

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

CONTRACT OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

ASHBURNHAM & WINCHENDON JOINT WATER AUTHORITY WATER FILTRATION PLANT

June 2022

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Legal Notice

The Ashburnham and Winchendon Joint Water Authority (AWJWA) is seeking proposals from qualified firms (hereinafter to as the “Proposers”) capable of providing full-service operation and maintenance (O&M) of the AWJWA’s Water Filtration Plant that includes all facilities at 204 Lake Road including a reservoir intake, raw water pumping station, water filtration plant, clearwell, residuals basin, and site piping.

Copies of the Request for Proposal (RFP) may be obtained at the Winchendon DPW Office, 109 Front Street, Winchendon, MA 01475. The telephone number is 978-297-0170.

Each Proposal submitted must be accompanied by a Bid Deposit payable to the Ashburnham & Winchendon Joint Water Authority (AWJWA) in the amount of Five Percent (5%) of the First Year Annual Fee.

Contractors possessing the necessary qualifications, experience and technical expertise are invited to submit proposals to the AWJWA, at the Winchendon DPW Office, 109 Front Street, Winchendon, MA 01475 until 11:00AM on July 21, 2022. Proposals received after such time will not be accepted.

A pre-proposal meeting will be held at 10:00AM on Tuesday, June 28, 2022 at 204 Lake Road, Ashburnham, at the treatment plant office. This meeting is intended to allow firms to view the facilities and to address questions. A tour of the facility will be conducted by representatives of the AWJWA. The pre-bid meeting is mandatory. No other dates will be offered for the walkthrough. If the pre-bid walk through is missed a bid will not be accepted form the contractor / firm.

This RFP and the evaluation and contract award process associated herewith, will not be judged solely on the merits of the lowest proposed price. Selection of the Contractor will be based on the proposer’s response to the scope of work discussed in the RFP, the thoroughness of the contractor’s response to the specific needs noted in the RFP, the proposed staff, the overall capabilities of the contractor, the financial stability of the contractor, and the contractor’s price proposal. A comprehensive comparative analysis is included in the RFP.

Legal Notice

The AWJWA reserves the right to accept any proposal, to reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, to waive irregularities and/or formalities as deemed appropriate, to request clarification of any proposal received, and to negotiate with the preferred contractor to finalize details of the form of Agreement. The consideration of all Proposals and subsequent selection of the successful Proposal shall be made without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap, religion, political affiliation, national origin or sexual orientation.

The Contractor to whom the Contract is awarded shall comply with the provisions of Chapter 30B of the General Laws of Massachusetts as amended. Prior to execution of the Contract, the selected Contractor shall file a Statement of Management on internal accounting control, and an audited financial statement for the most recent completed fiscal year.

All materials and equipment purchased under this contract are exempt from the Massachusetts State Tax. The selected Contractor shall file for exemption on behalf of the AWJWA with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Revenue as required by law. The exemption status from the Sales Tax shall be considered by the proposers during the proposal process.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Labor requirements as to conditions of employment and equal opportunity to be observed. The requirements set forth shall be considered by proposers during the proposal process.

According to the Department of Labor and Industries, prevailing wage rates do not apply to operations and maintenance of the plant, however, the Contractor must be mindful of prevailing wage rates if they hire a contractor to perform major maintenance at the plant.

The selected Contractor shall adhere to the provision of the Fair Employment Practices Law of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Chapter 151B of the Massachusetts General Laws).

ASHBURNHAM & WINCHENDON JOINT WATER AUTHORITY

Section 1 - Introduction

The Ashburnham & Winchendon Joint Water Authority (AWJWA) is soliciting proposals from qualified firms to provide Water Filtration Plant (WFP) Contract Operations and Maintenance (O&M) services to the AWJWA for a five-year term commencing on or about October 1, 2022 with an option to review for an additional three five-year terms as provided in the Agreement (See Appendix A).

The AWJWA water supply serves approximately 15,000 people in the Towns of Ashburnham and Winchendon, Massachusetts. The AWJWA draws all its water from Upper Naukeag Lake, a surface water source located in the Town of Ashburnham. The 2021 average daily demand was 0.35 MGD for Ashburnham and 0.73 MGD for Winchendon.

The AWJWA WFP is a 2.0 MGD water treatment facility which utilizes the proprietary Trident™ process for water treatment, combined with various chemical additions. This plant was designed for removal of organic particles and waterborne microorganisms to meet the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) regulations. The WFP is defined by 236 CMR as a Grade 3 Treatment Facility.

