

CITY OF DILLINGHAM
Downtown Fire Hall Replacement Project - A/E Award
Cover Memo - City Council | August 6, 2026

TO: Mayor Alice Ruby and Members of the City Council
FROM: Chris Maines, PhD, Planning Department Director
DATE: July 31, 2026
RE: Resolution No. 2026-28 - Authorization to Execute Professional Services Agreement with Aetta Architects for Downtown Fire Hall Replacement Project (Phases 2 and 3)

Purpose of This Memo

This memo transmits Resolution No. 2026-28 for City Council consideration and action. The resolution authorizes the City Manager to negotiate and execute a Professional Services Agreement with Aetta Architects, Palmer, Alaska, for architectural and engineering services for Phases 2 and 3 of the Downtown Fire Hall Replacement Project.

The Council is asked to adopt the resolution by majority vote, authorizing the City Manager to finalize the contract and issue a Notice to Proceed upon satisfaction of all conditions precedent.

Project Background

The Downtown Fire Hall Replacement Project will replace the existing fire station - which has reached the end of its serviceable life - with a modern facility sized for current and future operational needs of Dillingham Fire & Rescue. The project was authorized by City Council Resolution No. 2026-01, which accepted a State of Alaska Designated Legislative Grant (Grant No. 25-DC-078) in the amount of \$600,000 to advance design activities, with a grant lapse date of June 30, 2029.

Phase 1 Predesign is complete. That work established the building program, site concepts, and preliminary cost estimates. Phases 2 and 3 - funded by the grant - will advance the project through geotechnical investigation, site survey, civil engineering, and schematic and design development (approximately 30%-65% complete), producing design documents sufficient to support future construction funding applications.

Procurement Process

The City conducted a competitive, qualifications-based solicitation for professional A/E services consistent with Dillingham Municipal Code (DMC) §4.30.090(B) and (C), which authorizes the City Manager to solicit Statements of Qualifications (SOQs), evaluate responsible firms, and negotiate a professional services agreement with the highest-ranked firm. The RFQ was publicly advertised and administered in accordance with the competitive solicitation requirements of DMC §4.30.100.

Phase	Date	Action
Advertised	February 20, 2026	RFQ publicly issued; published per DMC §4.30.100
Questions Due	March 8, 2026	Addendum No. 1 issued responding to all questions received
SOQs Due	April 29, 2026	Six (6) firms submitted Statements of Qualifications
Evaluation	May 1-13, 2026	Submissions scored against published selection criteria
Notice of Intent	May 14, 2026	Aetta Architects identified as highest-ranked firm; protest window opened
Protest Period	May 14-21, 2026	No protests received
Pending	TBD	Council award -> contract negotiation -> Notice to Proceed

Six firms submitted SOQs: ECI, Aetta Architects, Bettisworth North, Architects Alaska, Alder Architects & Designers, and LCG Inc. Following evaluation against the published criteria - demonstrated fire station experience, rural Alaska and regional familiarity, references, and ability to meet RFQ requirements - Aetta Architects was determined to be the highest-ranked firm. A Notice of Intent to Award was issued on May 14, 2026. No protests were received within the five-day protest window.

Note on Procurement Method

Some council members may note that the City's procurement code references 'competitive sealed proposals' for professional services exceeding \$51,000, while this solicitation was titled a Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The distinction is one of label, not of substance or legal authority.

DMC §4.30.090(C) explicitly authorizes the City Manager to solicit Statements of Qualifications as a first step in identifying responsible firms, which is precisely what was done here. The resulting competitive field - six firms, publicly solicited, evaluated against written criteria, with a formal protest window - satisfies the competitive intent of the code. DMC §4.30.120 further authorizes negotiation of professional services fees with the selected firm following a qualifications-based competitive process, which is the standard approach for A/E procurement at every level of government. The resolution before you makes these code anchors explicit in its findings.

Requested Action

The Planning Department, on behalf of the City Manager, requests that the City Council:

- Adopt Resolution No. 2026-28, authorizing the City Manager to negotiate and execute a Professional Services Agreement with Aetta Architects for Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the Downtown Fire Hall Replacement Project;
- Confirm that the negotiated fee shall remain within available grant funds (\$600,000, Grant No. 25-DC-078) without further Council authorization; and
- Direct the City Manager to return to Council with a contract amendment request prior to any commitment of Phase 4 or Phase 5 services, consistent with the reservation of rights stated in Section 4 of the resolution.

Next Steps

Following adoption, the City Manager will negotiate a detailed scope, schedule, and fee with Aetta Architects within the grant funding ceiling. Aetta Architects must provide current business licenses, certificate of insurance, worker's compensation coverage, and proof of commercial

insurance prior to issuance of the Notice to Proceed. Work may not commence until the contract is fully executed and Notice to Proceed is issued, per AS 36.30.365.

The grant lapse date of June 30, 2029 provides adequate runway for Phase 2 and 3 completion, provided contract execution is finalized by late summer 2026.

Questions prior to the meeting may be directed to the Planning Department or City Manager's Office.