

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
FOR  
BUILDING SERVICES**



**DEADLINE TO SUBMIT:  
10:00 AM, THURSDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 27, 2018**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The City of Benton Harbor invites interested parties to submit written proposals to provide contract, as-needed Building Official, Inspection and Plan Check services for the City of Benton Harbor.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City of Benton Harbor is a city in Berrien County in the U.S. state of Michigan which is located west of Kalamazoo, and northwest of South Bend, Indiana. In 2010, the population was 10,038 according to the census.

Benton Harbor was founded by Henry C. Morton, Sterne Brunson and Charles Hull, who all now have or have had schools named after them. Benton Harbor was mainly swampland bordered by the Paw Paw River, through which a canal was built, hence the "harbor" in the city's name. In 1860, the village was laid out by Brunson, Morton, Hull and others, and given the name of Brunson Harbor.

Brunson, Morton, and Hull also donated land and solicited subscriptions for construction of the canal, which was completed in 1862. It had long been recognized that a canal would be crucial to the town's development, both to drain the marsh and to provide a berthing area for ships. The canal, originally 25 feet in width but expanded to 50 feet in 1868, led to the town's becoming a shipping and manufacturing center for the area.

In 1866, the name of the settlement was changed to Benton Harbor in honor of Thomas Hart Benton, a Missouri Senator who helped Michigan achieve statehood. In 1836, Benton Harbor was organized as a village and in 1891 was incorporated as a city.

The City has a council-manager form of government. A nine member City Commission is the legislative and governing body of the City. The Mayor, four Commissioners-At-Large and four Ward Commissioners are elected on a nonpartisan basis to serve four-year terms of office. The City Manager is the chief administrative officer of the City and is appointed by the City Commission. All other administrative officers of the City are appointed by the City Manager with the exception of the City Assessor, City Attorney, City Clerk and Finance Director who are also appointed by the City Commission.

The Public Safety Department consists of the following divisions: Police, Fire and Code Compliance. The Code Compliance Division is responsible for Building Services, Code Enforcement and Zoning Administration.

While the City is primarily built-out, there are many on-going projects, ranging from small residential additions to commercial tenant improvements to large-scale construction. Additionally, the City recently passed an ordinance allowing medicinal cannabis-related uses and building & safety services for these unique types of businesses may be necessary.

## **SCOPE OF SERVICES**

The City of Benton Harbor is open Monday-Friday from 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM. The City is

considering the contracting of its Building Services (Building Official Services, Zoning and Plan Checking, and Commercial Building Inspections) on an “as needed” basis. It is anticipated that the City will hire an in-house, full-time Chief Code Compliance Officer, who will facilitate the day-to-day operations of the division. However, the City still intends to contract out all plan checking and zoning administration. Consequently, the City of Benton Harbor is seeking proposals from one or more qualified firms to perform the following:

**Building Official Services**

The ideal firm(s) will provide a Certified Building Official (CBO) who is qualified and available to answer questions, inspect properties, attend meetings and can demonstrate the ability to provide a high level of building services expertise, including but not limited to:

- As needed on-site or off-site professional services.
- Knowledge of all aspects of the Michigan Building Codes.
- Knowledge of on-going changes to applicable state and federal laws.
- Ability to provide technical assistance to other City staff.
- Availability for 24-hour emergency, off-hours services.
- Ability to prepare and present staff reports, ordinances and resolutions to the City Commission.

**Building Plan Check Services**

The ideal firm(s) will provide highly qualified plan check professionals to provide accurate and timely plan check services with sufficient staffing to meet the City's needs. The staff should have previous experience working for cities and be customer-service oriented, and perform the following:

- Plan check shall be performed for all structural, architectural, plumbing, electrical, and mechanical plans for buildings and structures submitted to the City by developers or other applicable government agencies. Plans will be checked according to the Michigan Building Codes and all applicable codes, statutes and project conditions of approval.
- Review and approve building/structural revisions to plans as required during construction.
- All changes/corrections must be clearly and accurately identified, documented and addressed prior to approval.
- Plan check services must also have a process in place that ensures consistent and efficient communication between City staff, the Plan Check staff and the applicant to avoid delays.
- Approved plans must be stamped and signed as approved once they meet all requirements.
- Services shall also include provisions for transport of plans to and from off-site facilities and City Hall.

The standard turnaround time expected for initial plan reviews is 10 working days, with a turn-around time of five (5) working days for re-checks.

### **Building Inspection Services**

The ideal firm(s) will provide an ICC-certified Building Inspector who is qualified and able to perform on-site inspection services to ensure compliance with approved plans and project conditions of approval, and to enforce all provisions of the Building Code and provide assistance to City staff, including but not limited to:

- Ability to coordinate the inspection of commercial and residential construction, alteration and demolition in accordance with all applicable Building Codes, project conditions of approval, etc. Monday through Friday.
- Ability to enforce a variety of applicable local and state building codes and ordinances pertaining to zoning, land use, nuisances, housing, health and safety, and other matters of public concern.
- Ability to serve as a resource and provide information on City regulations to property owners, residents, businesses, the general public and other City departments.
- Ability to review construction drawings to ensure compliance with Building Codes, project conditions of approval, etc.
- Ability to issue, track and final building, and other types of required permits.

The City will provide office space and limited equipment such as a desk, drafting table, office supplies, desktop computer and telephone to be used in performing the contract staffing services for the City.

### **GUIDELINES**

Proposals will be received by the City of Benton Harbor for Contract Building Services. Interested vendors should submit their proposal in an envelope marked as follows:

### **CITY OF BENTON HARBOR, MICHIGAN CONTRACT BUILDING SERVICES PROPOSAL - DO NOT OPEN WITH REGULAR MAIL**

Please submit proposals to:

Kimberly Thompson, City Clerk  
City of Benton Harbor  
200 East Wall Street  
Benton Harbor, Michigan 49022

Please include in the envelope five (5) bound hard copies of the proposal, one un-bound hard copy and one electronic copy (on a USB flash drive).

