

## TOWN COUNCIL

### STAFF REPORT

#### Projects and Watershed Resilience Department



<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	May 13, 2025
<b>PROJECT:</b>	Approval to Authorize a Contract with Nix Construction Company, Inc. for the Reconstruction of the Sarah Riley Hooks Cottage (Fiscal Impact: \$943,448.00)
<b>PROJECT MANAGER:</b>	Chris Forster, Assistant Town Manager

**REQUEST #1:** Staff requests Town Council authorize the Town Manager to execute a contract (Attachment 2) with Nix Construction Company, Inc. (Nix) for \$857,680.00 for dismantling and reconstruction of the Sarah Riley Hooks Cottage, using as much salvaged historic materials as possible. Additionally, Staff requests a 10% contingency allowance of \$85,768.00 to cover any unforeseen changes that may arise during construction.

The total fiscal impact for the cottage construction is \$943,448.00 and is within the approved budget established for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 and illustrated on the attached Project Data Sheet (Attachment 3).

**BACKGROUND:** The .896-acre Sarah Riley Hooks property was purchased by the Town of Bluffton in January of 2021. The property is located at 76 Bridge Street on the banks of Huger Cove and included a small residential structure originally built in 1940 by a prominent African American resident and local businessman, M.C. Riley, and was last inhabited by Sarah Riley Hooks until 2002.

A Viability of Preservation Assessment for the Sarah Riley Hooks Cottage was prepared by the Charleston Historic Preservation firm of Meadors, Inc. and presented to Town Council in January 2023. The Assessment determined the building had extensive structural and termite damage, complete building restoration was unlikely and would require nearly complete reconstruction with new materials. Therefore, the attached contract is for the dismantling and new construction of the Sarah Riley Hooks Cottage, using as much salvaged historic material as possible.

Based on directions provided at Town Council workshops and community input received via surveys, the building is planned as an art studio, gallery, restrooms and flexible classroom space to offer a venue for educational opportunities within the Historic District. The site development plan (Attachment 4) provides park/green space for small gatherings, pedestrian trail along the bluff, an observation deck with an arbor overlooking Huger Cove, and interpretive signage to tell the story of the site and historical significance of the M.C. Riley family. Pedestrian connectivity will be provided via a new boardwalk across the cove and sidewalks proposed with the Bridge Street Streetscape project to be constructed in FY 2026.

The bidding process was performed in accordance with the Town's Purchasing Ordinance including required public notice, a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) posted on the Town's Vendor Registry, bid opening and a bid evaluation process by a selected review team.

The bid opening was held on 3/26/2025 with three bidders providing complete and responsive bids including:

- DH Abney Company Inc – Bluffton, SC
- Salacia Construction – Ridgeland, SC
- Nix Construction Company, Inc – Hilton Head Island, SC

Bids were reviewed for accuracy, completeness, experience, qualifications and value, with Nix Construction Company, Inc. determined to be the most qualified responsible bidder. The Review Team evaluation results are listed in the attached Bid Summary (Attachment 5).

**NEXT STEPS:** Upon approval of this contract, Staff will initiate a pre-construction meeting and plan to commence construction in June 2025, with an approximate 300-day construction period.

**SUMMARY:** This project originated from the Town of Bluffton's 2021-2022 Strategic Plan. It is supportive of the following Strategic Plan Guiding Principles:

- *Community Quality of Life Guiding Principle #4.* Support initiatives and evaluate community policies, programs, gathering places, and events that promote the quality of life for our diverse citizenry.
- *Infrastructure Guiding Principle #3.* Establish long-term planning, prioritization and investment strategies for future infrastructure and facilities that improve the quality of life for citizens while being financially sustainable.

Staff is requesting Town Council authorize the Town Manager to execute the proposed contract with Nix Construction Company, Inc.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Presentation
2. Draft Contract
3. Project Data Sheet
4. Conceptual Site Plan
5. Bid Evaluation
6. Proposed Motion