



**TOWN OF STRATFORD
PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
STRATFORD, CONNECTICUT**

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

RFQ No. 2016-017

Issued: March 31, 2016

Subject: Evaluation of the WPCA's Governance, Structure, Relationship to the General Fund and User Rates and Fees

The Town of Stratford through the Office of the Purchasing Agent will receive SEALED PROPOSALS for furnishing the equipment described in the accompanying specifications, in accordance with the instructions, conditions and reservations that follow:

A. CLOSING DATE:

Proposals will be received until 3:00 pm April 21, 2016, in the Office of the Purchasing Agent, Room 202, Town Hall, 2725 Main Street, Stratford, Ct 06615.

B. INSTRUCTIONS:

Proposals are to be submitted (FIVE COPIES) and ONE digital copy in a sealed envelope/box and clearly marked with the bid number and description on the outside of the envelope, including all outer packaging (DHL, FedEx, UPS, ect).

Proposals must be delivered to:

Purchasing Department
Stratford Town Hall - Rm 202
2725 Main Street
Stratford, CT 06615

C. CONDITIONS:

Addendums: All addendums will be posted on the town website www.townofstratford.com. It is the responsibility of the bidder to check the website for any addendums before submitting their proposal.

Conflict of Interest: No public official or employee shall, while serving as such, have any financial interest or engage in any business, employment, transaction or professional activity or incur any obligation of any nature which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his/her duties or employment in the public interest.

D. RESERVATIONS:

The Town of Stratford may consider informal any proposal not prepared and submitted to the Town in accordance with the provisions herein stated. The Town of Stratford reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or parts of proposals; to waive defects in same proposals; or to accept any proposal or part thereof deemed to be in the best interests of the Town of Stratford.

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
FOR
EVALUATION OF THE WPCA’S GOVERNANCE, STRUCTURE, RELATIONSHIP TO THE GENERAL FUND
AND USER RATES AND FEES

A. BACKGROUND AND INTENT

The Town of Stratford owns and operates its own wastewater collection and treatment system which serves a population of approximately 51,000. The Town also serves portions of Shelton, Bridgeport and Trumbull. The Town completed a comprehensive overhaul and upgrade of its wastewater treatment plant in 2009 at a cost of \$62 million.

The treatment plant has a plant capacity of 11.5 MGD and is designed to remove 85% of BOD and TSS with a nitrogen limit of 356 pounds annual rolling average. The conveyance system consists of 189 miles of sewers and 13 pump stations. The Water Pollution Control is a division of the Public Works Department. The plant is staffed 24/7 and has a total staff of 16 employees. The sanitary sewer cleaning and emergency response duties are provided by the Highway Division of the Public Works Department.

Revenues, annual operating expenses, debt service and reserve funds are obtained and managed through a separate Water Pollution Control Authority Enterprise Fund. The Water Pollution Control Authority consists of 10 elected council members all of whom shall serve for a term of two (2) years commencing on the second Monday of December following their election and terminating upon qualification of their several successors. The Water Pollution Control Authority, as authorized by Connecticut General Statutes § 7-246, shall be the Town Council.

The current operating budget including debt service for the Water Pollution Control Division is approximately 11 million dollars. The current rate structure consists of a unit fee for residential accounts and a water usage rate for commercial accounts. Please refer to “exhibit (A) – 2017 WPC proposed operating budget”.

The Water Pollution Control Authority is seeking qualifications statements from qualified consulting firms for the purpose of selecting a consultant to perform a comprehensive review of the items listed in the Scope of Services and to outline the findings and recommendations for improvements and actions necessary to implement the recommendations.

B. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The purpose of this study is to retain a Consultant to review and make recommendations for improvements to the following:

a. Governance and Organizational Analysis

Examine the relationship of the WPCA to the Town of Stratford, namely:

- The determination of the membership of the WPCA Board; whether Board membership should be comprised of Town Council members, non-Council members appointed by the Town Council or some combination thereof; the use of staggered terms for WPCA board members; criteria for selecting WPCA board members (e.g., skill sets, stakeholder affiliations, etc.); authority and responsibilities of WPCA Board members; requirements, limitations or restrictions on the actions of the WPCA Board.
- Identification of planning tools and management controls needed for and by the WPCA (e.g., strategic plan, long-term capital plan, organizational succession plan, financial planning models, customer satisfaction measurement tools), and the present status and currency of such tools and controls. Review of WPCA staffing – use of direct WPCA employees vs. use of employees from other Town departments vs. contracting with Town departments or outside vendors for selected services.