Water is pumped to the WFP from a pumping station on-site, previously utilized for Winchendon's water supply. After entering the building, equipment and piping exists to add sodium carbonate (soda ash), sodium hypochlorite, polyaluminum chloride, and cationic polymer for coagulation/flocculation, disinfection and corrosion control treatment. The chemicals are mixed with the water through an inline static mixer. The main process flow is to three parallel Trident™ process units. Each unit consists of an adsorption clarifier and mixed media filter.

Water then flows to a two-chamber 300,000-gallon concrete clearwell for CT disinfection and storage. After filtration and CT disinfectant reaction time, the facility is equipped with the infrastructure to add ammonia to form chloramines as a secondary disinfectant to persist through the distribution system, however ammonia has not and is not being used. Zinc orthophosphate and sodium carbonate (soda ash) are also added for

Section 1 – Introduction

corrosion control. Treated water pumping equipment dedicated for each individual Town is provided to pump water from the clearwell to both the Ashburnham and Winchendon water systems. Each individual Town has piping in place to add sodium fluoride for its dental benefits however, only Ashburnham currently practices fluoridation. Backwash pumping equipment is provided to deliver water from the clearwell to the filters to cleanse the filters of accumulated particulates removed during the filtration process.

Spent backwash water is transferred by piping to two lined residuals basins. The residuals processing and storage basins operates on a fill, settle and decant basis. Decant water is recycled to the reservoir. Settled thickened solids is stored within the basins and pumped into tanker trucks for off-site disposal at a receiving wastewater treatment plant.

Section 2 Proposal Instructions

The AWJWA's Request for Proposal has been structured to comply with Chapter 30B of the Massachusetts General Laws. All Proposals made in response to the RFP shall include two separate sealed components, as Part 1 and Part 2. Part 1 shall discuss *Qualifications and the Specific Services* that the proposer offers. Part 2 shall include *Cost Information* in the format requested. Seven (7) hard copies and one (1) electronic copy (PDF) of both Parts 1 and 2 are required. There shall be no reference to cost in the Qualifications and Service included in Part 1.

The separately sealed Parts 1 and 2 shall be contained within a single package clearly marked "Ashburnham & Winchendon Joint Water Authority Proposal for Providing Contract Operations and Maintenance Services". The envelope shall also bear the name and address of the Contractor submitting the proposal.

Proposals will be received at the location and until the date and time listed in the legal notice. Please note that there will be no exception to this deadline. Faxed or e-mail statements and/or submissions will not be accepted.

A bidder may modify, correct, or withdraw a bid by providing a sealed request in writing prior to the bid opening. After the bid opening, bidders may not adjust provision or price of the bid.

The AWJWA proposal review process will be in accordance with Chapter 30B as identified in Section 7 of this RFP. The AWJWA shall not be liable for any costs incurred by proposers in preparing, submitting, or presenting proposals. All proposals, responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to this Request for Proposal, and all documents provided, shall become the property of the AWJWA when received. The AWJWA retains the right to use some or all ideas presented in any proposal. Selection or rejection of a proposal does not affect this right.

Each Proposal submitted to the AWJWA shall be accompanied by a Bid Deposit payable to the AWJWA in the amount of 5% of the total first year's annual fee.

Section 2 Proposal Instructions

Proposers shall not adjust or operate equipment, whether operating or not. Questions regarding the RFP or those raised during the detailed site visits must be submitted in writing to the AWJWA's Representative, Brian Croteau, Winchendon Director of Public Works, 109 Front Street, Winchendon, MA 01475, tel. 978-297-0170 at least seven (7) days prior to the proposal submission date. A response in the form of an Addendum will be provided to all prospective proposers a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the proposal submission date.

Bidders will be provided electronic access to information relative to the existing treatment plant, operational data, and other information to be used in preparation of proposals through OneDrive. Available information includes:

- Quarterly Operations and Maintenance Reports - 2019-2021
- Monthly electricity bills and spreadsheet of daily electrical usage – 2021
- Monthly MassDEP reports (chemical usage) – 2021
- Fuel Heating Oil Usage spreadsheet – 2010 – 2021
- 2021 Annual Statistical Report
- February 2022 NPDES Discharge Monitoring Report

Section 2 Proposal Instructions

Proposals shall provide the information in accordance with the format set forth in this section in sufficient detail to clearly demonstrate that the requirements contained in this RFP have been met.

