

From: [Ellen Angel](#)
To: [Penny Thompson](#)
Subject: RE: Councilor Questions
Date: Friday, August 15, 2025 6:10:17 PM

Answers below in BLUE – hope this helps

Ellen

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"One should never impose one's views on a problem; one should rather study it, and in time a solution will reveal itself." ~ Albert Einstein

From: Penny Thompson <pthompson@cariboumaine.org>
Sent: Friday, August 15, 2025 12:05 PM
To: Ellen Angel <eangel@artifexae.com>
Subject: Councilor Questions

Good morning, Ellen –

Here are some questions recently received by a member of the Caribou City Council. I would appreciate it if you could assist me with some answers:

1. Was our total budget stated in the RFP? If so, what was the number given - \$10M or \$12.5M?
[Spec Section – Invitation to Bid Section 00 11 13:](#)
[Project Description: Project cost range is anticipated to be under \\$ 9,000,000.00](#)
2. Were all offers 100% responsive to the RFP (no exceptions, alternatives, substitutions, etc.)?
[Yes](#)
3. Did the RFP include any scoring criteria, or was it stated that selection would be based solely on lowest cost?
[Based on lowest cost, but City was allowed discretion not to take lowest bidder; we refer to this as lowest “credible” bidder](#)
4. Did the committee apply any scoring criteria in its review of the bids and/or selection of

the lowest bidder for further negotiations?

Just price

5. If scoring criteria were applied, how did the lowest bidder score in relation to the others?
3 bidders were very competitive – the City selected the one who most quickly responded to the question of additional options for reduction to cost – making them the lowest

6. Was there anything in the RFP to indicate we were going to select the lowest bidder or grouping of lowest bidders for further negotiations?

Other than there were NO Other criteria for selection, no. Again, the City reserved the right to select whomever they select

7. What is meant by “working to value engineer the project?” If we’re talking about substitutions of materials and methods with less expensive alternatives, then you are changing the design of the building (specifications), and thus, the scope of the effort. It is improper to provide that opportunity to only one of the bidders and not to the others. In a competitive bid procedure, you must provide the same information and opportunities to all bidders equally. If you change the scope of the effort, you must request updated bids from all offerors.

The only bidder offering options was the one deemed lowest apparent bidder. This is then a typical process, before a contract is signed, to see if the number contracted is the lowest possible appropriate cost.

8. You indicated that the committee “decided to work one-on-one with Blane Casey...” Was a vote of the committee taken during this meeting? Where is that result documented? There is no evidence that proper notification of this meeting was made, and apparently, no record kept of the proceedings. At most, the committee can only vote/decide to recommend something to Council – committee members, by themselves, do not have the authority to render this decision. The City is now vulnerable to formal protest and potential legal action from the other bidders because of the misjudgment of the committee and the action it took outside its authority.

I spoke with the three lowest bidders personally. They all accepted this as a standard procedure. No one wants to go into this process if they are still competing. They want to go into it knowing they have the contract if the number is acceptable.

9. What other types of things are we looking at to reduce costs, besides the 7 potential “deduct alternates” that were included in the RFP and already bid, and whatever materials/method substitutions that Blane Casey is proposing? Has the approved layout/design or footprint changed from what was put out to bid? If so, who is doing that design work and how is it being paid for? If the layout/design or footprint have been changed to get to a lower cost, please provide Council members an update showing that revised design.

As of today, no changes are being made to any operational aspects of the building. The only cost-savings that have been discussed (and nothing has been accepted or selected) are those that the contractor believes fully maintain the operations of the facility while saving construction costs.

10. Have any of the bidders been notified that they were not selected? Has notification been sent out to the other two bidders who were approached for “value engineering” and/or the other three bidders not approached for “value engineering,” indicating that you are now conducting further negotiations/value engineering solely with Blane Casey? Have any notifications been sent out to any of the bidders at all? If so, what was the nature of those notifications?

The notification was my letter of June 24, 2025 with the final bid tabulation and the three low bidders highlighted.

11. Based on the current state of negotiations with Blane Casey, how far off are we now from our stated budget of \$10M, and does that number include the estimated \$1.87M “soft costs” that we have to add on top of construction costs?

Thank you.

Penny Thompson

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