b. Purchase of/Reimbursement for Services Provided by the General Fund

The Stratford WPCA effectively functions as a self-supporting enterprise fund within the Town's budgeting and accounting systems. The WPCA should reimburse the Town's General Fund for services provided to the WPCA, and such reimbursements should be made on a basis that is internally consistent and compatible with how the General Fund identifies or allocates costs to other Town services or programs. Absent an explicit Town policy to the contrary, WPCA reimbursement should be limited to actual and reasonable costs for actual services provided.

With assistance from WPCA, identify the services provided by the Town's General Fund to the WPCA (e.g., budgeting and accounting, human resources, data processing, etc.) and set forth and document the basis for assigning or allocating General Fund costs to the WPCA.

c. Review/Development of Long-Term Financial Plan and Rate Study

Identify on an annualized basis the revenue needs for the WPCA, including O&M and capital costs, contributions to reserves, and maintenance of desired / targeted cash balances. Review and document projected demand for services. Analyze existing rate designs and billing practices; evaluate alternatives. Review desired or suggested discounts, exemptions and rebate practices. Develop a spreadsheet projection tool that can be utilized for developing future budgets and changes to rates and charges.

C. QUALIFICATIONS

Eligible proposers will be those consultants, companies, or institutions that have the following qualifications:

- Experience and expertise in regard to the financing, operations, structure, staffing, operating policies and procedures and other issues critical to the effective operation of municipal utilities.
- A proven track record of analyzing the operations of municipal utility departments and making recommendations resulting in improvement.
- Knowledge of federal and state laws and regulations governing municipal utility operations.
- Experience analyzing departments whose operations are influenced by employee collective bargaining agreements and making/implementing recommendations which are possible under those collective bargaining agreements.
- Demonstrated practical knowledge and expertise in regard to “best practices” related to municipal utility operations.
- Abilities and experience with applying analytical and qualitative tools and models needed to undertake the work required under this RFQ.
- Demonstrated experience conducting rate studies and financial analysis for public utility operations.

D. ANTICIPATED DELIVERABLES

As a result of the above analysis and findings and the agreement between the Consultant and the WPCA, the Consultant shall be expected to present the following:

- Periodic meetings with WPCA/Town staff to discuss tasks identify data needs and discuss findings and recommendations of the study.
- A written report outlining findings related to the work undertaken in *B. Scope of Services*, and recommendations based on these findings that will enable the WPCA to deliver services in an efficient and effective manner.
- A proposed schedule and the actions necessary to implement the recommendations. Such plan shall consider and address impediments to implementing the recommendations, measures to address such impediments, and alternative recommendations in case such impediments cannot be overcome.
- Computer spreadsheet model capable of changing assumptions to project necessary rates and fees to keep WPCA’s present level of service while investing in necessary infrastructure.

E. TIMETABLE FOR COMPLETION

The WPCA is seeking to have a draft report and recommendations completed by a target date of August 31, 2016.

Questions may be directed to Peter Stallings, Superintendent, Water Pollution Control Division, pstallings@townofstratford.com / (203) 385-4065

F. CONTENT OF QUALIFICATIONS STATEMENT

Consultants are requested to provide the following information with the written submission:

1. Letter of transmittal
2. Title page that includes firm name, address, telephone/fax numbers and primary contacts
3. Table of contents
4. Background and capabilities of the firm
5. Firm's understanding of and approach to the study
6. Qualifications, availability and resumes of key project personnel
7. Summary of relevant experience on similar studies, including names and contact information
8. Proposed sub-consultants to be used
9. Services expected of the Town, identifying services, timing and scope any services to be provided by the Town

G. SELECTION PROCESS

Qualifications statements will be reviewed by an evaluation and selection committee of three or more WPCA/Town staff; one or more qualified consultants may be interviewed, based on the following evaluation criteria:

- Demonstrated experience of the firm and key personnel on similar projects
- Qualifications of assigned personnel
- Understanding and approach to study

Any short-listed consultants will be asked to attend an interview with the committee at which they will be given thirty minutes to present their qualifications and experience and thirty to forty-five minutes to answer questions from the committee.