Proposers are strongly encouraged to follow the technical Proposal outline set forth below. This outline is intended to ensure that the information required to evaluate proposals is easily located. The AWJWA assumes no responsibility for locating information if Proposers elect to use a different organizational structure.

- Executive Summary
- Minimum Criteria Compliance
- Comparative Evaluation Criteria

The executive summary shall concisely summarize the Proposal, including the proposed general management philosophy. The executive summary shall, at a minimum, include an identification of the proposed project team, responsibilities and specific responsibility assignments of the project team and a summary of the proposed services. This section should include a statement of the proposer's understanding of this RFP and the name, address, telephone, and e-mail address of the Proposer and the Proposer's contact person to which all communications from the AWJWA will be sent. The executive summary shall not exceed 5 typed pages.

Minimum criteria compliance shall address each item identified in Section 3 relative to minimum standards of experience and financial capability. Minimum criteria compliance text shall not exceed 10 typed pages.

Comparative evaluation criteria shall address the contract operations requirements identified in Section 4 relative to the proposal rating criteria identified in Section 7. Comparative evaluation criteria shall not exceed 30 typed pages.

The Cost Proposal must be submitted in a separate (Part 2) sealed envelope which clearly labels the contents as the Proposer's Part 2 Cost Proposal. Failure to comply with this provision may disqualify the Proposer.

Section 3 Minimum Submission Requirements

This section of the RFP establishes certain minimum standards of experience and financial capability that the AWJWA requires for a Contractor to be deemed qualified. Proposals from firms that do not meet the prescribed standards will be considered by the AWJWA as non-responsive and will not be evaluated further. The AWJWA in its sole discretion and judgment will decide if a Proposer meets the standards.

All Proposals must include the following data and be able to demonstrate compliance with all noted performance standards:

- A. Separate Qualification/Service (Part 1) and Cost Proposals (Part 2) must be submitted as indicated in Section 2.
- B. All proposals must be delivered to the Owner on the time and date noted in the Legal Notice.
- C. A 5% Bid Deposit must be provided.
- D. All proposers must provide a Contractor Profile including:
 - Full name, tax identification number, main office address and officers of the Contractor that would ultimately enter into a contract with the AWJWA.
 - History and background including when the Contractor was organized and if a corporation, where incorporated and how many years engaged in providing O&M Contract Operations under that name. Provide a comprehensive description of Contractor's corporation ownership history including all mergers and acquisitions. Identify and explain any and all changes in corporation owners and/or operating name. Provide a complete list of officers including name, title, address, and telephone number.
 - Audited Corporate Financial Statement for the previous two years. Proposers may submit such additional information as a Dunn & Bradstreet report as they believe is appropriate to demonstrate their relative financial strength.

Section 3 Minimum Submission Requirements

- Bank References with names of contacts, titles, and telephone numbers.
 - A list of all pending claims or suits that deal with past or on-going contract operations. If any, name the Owner and describe the circumstances.
 - A list of any fines incurred at any water treatment plant operated by the Contractor over the last ten years from any State, Local, or Federal regulatory agency. A description of the violation shall be provided as well as the dates and amounts of any fines or penalties.
- E. All proposers must demonstrate that they have provided Contract Operations, similar to the services requested by the AWJWA, and have the staff and resources necessary to provide services to the AWJWA. Past experience and the number of successful Contract operations facilities will be an important evaluation criterion. A Contractor must demonstrate proven experience by having provided O&M service contract operations for at least one (1) water treatment facility equal to or greater in size and complexity to the facilities addressed under this RFP. Contractor must have been in the business of providing O&M services for water treatment facilities for at least five years. A reference name, title and telephone number should be furnished for each municipal example along with information on the size of the facility, a description of the treatment process, residuals treatment and disposal system, manpower commitment, regulatory compliance history, accident history, the number of years that contract operation services have been provided, start dates, and expiration dates.

