



CITY OF NOVI
Finance and Administration Committee Meeting
September 15, 2025, 5:00 p.m.
Mayor's Conference Room | Novi Civic Center | 45175 Ten Mile Road
(248) 347-0445

CALL TO ORDER: 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Mayor Fischer, Mayor Pro Tem Casey, Councilmember Staudt

STAFF LIAISON: Victor Cardenas, City Manager
Katherine Oppermann, Recording Secretary
Greg VanKirk, Plante Moran Realpoint
Todd Fenton, Plante Moran Realpoint
Robert Stempien, Plante Moran Realpoint

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Casey; Seconded: Staudt; Approved: 3:0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 7, 2025

Motion: Casey; Seconded: Staudt; Approved: 3:0

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

1. Interviews with Architectural/Engineering Firms for Public Safety Building Project

Mayor Fischer and City Manager Cardenas invited the owner's representative for the Public Safety Building Project, Plante Moran Realpoint, to start off the meeting.

Mr. Stempien stated that this is the second round of interviews for an Architectural/Engineering Firm for the project. They had previously vetted out four firms for the City and then narrowed to the two before them this evening. Both firms will give a presentation on their firms, and what makes them different from the other competitors, their expertise, and the professionals that would be engaged in the project.

Mayor Fischer thanked everyone for being present. He shared that City Council, including the Committee members here, are the oversight body not architects/engineers. He intends that, following the presentation, they will have a discussion with staff and Plante Moran Realpoint for feedback on their recommendations, as the topic experts. As such he just wants to get to know the two firm teams on an in-person basis, not to have an overly in-depth or "hard core" question session.

a. HED

Principal/Client Manager Chris Vogelheim, Lead Project Designer Chris Sano, Principal Civil Engineer Tim Juidici (of OHM), and National Community Strategist Kelli Herman

The representatives from HED thanked everyone present for the opportunity to present and welcomed them to interrupt at any point during their presentation, they then went through introductions of all the team members present (and noted those which were unavailable due to vacations). They then proceeded to go through their presentation. They emphasized their strengths such as a fully integrated team with national expertise and public safety specialists, that they have a local presence, deep collaboration, no "silos", proven processes, consistency, and great value for their work. They spoke on their work methodology including past projects such as in Richardson, TX where their current Police Operations Specialist was an Assistant Police Chief (now retired) during their construction of a new Public Safety campus. They congratulated the City of Novi on the recent passing of the Public Safety bond (noting that one of the inspiration photos we used was based on one of their past designs) and went into additional detail on their design thinking for Novi, their design performance evaluations and public safety best practices checklist, future-proofing strategies, cost management and benchmarking, cost/risk factors, project delivery including 3D VIN models, and their strong and seamless communication and coordination skills.

Following the presentation Mayor Fischer opened the question session to the Committee members. Councilmember Staudt stated that there are two words he hates "contingency" and "Change-orders", he wants to know how HED plan to avoid using contingency to expand the project and how they will make sure to spend our taxpayer dollars in a responsible way. As fiduciary for taxpayer dollars he would rather see none of the contingency spent, unless they make conscientious decision to do so. Mr. Vogelheim said that they are aware of those areas that "scope creep" tends to happen and work very hard at the early stages to avoid those pitfalls by defining site conditions and ensuring that all stakeholder voices are heard and involved in the design process so those asks don't creep in later. E said that the quality of design documents and understanding of contingencies along with constant review and contact so there is transparency and ownership of any issues along the way. He believes contingencies are necessary but thinks they can be managed with the goal of bringing some money back to the client in the end. Councilmember Staudt noted that Plante Moran was hired, in part, to keep an eye on and control contingency usage. Mr. VanKirk agreed and said that, in his experience, there are three areas of change order management: unforeseen conditions, error in design or interpretation of design, and scope creep. Mr. VanKirk asked HED how they manage scope creep, he often sees architects trying to please a client even when they are trying to squeeze in too much, resulting in an unrealistic design. Mr. Vogelheim agreed that such a thing can happen, architects being "people pleasers", but that open and honest communication is key. It is important to establish both goals and priorities within the budget and to be consistent in message with stakeholders.

They work to create vision and mission statements that will inform the whole process, if there are elements that don't align, he is comfortable taking the role of saying "no" to things that will not work with budget (or any other guiding principal for the project).

