailed Design (Phase 2).

**PHASE 1 SCOPE OF SERVICES:**

- **PROJECT MANAGEMENT SUPPORT** – Assist the City’s Project Management Office (“PMO”) in the overall definition and management of the project from an events venue planning subject matter expert perspective. Organize and support the PMO in the overall scoping, planning, and options evaluation effort, leading the team in phased steps to complete design and construction administration for the new complex. Engage with the PMO, City Commission, and the community to develop and articulate the project design through public presentations. Perform specialized cost estimating from conceptual stages throughout the design process to develop a thorough and comprehensive estimate for the hard construction costs, soft design and administration costs, reasonable contingencies, project risks definition and mitigation plans, furniture, fixtures and equipment, and miscellaneous owner’s costs. Provide overall project planning and scheduling from concept design through construction.
- **MARKET STUDY PROFORMA** - Provide industry planning, research, and analysis to uncover aspirational assessments, perform market studies, create proforma development for capital needs, define ongoing operational expenses, and target audience / talent viability.
- **CONCEPT DESIGN** – Based on the Market Study Proforma, provide theater and convention center programing and concept design through a Subject Matter Expert to address the complexities of each venue.
- **SITE SELECTION** – Based on the Concept Design (or in conjunction with), assist the City in targeting and acquiring the most appropriate site for the Events Center.

**PHASE 2 SCOPE OF SERVICES:**

- A/E DETAILED DESIGN – Based on the City’s approval of Phase 1 results and deliverables, the A/E firm/group shall perform comprehensive detailed design and documentation of the new Event Center Complex, from site planning and permitting, building design and documentation, through construction administration, to support for facility inspection, testing, and commissioning and turnover to owner for operation. (As more fully described in Section 2.3.5 of the RFQ.)

If you have any questions or would like more information from the Evaluation Committee, please let me know.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim McGuffin', written over a horizontal line.

Tim McGuffin, Director, Project Management Officer, City of Panama City