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NEWS

Rochester marina project expected to move forward

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Efforts to build a marina at the Port of Rochester are expected to resume after three companies submitted bids to take on the rest of the project.

Plans for the 85-slip marina stalled late last year when the city and the original contractor, The Pike Co., agreed to close out Pike's contract before the excavation of the basin was finished. Pike completed about half the digging work required, as well as some utility and road work involved in the project.

At the time, the company and city said they disagreed on how to deal with water while excavating the site. The remaining digging will largely take place below the water table.

The city put the remaining work and an additional phase of the project out for bid, and it was an open question until Friday who might be willing to take the job on. Opponents of the city's plans to develop the port have publicly questioned whether the troubles with Pike were tied to soil and bedrock conditions that they believe will make building there difficult, if not impossible.

Several contractors turned up Friday at City Hall to see who put in the winning bid.

Spencerport-based Crane-Hogan submitted a low bid of \$10.6 million and is expected to be awarded the contract if it meets all city requirements.

Mark Cerrone Inc. of Niagara Falls bid \$11.9 million and Sealand Contractors of Rochester bid \$11.5 million.

City Engineer Jim McIntosh said he had expected bids to range from \$9 million to \$12 million.

"We were pleased that even with the press around the project and all that, we had three bidders," he said.

If all goes well, work could resume on the marina by mid- to late April, if not sooner, McIntosh said. While plans originally called for the marina to open this year, city officials are now aiming for spring 2016.

The *Democrat and Chronicle* filed an open records request in November seeking more information about why the city and Pike parted ways. The city has yet to fulfill that request.

The city discussed options with contractors for managing the water at the site, but ultimately it will be up to the construction firm to decide the best course, McIntosh said.

The contract will call for finishing the excavation work, installing floating docks, roadwork and some landscaping.

Crane-Hogan is currently working on garages for Midtown and the Monroe County Civic Center, as well as a number of state highway projects, according to its website. It previously worked on the O'Rourke Lift Bridge in Charlotte, among other major jobs.

The company and two of its workers pleaded guilty last year to illegally dumping polluted water into the Susquehanna River while working on a project in Binghamton. McIntosh said the city was aware of this incident, but that it likely would not affect its decision on the contractor.

Crane-Hogan could not be reached for comment late Friday afternoon.

The overall marina project remains under its roughly \$20.3 million budget. While the city is still finalizing how much Pike must be paid, it is expected to be about \$7 million, McIntosh said.

A third, smaller contract is planned to retrofit part of the port's Link building to offer bathrooms, showers and other services to boaters.

Critics have sharply pushed back against the project, along with the city's plans to partner with a private developer to build a hotel, condos and retail at the port.

Bill Brown, a systems analyst who has been researching the project and is involved in the Charlotte Strong group, attended Friday's bid opening and said afterward that he still sees evidence the site cannot support development. The city disputes this claim.

"That place is just not stable," Brown said.

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