

Building Safety & Zoning

To: Finance Committee

From: Brian Zirbes, Zoning Administrator

Date: 03/10/2025

Subject: Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Contract Agreement

Background

The approved 2025 Capital Projects Budget has a budgeted line item for a Zoning Code Rewrite Project and Vandewalle and Associates, Inc. has proposed a contract agreement to provide Zoning Code Rewrite services for this project. The Watertown Policy Manual allows exceptions to the Competitive Pricing Policy and the use of a single vendor when working with firms, like Vandewalle & Associates, Inc., where the City has a long-standing history of using their services and where switching services would complicate operations. The Policy Manual also allows the Mayor to waive the competitive bid requirement due to the quality of the firm and the service to be provided. The Competitive Pricing Policy's bid requirements that request project proposals from three different vendors would not be advisable with this project. The level of change that would be introduced into the zoning code by a new vendor's code format as well as the amount of education a new vendor would require to understand the City and its operations would be a heavy lift on top of this already large and complex project. Such a level of change could introduce confusion, be a deterrent to the development process in the City, and likely come at a higher cost than the services proposed by Vandewalle & Associates, Inc. The rewrite of the Zoning Code as proposed by Vandewalle & Associates, Inc. will provide continuity in the way zoning is administered within the City, modernize the Zoning Code, and provide a vital update to the City's land use regulations that will allow for an improved and streamlined development approval process.

Budget/Operational Goal

Fosters community growth by assessing opportunities, stakeholder input, environmental needs, and modern code and policy priorities.

Financial Impact

The project will utilize \$90,000 budgeted for this project under the 2025 Capital Projects Budget.

Recommendation

Recommend forwarding the Vandewalle Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Contract Agreement on to Common Council for approval.