Section 3 Minimum Submission Requirements

- F. All proposers must provide a proposed Project Staffing Plan and include the name and resume of at least two personnel who will be involved with the day-to-day operation of the Ashburnham & Winchendon Water Filtration Plant (WFP). At least one of the two individuals shall hold a Massachusetts Certified Grade III License to operate a Water Treatment Facility. Also, summarize all technical and management support staff available including computer (PLC) technicians. The AWJWA intends to interview qualified proposers and expects to be able to meet with and discuss plant operations with at least one of the key people who will be permanently assigned to work at the WFP.
- G. A signed Certificate of Non-Collusion. The Certificate of Non-Collusion is attached.
- H. A signed Massachusetts State Tax Statement. The Massachusetts State Tax Statement form is attached.
- I. If the proposal is a Joint Venture or the proposer intends to use subcontractors for major work elements, the Joint Venture relationship shall be described or the names of all proposed subcontractors provided along with their role in the overall contract operations plan.
- J. Proposer must be able to obtain insurance and bonds as required herein.
- K. Acknowledge receipt of each Addendum by number and issue date.

Section 4 Contract Operations Requirements

The following information is provided to ensure that all proposers are aware of features that must be included in their Contract Operations proposal. In addition, the information that follows provides instructions and guidelines to proposers that they must include in their proposal to the AWJWA. Any deviations from the instructions or guidelines provided in this section shall be clearly noted in the proposal.

- A. The Contractor shall be responsible for 100% of the operation and maintenance of the WFP throughout the term of the contract.
- B. The Contractor shall have complete control of the WFP and shall address all operational problems in a timely manner. Since timely responses will be important during certain emergency situations, each proposer shall describe how they intend to provide timely response to unusual events in Ashburnham and Winchendon. The Contractor must have, and demonstrate within its proposal, an in-house capability to perform specialized maintenance and repair of various pumps, valves, compressors, controls, motor control centers, alarm circuitry, generators, transfer switches, telemetry, and other items encountered at water treatment facilities.
- C. The Contractor is responsible for the cost of the analytical work to be completed by a qualified laboratory. All analytical work and reporting required by the USEPA and MassDEP shall be submitted by the Contractor and filed on-site for reference by the AWJWA.
- D. The Contractor is responsible for providing monthly reports to the MassDEP with copies to the Winchendon Department of Public Works, Ashburnham Department of Public Works, Water and Sewer Department, and the AWJWA.

Section 4 Contract Operations Requirements

- E. The Contractor is responsible for residuals sludge pumping and disposal. The cost for the service, including transportation and disposal, shall be included in the cost information provided by the Contractor. The Contractor shall clearly discuss how sludge disposal will be accomplished.
- F. The Contractor shall review the condition of the equipment and make an independent assessment of the operational capability of the equipment. The AWJWA shall not be responsible for any maintenance and repairs of existing equipment and will rely entirely on the Contractor to operate and maintain available equipment or provide alternate equipment necessary to fully support contract operations.
- G. Contract operator shall furnish all chemicals, maintenance equipment, and laboratory equipment necessary for the operations of the facility.
- H. The AWJWA shall not provide any vehicles to the proposed Contractor. It shall be the Contractor's responsibility to provide all vehicles required to support the WFP.
- I. All land, buildings, structures, improvements, permanent equipment, and pipelines that are presently in-place, currently under construction, or added by any new construction projects, are and shall remain as property of the AWJWA.
- J. Any expendable supplies and spare parts that are on-hand on the date of the contract execution shall be inventoried. A typed inventory shall be prepared by the Contractor and signed by both parties and a copy provided to the AWJWA. The Contractor shall have access to these materials during the contract period but shall maintain the inventory such that at the end of the contract period, the AWJWA's inventories shall be replenished. All other supplies, miscellaneous tools, and equipment necessary for performing the O&M services being contracted shall be the Contractor's responsibility.

Section 4 Contract Operations Requirements

- K. Provide adequate staffing with qualified personnel to operate and maintain the facility in accordance with MassDEP requirements and in accordance with industry standards. The WFP is defined by 236 CMR as a Grade 3 treatment facility. The minimum qualified staff that shall be assigned for the operations and maintenance of the WFP shall be one primary operator and one secondary operator. The scope of O&M services outlined herein does not typically require full-time services. Part-time operations may be acceptable if approved by the MassDEP. Operators shall be certified in accordance with 236 CMR 1-5: Board of Certification of Operators of Drinking Water Facilities Rules and Regulations. The Contractor shall be on call for 24 hours per day, seven days per week, including Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, to respond to emergencies.

- L. Contractors shall comply with State Regulation 310 CMR 22: Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations and current MassDEP Guidelines and Public Water Systems. If there is any contradiction between 310 CMR 22 and this RFP, the Contractor shall follow the State requirement.

- M. All violations that require reporting in accordance with the EPA Public Notification Rule shall be reported consistent with EPA requirement.