Formal proposals must be received by **Thursday, September 27, 2018 at 10:00 AM.** Bids will be publically opened and read aloud on Thursday, September 27, 2018 at 10:30 AM in the City Clerk's office.

Late proposals will not be accepted. Proposals may not be submitted via email or fax. Once received, the proposal and supplementary documents become the property of the City and may be subject to public records laws.

The City reserves the right to reject all proposals, to request additional information concerning any proposals for purposes of clarification, to accept or negotiate any

modification to any proposal following the deadline for receipt of all proposals, and to waive any irregularities if such would serve the best interest of the City as determined by the City Manager.

It should be noted that the City may select one or more firms to provide the services described in the Scope of Services; however, award of contract does not guarantee work.

All inquiries regarding this Request for Proposals and/or current Building Services of the City should be directed to Darwin Watson, City Manager in writing or via email at: [dwatson@cityofbentonharbormi.gov](mailto:dwatson@cityofbentonharbormi.gov), or by telephone at (269)927-8457.

### **REQUESTED INFORMATION**

All proposals must provide specific and succinct answers to all questions and requests for information listed below. Indirect, imprecise or incomplete responses will not be accepted. Submission of resumes is encouraged, but alone may not be considered responsive to any specific questions contained herein.

**Cover Letter:** Provide a brief cover letter summarizing the key points of the proposal, including an understanding of the work to be performed and why the firm believes it is the best qualified to perform the services requested. The letter must be signed by an individual with authority to bind the proposer and should state that all conditions contained in the attached proposal are valid for a period of at least 90 days.

**Company and Staff Information:** Provide information about the firm, including such items as organization and ownership structure, history, experience and credentials to demonstrate the ability of the firm to provide the requested services, and the location of the principal office that will be responsible for the implementation of this contract. Provide the names, titles, experience, qualifications (including certifications) and resumes of the personnel who will be assigned to the City, including any subconsultants.

**Work Plan:** Explain how plans being checked will be tracked, transported to and from the City, reviewed, marked up and communicated with customers.

**Training:** Describe any training the firm will provide for staff that is assigned to the City in order for the staff to maintain knowledge of existing and new Michigan Building Codes and other applicable codes.

**Additional Information:** Please include any additional information you or your firm feels would be essential to the proper evaluation of your response to this Request for Proposals.

**References:** Provide a minimum of three (3) references who may be contacted to discuss their experience working with the firm on similar services. Please provide contact information including the organization, name, title, address, phone, email, services provided and dates.

**Insurance:** Prior to commencement of work, the City of Benton Harbor will require evidence of appropriate professional liability insurance, errors and omissions insurance, and workers' compensation insurance coverage.

**NOTE:** Such coverage must be provided by an insurance company(ies) licensed to do business in the State of Michigan. Certificates must name the City of Benton Harbor as an Additional

Insured and shall provide that contractor's policy is primary over any insurance carried by the City of Benton Harbor and that the policy will not be canceled or materially changed without thirty (30) days prior notice in writing to the City of Benton Harbor.

The successful firm must agree, if awarded a contract as a result of its proposal, to indemnify and hold harmless the City of Benton Harbor, its officers, agents and employees from any and all claims and losses accruing or resulting to persons engaged in the work contemplated by its proposal, or to persons who may be injured or damaged by a firm or its agents in the performance of the work. Prior to the commencement of any work, a signed legal contract will be established for these and other provisions.

**Compensation:** Based on the described scope of services, please include in your proposal the following:

- Explain the billing schedule for each employee of the firm assigned to the City (including subconsultants), including any reimbursables and other direct costs.
- Explain the billing schedule for work performed outside the normal working schedule (i.e. building inspection during an emergency).
- Provide a schedule of hourly rates for each type of service to be provided and by each employee title.
- Cost of plan check services, including for different levels of service performed, if applicable (i.e. for a full plan check, for structural only plan review).
- Cost of plan and zoning administration.

#### **TERM OF THE AGREEMENT**

The term of the agreement shall be for two (2) years commencing from the date the agreement is approved by the City Commission until December 31, 2020, subject to certain conditions. There is the ability to extend the agreement for up to two (2), three (3)-year contract periods, at the City's sole discretion.

#### **SELECTION CRITERIA**

Qualifications will be evaluated against, but not be limited to, the following criteria:

- Understanding of the scope of work and the ability and capacity, in the opinion of the City of Benton Harbor, to provide as-needed Building & Safety services to meet the needs and considerations of the City of Benton Harbor.
- Professional qualifications of the Building staff to be assigned.
- Cost of services.
- References and other evidence submitted supportive of excellent past experience in providing similar services.
- Completeness of responses to the Request for Proposals.

The City of Benton Harbor reserves and holds at its discretion all of the rights and options of any potential or actual client for building and safety services, including the rights:

- To reject any or all of the proposals.
- To waive any of the provisions of this Request for Proposals.
- To issue subsequent Requests for Proposals.

- To elect to cancel the entire Request for Proposals.
- To waive technical errors in the responses to the Request for Proposals.
- To negotiate with any, all, or none of the respondents to the Request for Proposals.

This Request for Proposals does not commit the City of Benton Harbor to negotiate a contract, nor does it obligate the City to pay for any costs incurred in preparation and submission of responses in anticipation of a contract.

Proposals will be reviewed; references and qualifications of top candidates, based upon proposal responses will be verified.

The City may conduct personal interviews of the top firms to make the final selection.