Mr. VanKirk then asked, knowing that the building needs to be future-ready, being the planned building for the next 50 years in Novi, how much stock they put into robust infrastructure versus finished product or finish project with fixes needed 25 years later. Mr. Vogelheim said that there are a few things: 1. Creating blocked diagrams/square footage considerations that allow for expandability/modularity, service loops and options to add other feeds, and commonality system setup so that there are available pathways for possible later system implementation. Councilmember Staudt then asked how they envision the timing of the two fire stations and the large Public Safety campus (combined Police/Fire building). Mr. Vogelheim said it is common for them to work parallel on multiple projects at the same time for the same client. He also noted that they will have a lot of conversations regarding the fire stations given the different sites, whether there will be a lot of commonalities between them or if they will be more custom for each site design and aesthetics-wise. At Mr. VanKirk mentioning a Book of Standards being established for the project, Mr. Vogelheim said they should look at value that can be gained from similar user-experience and construction types, and modularity to control costs.

Councilmember Staudt emphasized that he will want to see the vision of a FULL campus, including the open space to the north of the proposed building space. Mr. Sano said that he loves hearing that, they certainly want to maximize the land to the north, that they don't yet know what that looks like but had assumed it would be part of a master plan for the complex. They will continue to ask questions going forward to understand the direction and desires for the rest of the property.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey asked, regarding stakeholders, who they think their client is? Mr. Vogelheim said that ultimately it would be an established, decision-making steering committee alongside the overall stakeholders. With big picture vision they will need communication and to structure the stakeholder engagements around mission, vision, and goals. Mayor Pro Tem Casey agreed and noted that they will also need to have clear direction, thanking everyone for their input and explaining what choices they go with, making sure to mitigate design creep when needed. Ms. Herman noted that they work to "change communication, not management" when needed. Engagement opportunities were also briefly discussed, including staff – especially Public Safety personnel as well as residents in subdivisions that will be about the new fire stations.

Mayor Fischer said that, to him, the biggest potential error or failure would be not fulfilling the project based on the bond proposal and asked how we would avoid such a failure? Mr. Vogelheim said that the biggest thing is benchmark estimates, looking at an understanding the functional asks versus

aspirational goals. They plan ahead, work closely with the construction manager and having them at every design meeting, using independent specialized cost estimator, spend a lot of time in early planning on riser diagrams for electrical systems, narratives for mechanical systems which allows them to accurately price things, building in additional control and efficiency. Working beyond just square footage cost. Mr. VanKirk said that escalation and speed is key, the faster we design the better, though that is necessarily balanced with stakeholder engagement. Mr. Sano said that because they have built a lot of such facilities recently, they can make a lot of educated assumptions and responsibility matrices to help aid in a quick build. Councilmember Staudt reminded that the project is not intended to have carry-over from the old Police Department, and that full furnishing of the building must be considered and budgeted. Mr. Sano and Mr. Vogelheim both affirmed that that was already the assumption from the Request for Proposal (RFP) and that they prefer it that way. They don't like procurement of furniture to happen after the design, because it often ends up poorly fitted, in the wrong space, power and data in the wrong spaces, and lacks proper flexibility and mobility they want. All new furnishing allows them to think for a future beyond today.

Ms. Herman also noted that their firm actually design the Civic Center building back in 1987 and they would love the opportunity to come back to work on this new project for Novi.

HED and the Committee exchanged thank yous, Mayor Fischer requested a copy of the presentation for their records, and HED departed.

b. DLZ

Principal Manoj Sethi, Public Safety Specialist John Sabish, Public Safety Specialist Stephen Kromkowski, Architect Dan Swiontoniowski, Site Design Manager/Civil Engineer Alex Bade, and Mechanical Engineer David Conrad

Mayor Fischer welcomed DLZ and stated that the Council and Committee depend on staff and Plante Moran Realpoint for area expertise, the Committee invited DLZ here for a high-level overview. The team for DLZ then thanked the group for inviting them, did introductions for all of the present team members, and proceeded with their own presentation. They are a full design consultation firm and have, in addition to those present today, a project manager that is an excellent architect and project manager and most importantly an excellent listener. Mr. Swiontoniowski spoke on their understanding of the challenges involved in designing combined facilities and that, as a firm, they are open to solutions. They recognize the accountability to residents/voters, City Council, staff, the environment, and community as a whole. Some key items in the design thought are accessibility, flexibility, sustainability, and predictability. The buildings must be comfortable and functional for both the staff users and public, and have future-proofing with built-in expansion potential. They like to have engagement sessions with all the public safety shifts (IE all user groups) and also the public, striving to keep everyone informed. They spoke briefly on the importance of a public entrance

design, that it must be approachable and welcoming, a safe spot for the community to engage, clear signage and entrances, non-confrontational, and warm, not institutional. Mr. Sabish spoke on designing for light and celebrating staff as well as the public and acknowledging their valuable contribution to the community. They spoke on various spaces needs, necessity of various room types with transitional spaces, specialty spaces, and fungible/flexible spaces. They also touched on the importance of health and wellness of personnel, with appropriate decontamination spaces, training and workout areas, locker room and sleeping spaces. They want to bring in sunlight and fresh air wherever they can, including incorporation of outdoor living space. Mr. Swiontoniowski said they recognize the work that has already been put into this project and are interested in how they can add to it. They then opened to questions from the Committee.