- N. Contractor shall be responsible for payment of all employee wages, salaries, and benefits. To assist the AWJWA in evaluating proposals, Proposers shall provide the following information:
 - 1. Anticipated wages that will be paid to all Contractor personnel who will be permanently or temporarily assigned to the WFP. Wage information should be consistent with the job classifications and experience that is necessary to operate and maintain a WFP.

Section 4 Contract Operations Requirements

2. Benefits that will be provided to each employee, such as vacation, sick days, family and individual health insurance, training, etc.
 3. Attention shall be given to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Labor requirements as to conditions of employment and equal opportunity to be observed and the minimum prevailing wage rates to be paid under this contract.
- O. Pay all utility and consumable costs such as fuel, chemicals, power, telephone supplies, lubricants, etc.
- P. Provide routine and normal maintenance of plant equipment, buildings, and grounds, including custodial services. The Contractor shall furnish all labor, services, materials, equipment, machinery, apparatus, tools, miscellaneous supplies, and all other items necessary to perform all maintenance.
- Q. Provide grounds maintenance including routine grass cutting, grooming, and snow removal.
- R. Perform daily operational checks of all facilities including daily written reports maintained at the WFP documenting all maintenance performed.
- S. Calibrate and maintain analytical instruments as recommended by the manufacturer.
- T. On a weekly basis, perform alarm and generator operational and condition checks.
- U. Perform all laboratory sampling and analytical work in accordance with Federal and State Regulations.

Section 4 Contract Operations Requirements

- V. Ensure that all provisions of the NPDES permit, for the discharge of residuals basin decant and filter-to-waste to the reservoir are met. Appendix B contains a copy of the NPDES Permit. The February 2022 National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit Discharge Monitoring Report for Permit No. MAG640045 is available on OneDrive.
- W. Implement a maintenance management plan that stresses preventative and corrective maintenance on all plant and pumping station equipment.
- X. Provide employee training in the areas of operation, maintenance, safety, supervisory skills, and laboratory skills. This training will include both plant specific and drinking water field related material.
- Y. Prepare written monthly reports of operations and maintenance plus a summary of all appropriate operating costs and budget status. Information provided shall include staffing, permit compliance results, corrective and preventative maintenance performed, operational concerns, safety and training programs, corrective maintenance and repairs, equipment replacements, etc. Provide copies of reports to the Winchendon Department of Public Works, Ashburnham Department of Public Works, Water and Sewer Department, and AWJWA.
- Z. Contractor shall also be available to attend monthly AWJWA meetings, if requested, to review monthly status report.
- AA. Provide quarterly inspection tours of the WFP with members of the AWJWA. Inspection tours shall be scheduled at the convenience of the AWJWA, shall include a tour of the WFP and may include an independent consultant to advise the AWJWA on the success of ongoing contract operations.

Section 4 Contract Operations Requirements

- BB. Provide equipment maintenance and repairs. Individual equipment repairs that exceed \$5,000 are not considered normal and will be covered by an Equipment Improvement Program that is discussed in Section 5.
- CC. Provide all other services normally provided to properly operate, maintain, and care for a WFP, including a monthly operational report to the Winchendon Department of Public Works and Ashburnham Department of Public Works, Water & Sewer Department.
- DD. The Contractor must familiarize itself with the facilities, obtain the construction contract specified training, and to inventory tools and spare parts. A one-time cost (first year) will be included in the cost proposal.
- EE. A 100% Performance Bond must be furnished to the AWJWA totaling each year's estimated annual cost for the operation of all WFP facilities. All Bonds shall be from companies authorized to do business in Massachusetts and in a form acceptable to the AWJWA.
- FF. Insurance shall be provided as described in the Agreement.
- GG. Contractor shall be responsible for Major Maintenance & Repairs as explained in Section 5 of this RFP.
- HH. At the end of the operations contract, the Contractor shall leave the WFP with the same equipment, supplies and material, less normal wear and tear.
- II. Contractor shall be responsible for all State/Federal fines that may be issued to the AWJWA for the operation of the water filtration facilities that are the responsibility of the Contractor.

Section 4 Contract Operations Requirements

- JJ. Each proposer shall be prepared to accept the form of the Agreement included in Appendix A for the services that will be provided to the AWJWA. The form of the Agreement is comprehensive and in the form suitable for the AWJWA to initiate final negotiations with the most highly qualified, cost effective proposer.

