

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

A contract will be drawn up and reviewed by the city council as efforts continue for a new fire hall in Imperial.

After hearing details two weeks ago about the construction manager option for the project, versus hiring a general contractor, the council gave direction to Fire Chief Nick Schultz and Clerk/Administrator Jo Leyland to pursue that option.

The city will ask that a contract be drawn up with BD Construction of Kearney, the same firm that recently coordinated Harchelroad Motors' new body shop construction.

The fire chief noted there are two options in this method of construction—a construction manager and a construction manager-at risk.

Schultz said the IVFD building committee favors the construction manager-at risk option.

"A construction manager-at risk means that after we come up with a basic design plan, the construction manager guarantees that construction costs won't go above" the project price he determined, he said.

The fire chief said there are overall cost savings with this option which come from the lower profit margin a construction manager figures in (6 to 7 percent) vs. what generally a general contractor does, as well as savings on bond costs.

If a contract using the construction management option is eventually approved, the council would be involved in choosing the subcontractors for all aspects of the project such as carpentry, plumbing, electrical, etc.

And, the construction manager and engineer/architect work together more as a team, he said.

Schultz said the construction manager option is a relatively new option governmental bodies can use for public projects.

Schultz said there would be no money required initially should the council approve proceeding with the project.

It's estimated preliminary plans to be used at info meeting prior to a bond issue vote would run \$10,000 to \$15,000.

A special election sometime this year asking Imperial voters on the yet-to-be-determined bond issue is favored by the fire department, Schultz said, so concrete could go in prior to winter.

While there is extra cost for a special election, he said it may be offset by the savings in rising material costs.

Having never used the construction management option before, Clerk/Administrator Leyland said she was "real reluctant" about it.

She said, typically, the contractor and engineer are "in somewhat of an adversarial relationship," with the engineer watching the contractor to make certain the project is built correctly.

"Who's watching that contractor to make sure what they do is what we want to have happen? The construction manager will get his money no matter what," she said.

Schultz felt both the architect and construction manager would have an interest in it being built correctly.

"I just have some reservations about it," she concluded.

Schultz said the construction manager wouldn't want to leave a project with the owners unhappy.

“Bad news travels a lot faster than good,” he said.

He added he’s made several calls to customers of BD Construction and found no one unhappy with their projects.

In the end, the direction was to look at a contract from BD Construction, and proceed from there.

The current plan is to locate the new fire hall, if it becomes a reality, in the empty lot north of the library.

However, later in the meeting, council member John Arterburn said he had concerns locating the fire hall there because it is “taking prime retail space.” He suggested looking at other locations as there is limited downtown property available for new business. He’d like to keep as much retail activity downtown as possible.

Other council business

- The council tabled a request from the Imperial Airport Authority asking the city to approve a 3.5-cent bond indebtedness for an airport paving project to repair cracks next year. Ninety percent of the \$2 million project will come from the FAA, with a local cost expected to be about \$200,000, the reason for the bond request, said Clerk/Administrator Leyland. Council members wanted to look at the runway surface and find out more about the project. Some planned to possibly attend this week’s Airport Authority meeting.

- After two votes, the council approved a recommendation from the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), establishing a 62-cent per square foot price for residential lots in the Cornerstone Commercial Park. However, the council left Lot 22 out of the motion. Passed on a 3-1 vote, the council vote excludes Lot 22 in the property, which has an irrigation well on it now used for crop plantings. An original motion to include Lot 22 with the same 62-cent square foot pricing did not receive a second. In the second motion, voting yes to set the 62-cent per square foot price and excluding Lot 22 as being for sale at that price were John Arterburn, Dan Thompson and J.R. Reeder, with Chad Yaw voting no. Yaw favored Lot 22 be included.

- A resolution to close a section of Broadway for the Chase County Fair Parade Aug. 17 was approved. The State Dept. of Roads now requires this which makes the city liable for any damage to state property during the parade, since Broadway runs along a state highway. Should any liability occur, the county’s insurance policy would cover it based on an agreement between the city and county.

- Previously declared a nuisance by a council resolution, the property at 221 Park St., is no longer on that list based on a recommendation from the city’s nuisance officer, West Central Nebraska Development District. The garage has been torn down and windows boarded up, which had been the concern.