Councilmember Staudt spoke on the need for a campus feel on the property for the combined Public Safety building, including the space to the north. He also asked about how much more expensive it is to get LEED certifications. Mr. Swiontoniowski and Mr. Kromkowski said that it can be hard to put an exact number to it since there are various LEED levels but that there are many sustainability features that can be added. They also noted that they can incorporate environmental sustainability, energy efficiencies, and reduce carbon footprint with LEED standards in mind without actually doing the additional documentation requirements to actually get a LEED plaque on the wall. Councilmember Staudt then asked if they see each building having a common feel, he is comfortable with each building being "its own thing". Mr. Swiontoniowski said that they would want an established design that communicates them as a City of Novi building but also allow for more custom fitting into their individual environments. Mr. Kromkowski agreed, saying that he can have the same program for each building but adapt aesthetic and function for each site. Councilmember Staudt appreciated that, and noted he wants all the buildings to be able to fit all the fire apparatuses.

Councilmember Staudt then asked about contingencies and change orders, their philosophy on avoiding project creep, and building cost certainty as best they are able. How does DLZ achieve this? Mr. Swiontoniowski said that it is their job to come together with the Construction Manager and come together as a team, knowing the Bond amount and therefore budget, collaborate together to mitigate risks. Mr. Kromkowski talked about drawing in realtime using BIM360 which includes 3D design including ductwork and other details. This helps them to have contractors pre-fabricate and more easily install systems, making for overall cost savings. Mr. Sethi noted that there are always some changes but the goal is always no change owners. Councilmember Staudt spoke briefly on fiduciary responsibility to taxpayers, that they want to spend the budget but not beyond. Mr. Sabish talked about having the objective at the beginning of identifying the "Pandora's Box of options", so they can understand all potential issues and wants so they can establish a clarity of understanding on what needs to be included within that budget and design around that.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey asked how they manage conflict between stakeholders on what they want. Mr. Kromkowski said that they work to be fully informed and know the why behind asks and wants. They are then able to share the information with the decision makers so informed decisions can be made. In the beginning they have benchmarks, goals, and objectives. They establish the goals and prioritization of the elements, and make sure choice made hold up to those goals. Their role, alongside Plante Moran, is to give Council the information they need to make decisions. The advantages/disadvantages of items and additional spend, setting up alternates so there is flexibility.

Mayor Pro Tem Casey then asked about how they engage stakeholders. Mr. Swiontoniowski said that they recognize the importance of informing the general public, most especially those who live closest to the new buildings. They engage a variety of means to do so but ultimately recognize Council as the final decision makers.

Mayor Fischer asked how they make sure they prevent the failure to deliver on the project and also what the LEED certification of DLZ's recent Kalamazoo project was. Mr. Sethi said they were LEED silver, and also emphasized that planning early for certification, if desired, is important. Mr. Swiontoniowski added that there are multiple LEED levels: basic, silver, gold, and platinum. Typically the higher the certification the higher the cost, they encourage aimig for adherence but not necessarily "the diploma".

Councilmember Staudt asked if they have the bandwidth to do all the building designs simultaneously, DLZ affirmed that yes, they have the capacity across multiple offices and experts. Mr. Sethi noted that this team has worked together before and that they are built for all projects.

Having no further questions Mayor Fischer thanked DLZ for coming, DLZ thanked the Committee and exited.

The Committee and Plante Moran Realpoint then briefly discussed the options before them. Mr. VanKirk said that as this is a professional service Council can do whatever they like, including mixing and matching firms. They interviewed seven firms and HED and DLZ were evaluated as the best candidates. He also spoke on the importance of having a book of standards written regardless of the final firm selected to ensure cohesion and fast design and construction.

Motion: (for council action)

The F&A Committee recommends, having found both HED and DLZ acceptable, City Council allow Plante Moran Realpoint to continue discussions with both Architecture and Engineering firms with options understood to be the full project going to one firm, the full project going to another firm, or for the project to be split between firms. The final decision is expected before City Council on their upcoming October 6, 2025 meeting.

Motion: Casey, Seconded: Staudt, Approved 3:0

Mayor Fischer requested that the item go before the full council so that everyone understands the current thinking and stage of process.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

ADJOURNMENT: 7:37 p.m.

Motion: Casey; Seconded: Staudt; Approved: 3:0