



Northwest Regional Planning Commission

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To: Fairfield Selectboard
From: Greta Brunswick, Senior Planner
CC: Cathy Ainsworth, Town Administrator
Date: September 5, 2025
Subject: Common School MPG Architect RFP and Septic System Design Update

Architect Request for Proposals

The Common School Municipal Planning Grant includes a budget of \$13,500 for architectural planning services.

The Town advertised an RFP for architectural planning services on July 25, 2025.
The Town received 2 proposals in response to the RFP (available upon request):

- Studio Nexus (SN) based in White River Junction
- Guillot, Vivian, Viehmann (GVV) based in Burlington

The CSWG reviewed and scored the proposals using a rubric based on the RFP. GVV scored highest for all members scoring. The following conclusions were noted:

- More hours allotted to the scope of work
- Fewer assumptions of work completed by CSWG
- Evidence of a process that respects community input and engagement
- Has past experience (and residency) and ongoing work in Franklin County

The CSWG recommends that the Selectboard accept the proposal from GVV for \$13,400 (pending reference checks).

Septic System Feasibility

The Common School Municipal Planning Grant includes a budget of \$3,000 for further investigation of wastewater capacity at the site in compliance with state wastewater rules.

I have consulted Cristian Jablonski from Bernard and Gervais about what might be needed next to ensure that an adequate and compliant wastewater system would be available for a restored common school. He recommended designing and seeking a permit for a replacement system (he roughly quoted \$5,000). The CSWG supports this task. While the existing system may be able to continue if the capacity and use of the building does not change from how it was used by the school, it would be in the best interest of the town to ensure a backup system is feasible

and ready to go if the existing system were to fail or if the system was deemed to be inadequate for new use of the building.

The next step would be to request a proposal from Bernard and Gervais for this work. Note: consider whether town equipment and personnel would be available for test pitting and ensure this is reflected in the proposal.

There are few options for funding this work:

- Negotiate with Bernard and Gervais for a scope not to exceed \$3,000 that makes good progress. For example, perhaps this could include completing test pits and preliminary design but not preparing and submitting a permit application.
- Fund the balance of the work that would not be covered by the MPG, essentially increasing the town's match for the MPG. (existing match is \$2,101; increasing budget for septic work from 3-5k would increase match to \$4,101)
- Seek an amendment to the contract with NRPC for project management for a reduced budget to allow for an increased budget for the septic design. (Existing contract is for \$4,510)

Please let me know how I can support moving this step forward.