



City of Racine, Wisconsin
Agenda BRIEFING MEMORADUM

AGENDA DATE:

March 17, 2026 – Referred to Finance and Personnel Committee
June 08, 2026 – Finance and Personnel Committee
June 16, 2026 – Common Council

SUBJECT:

0199-26: Communication sponsored by Mayor Mason, submitting results of Official Notice #3-2026, Design Services for Construction of Fire Station 1 Headquarters.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to negotiate and enter into a Design Services for Construction contract with Wendel Companies for the Fire Station 1 Headquarters.

SELECTION AND PROCESS:

In March of 2026, the purchasing manager submitted Official Notice #3-2026 requesting proposals for qualified architectural firms to provide design services for construction of Fire Station #1 Headquarters. The City received proposals from 7 companies and after review of the proposals by the internal panel, 5 companies were selected for onsite presentations and interview.

This item seeks authorization to proceed with the selection of an architectural design firm to provide professional design services for the development of the City of Racine Fire Station 1 Headquarters project. A series of interviews were conducted with shortlisted firms to assess experience, approach, and alignment with the City's project goals.

A panel consisting of Mayor Mason, Fire Chief Hansen, Assistant Fire Chief Wolf, Building Complex Facility Manager Miller, and Finance Director Fischer participated in interviews with the following firms:

- Continuum Architects
- SEH Inc
- Wendel Companies
- Bray Architects
- OPN Architects

Continuum Architects is a regional architecture firm with experience in civic, educational, and public sector facilities. Their work emphasizes functional building design that supports long-term operational use and community-serving infrastructure, with a collaborative approach to early programming and municipal planning.

SEH Inc is a multidisciplinary engineering and architectural firm providing services in infrastructure, planning, and public works development. They support municipalities through integrated engineering and design services, with a focus on coordinated delivery of complex capital improvement projects.

Wendel Companies is a full-service architecture, engineering, and construction services firm with extensive experience in public safety and municipal facilities. Their portfolio includes fire stations and civic projects across Wisconsin and the Midwest, with experience in mixed-use fire station development, brownfield-influenced projects, and collaboration with government entities on multi-phase delivery, commissioning, and long-range capital planning.

Bray Architects is a Wisconsin-based firm with a strong focus on municipal, civic, and public safety design. Their experience includes fire stations, public works facilities, and government buildings, with an emphasis on practical, cost-conscious design solutions tailored to operational requirements.

OPN Architects is a Midwest-based architecture firm with a broad portfolio spanning civic, healthcare, educational, and public safety projects. Their approach emphasizes stakeholder collaboration, sustainability, and user-centered design to align building performance with operational needs.

The interview discussions focused on each firm's experience with fire station and municipal facilities, design philosophy, understanding of operational needs, sustainability approach, and ability to support a complex public safety project with mixed-use components. Additional discussion included experience with commissioning buildings, project delivery timelines, partnership coordination, and working within multi-layered government approval and regulatory frameworks.

From the BID:

The selected firm will be responsible for delivering full architectural and engineering design services for an approximately 37,000-square-foot Fire Station Headquarters facility. The scope includes the following key priorities:

- Development of construction-ready architectural and engineering plans for a modern Fire Station Headquarters facility
- Evaluation and incorporation of a mixed-use residential component, including multi-family apartments up to four stories above the fire station
- Compliance with all applicable building, life-safety, and accessibility codes
- Optimization of space planning, functional adjacencies, and operational workflow efficiency
- Support for modern fire service operations, including EMS response, training functions, administration, and apparatus maintenance
- Planning for long-term growth, operational flexibility, and gender-inclusive facilities
- Integration of net-zero energy principles and green infrastructure strategies
- Preparation of complete documentation to support City approvals, permitting, commissioning, and construction delivery

Recommended Direction:

Based on review of the proposals, and the extensive interview process, the City has identified Wendel Companies as the preferred firm to advance for this project.

Wendel Companies brings extensive experience in municipal and public safety facility design, with a strong portfolio of fire station projects across Wisconsin and the Midwest. Their work reflects a deep understanding of fire/EMS operational requirements, including apparatus circulation, response efficiency, and integrated training and administrative functions.

The firm has demonstrated experience working on complex civic and mixed-use developments, including a current project in Green Bay, Wisconsin involving a fire station integrated with residential

development in a horizontal mixed-use configuration. This project reflects coordinated planning between emergency services and residential components and demonstrates their ability to manage multi-component civic developments.

Wendel also brings experience with brownfield-influenced redevelopment considerations and coordination across multiple stakeholders, including municipalities, regulatory agencies, and project partners. Their background includes structured delivery of capital projects through design, construction, and commissioning phases, with attention to long-term operational performance and building transition.

Their design approach emphasizes functional adjacencies, workflow efficiency, and adaptability to evolving fire service needs, including EMS delivery, training requirements, gender-inclusive facilities, and future expansion capability. In addition, their sustainability strategies align with the City's goals, including net-zero energy design principles and integration of green infrastructure systems.

FISCAL NOTE:

Pre-Design Services (Phase 1) will be \$32,500. Phase 2-4 Services including schematic design, design development, construction document preparation, bidding, and construction administration will be charged as a percentage of the cost of work as defined during Phase 1. Costs of Phase 2-4 is estimated to be \$2,500,000. Funds are available for this project in the City's capital plan for 2026 and 2027. Total project costs for both design and construction of the building is estimated to be around \$30M.

Org/Object/Project: 40103 52100 30020-Other Capital Projects Professional Services Fire Station #1