- KK. Contractor shall provide and maintain well documented records of operations, maintenance, laboratory, personnel, training, safety, process control, daily inspections, materials, alarms, and any other significant events. Proper documentation of the aforementioned subjects must be presented for review upon request.

- LL. Develop and implement an organized in-house safety program. Essential elements of any safety program must include regularly scheduled safety training sessions for all plant personnel, standard operating procedures (SOP) for chemical handling, confined space entry and emergency response, and the care and use of the proper safety equipment to perform these procedures.

The AWJWA recognizes that the Information provided above may not include specifics of all services that need to be provided by a Contractor. Each proposer is encouraged and expected to clearly discuss and detail the full range of services that they expect to provide to the AWJWA. If there are unique services or special features that a proposer intends to provide to the AWJWA, proposers are encouraged to discuss those features and to include appropriate cost information in the Cost Proposal. Although no cost information shall be provided in the Part 1 Qualifications & Services portion of the submittal, proposers may indicate exceptions or proposal enhancements that they will provide to AWJWA and note whether the exception or enhancement results in a general cost savings or cost increase.

Section 5 Major Maintenance & Repairs

The Contractor shall implement a major maintenance & repairs program to maintain the condition of operating equipment. The AWJWA requires that an annual amount of no less than \$30,000 be included in the cost proposal for this work. The AWJWA may authorize expenditures from this account for those items whose total dollar value exceeds \$5,000. Non-expended funds shall be retained by the AWJWA. The Contractor shall not expend funds without the prior written approval of the AWJWA. In addition, competitive price quotations for equipment and service shall be provided where required by the AWJWA.

Major maintenance and repairs may include:

- Service agreements for equipment repair and maintenance,
- The purchase of replacement equipment, replacement parts, etc. exclusive of the Contractor's on-site labor.
- Unanticipated repairs/corrective work (other than normal repair and maintenance). The Contractor is expected to provide on-site labor to the extent possible for each repair item.
- Planned major equipment repairs, replacements, and upgrades. The Contractor shall make its own analysis of plant needs and discuss that analysis with the AWJWA so that plans may be implemented.
- Other major maintenance and repairs approved by the AWJWA.

All work completed under the Major Maintenance & Repairs category shall include the following:

- Competitive prices from multiple vendors, at least 3.
- Minimum one-year warranty on all new equipment.
- Complete O&M manuals shall be provided for all new equipment and included in the annual operations report furnished by the Contractor.

Section 6 Cost Data

The Ashburnham and Winchendon Joint Water Authority (AWJWA) intends to award a five-year contract for the services discussed in this RFP with an option to review for an additional five-year terms as provided in the Agreement. The proposer shall identify the total contract cost as indicated on the attached Operations Cost Information form. Identify the annual escalator clause that will be used, if any. The proposer shall supplement the first-year annual cost and escalator clause(s) with the following:

- A detailed breakdown of the first-year annual cost using the form on the next page.
- Discussion on any item or items that significantly impact annual costs.
- Sludge disposal costs shall be clarified noting the cost for residuals sludge disposal and the actual residuals sludge disposal service that will be provided for the full term of the contract.
- The Contractor shall prepare an estimated level of effort and the costs associated with the project. Direct costs shall be broken down by the individual tasks including number of man-hours required for each team member. The hourly rate for each team member and other personnel and any equipment rates shall be clearly defined (both regular and overtime rates). Indirect costs shall also be clearly defined.

Section 7 Proposal Rating Criteria

All proposals submitted in accordance with the requirements of this Request for Proposals (RFP) will be reviewed for completeness and responsiveness. All proposals which satisfy the Minimum Submission Requirements will be evaluated by a Selection Committee comprised of individuals from Ashburnham and Winchendon's Water-Sewer Commissions or their designated representatives selected by the AWJWA.

Each criterion in this Comparative Criteria Section for both treatment operations and inspection and maintenance programs will be scored generally as follows:

- *Highly Advantageous:* The proposal approach or capability significantly exceeds the requirements of the RFP for the criterion evaluated.
- *Advantageous:* The proposed approach or capability exceeds the minimum requirements of the RFP for the criterion evaluated.
- *Acceptable:* The proposed approach or capability meets the minimum requirements of the RFP for the criterion evaluated.
- *Unacceptable:* The proposed approach or capability does not meet the requirements of the RFP for the criterion evaluated. Any proposal receiving this rating for a criterion will be deemed non-responsive.

If a Proposal receives an "Unacceptable" rating in any evaluation criteria, the overall proposal shall be rated not acceptable. Proposals will receive a rating for each criterion that will then be used by the Selection Committee to determine a composite rating for each of the Proposals regarding the comparative criteria.

Comparative criteria and the relative value of each criteria are noted below:

Experience	1/3
Staffing Plan	1/3
Management Approach	1/3

The AWJWA expects to see the following information in the Proposals:

Section 7 Proposal Rating Criteria

Experience – Identify the number of years of experience in contract operations, the number of facilities presently being operated, the number of facilities where contract operations services have extended beyond an original contract period, a list of facility references in New England including names and telephone numbers, and a statement describing any litigation that the firm is involved in regarding contract operations.

Experience will be evaluated as follows:

- A. If the Proposer has less than five (5) years of experience or has not operated any facilities equal to or greater in size and complexity to the facilities addressed in this RFP, the proposal will be rated “Unacceptable” for this criterion.
- B. If the Proposer has five (5) years or more of experience and has operated at least one facility equal to or greater in size and complexity to the facilities addressed in this RFP, the proposal will be rated “Acceptable” for this criterion.
- C. If the Proposer has five (5) years or more of experience and has operated three (3) or more facilities equal to or greater in size and complexity to the facilities addressed in this RFP, the proposal will be rated “Advantageous” for this criterion.
- D. If the Proposer has more than ten (10) years of experience and has operated three or more facilities equal to or greater in size and complexity to the facilities addressed in this RFP, the proposal will be rated “Highly Advantageous” for this criterion.

Staffing Plan – Identify the total person hour commitment that the firm will provide to the WFP. The person hour’s description shall explain the impact of training and safety programs on the actual hours available for direct operation and maintenance work at the WFP. In addition, the names and resumes of key personnel shall be provided with emphasis on the people who will provide day to day service to the WFP. Also, discussion should provide information on the experience of the staff, availability of staff, the licenses that the staff will have, the mechanical capabilities of the staff and the emergency response capabilities of the staff.

Section 7 Proposal Rating Criteria

- A. If the Proposer provides key personnel with less than the appropriate education, licenses and/or experience addressed in this RFP, the proposal will be rated “Unacceptable” for this criterion.
- B. If the Proposer provides key personnel with no experience in the operation and maintenance of a water treatment of comparable size and complexity but with the appropriate education and licensing, the proposal will be rated “Acceptable” for this criterion.
- C. If the Proposer provides key personnel experience in operation and maintenance of a water treatment facility of comparable size and with the appropriate education and licensing, the proposal will be rated “Advantageous” for this criterion.
- D. If the Proposer provides key personnel with more than ten (10) years experience in operation and maintenance of a water treatment facility of comparable size and with the appropriate education and licensing, the proposal will be rated “Highly Advantageous” for this criterion.

Management Approach – Discuss the overall supervision that will be provided to the AWJWA, the quality control programs that the firm provides, the accounting and record keeping programs, the preventative maintenance programs, the impact that the firm will have on plant operations, plant improvements that the firm projects for the WFP, special interest items and any other information specific to the AWJWA facilities that will assist in judging the qualifications of the firm.

Proposers shall demonstrate a good knowledge of the WFP facilities gained by reviewing this RFP, available records at the WFP, by site visits made specifically to review facilities and equipment and by discussions with personnel familiar with the anticipated operation of the WFP.

Ratings for management approach are more subjective than the other comparative criteria, allowing the AWJWA Selection Committee more leeway in its evaluation.

Section 7 Proposal Rating Criteria

Management approach will be evaluated as follows:

- A. If the Proposer exhibits unsatisfactory capacity to provide the supervision, programs, and knowledge identified in this RFP, the proposal will be rated “Unacceptable” for this criterion.
- B. If the Proposer exhibits limited capacity to provide the supervision, programs, and knowledge identified in this RFP, the proposal will be rated “Acceptable” for this criterion.
- C. If the Proposer exhibits satisfactory capacity to provide the supervision, programs, and knowledge identified in this RFP, the proposal will be rated “Advantageous” for this criterion.
- D. If the Proposer exhibits superior capacity to provide the supervision, programs, and knowledge identified in this RFP, the proposal will be rated “Highly Advantageous” for this criterion.

Cost

The cost proposal shall be submitted in a separate sealed envelope containing the seven required copies.

Costs will be compared based upon information provided for the 5-year contract period. Pricing proposal shall include basic O&M costs, start-up costs, Major Maintenance & Repairs, and an annual escalator percentage.

Review Schedule

The AWJWA Selection Committee intends to review all “Qualifications and the Specific Services” submittal from all firms to determine whether they have satisfied the Minimum Submission Requirements. Proposals that do not meet the Minimum Submission Requirements will be eliminated from further consideration.

The AWJWA has established the following schedule for this procurement, dates are subject to change:

Section 7 Proposal Rating Criteria

Proposal Deadline:	July 21, 2022
Conduct Interviews:	July 25–29, 2022
Final Selection/Award:	August 1- 3, 2022
Contract Begins:	October 1, 2022

For each proposer which meets the Minimum Submission Requirements, the AWJWA Selection Committee will review the specific information provided with respect for each of the comparative criteria: Experience, Staffing Plan, and Management Approach.

The evaluators shall prepare written evaluations for each proposal that meets all minimum submission requirements. The evaluations will be based solely on the comparative evaluation criteria. The evaluators will assign a rating of “highly advantageous”, “advantageous”, “acceptable”, or “not acceptable” to each proposal comparative evaluation criteria and a composite rating. The written evaluations shall specify the reasons for each rating of the comparative evaluation criteria and the composite rating. The evaluations may also describe a proposal’s attributes which make it superior to the others. The written evaluations may also state whether one proposal is only marginally better than the others.

If necessary, to clarify items within the proposals, interviews will be scheduled and held within 2 weeks of the submittal date.

Submittals will be ranked by the members of the Selection Committee for each technical criterion identified and a composite rating will be determined.

Composite ratings will be determined as follows:

- A. If a proposal has received an “Unacceptable” rating on any single criterion, the composite rating shall be “Unacceptable”, and the proposal will not be accepted.
- B. If a proposal has received one or more “Acceptable” ratings, the composite rating shall be “Acceptable”, and the evaluation shall specify the risks or disadvantages of selecting the proposal so that the Selection Committee will have a basis for balancing those risks with the proposal’s cost advantage, if any.

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- C. If a proposal has received no “Unacceptable” or “Acceptable” ratings on any single criterion and has received a “Highly Advantageous” rating on at least two (2) criteria, the composite rating will be “Highly Advantageous”. The written evaluation accompanying this composite rating shall explain the extra benefits offered by the proposal to provide the Selection Committee with a basis for balancing the extra benefits with the proposal’s cost premium, if any.

- D. All other proposals evaluated pursuant to the comparative evaluation shall have a composite rating of “Advantageous”.

Upon completing the evaluation of Qualifications and Specific Services, Cost proposals will be opened and ranked. Cost will be reviewed for the entire contract period.

Within 8 weeks of submittal date, the AWJWA intends to select the highest ranked firm that has a cost determined to be fully responsive to the proposal. The Selection Committee shall award the Contract Operations and Maintenance Agreement, in writing, to the most advantageous proposal from a responsible and responsive Proposer taking into consideration price and the written evaluations of portions of the proposals. The Selection Committee may condition an award on successful negotiation of revisions specified in the evaluations. If the Selection Committee awards the contract to a Proposer who did not submit the lowest price, the Selection Committee shall explain the reasons for the award in writing, specifying in reasonable detail the basis for determining that the quality of the services under the contract will not exceed the AWJWA’s actual needs.

The AWJWA reserves the right to request additional documentation from Proposers and to inspect existing facilities owned, operated, or managed by Proposers after receipt of the proposals. The AWJWA reserves the right to reject all proposals at any time. If there is any ambiguity or conflict between the Agreement and this Request for Proposals, the Agreement shall control.

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Each Proposer, by responding to this RFP, grants the AWJWA, and all persons and entities with whom the Proposer has contracted for service contracts, currently or in the past, full and free license to discuss the Proposer's performance, strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, each Proposer by responding to this RFP, waives and releases any claims against the AWJWA and each person and entity with whom the Proposer has or had a service contract arising from any information, opinions or materials conveyed pursuant to the foregoing license.

The Proposer should be prepared to sign the Agreement included in Appendix A. In the event a successful proposer fails to execute an Agreement within thirty (30) days after notification of award by the AWJWA, the AWJWA may cancel its action and reconsider other proposals or solicit any new proposals. No payment will be made to the Contractor until an executed Agreement is received by the AWJWA.