



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Beaufort City Council approves contract to build new \$3.3M fire station at Ribaut Road

After months of review and negotiation, the Beaufort City Council this week agreed to move forward with construction of a new Beaufort Fire Station at 1120 Ribaut Road.

The City Council approved a contract with the lowest responsible bidder, Frasier Construction, to build the new fire station. The total cost of the project, including land, furnishings and technology, is \$3,299,837. Firefighting equipment will be moved from the current station on Mossy Oaks Road to the new site when it is completed, Beaufort Fire Chief Sammy Negron said.

Beaufort City Manager Scott Dadson and his staff, working with architects from Hussey Gay Bell & DeYoung and Frasier Construction, met in November and December to review construction costs.

Those value-engineering sessions trimmed the overall construction costs by \$243,130, according to Kathy Todd, finance director for the City of Beaufort. The revised construction bid by Frasier is \$2.545 million.

Additional costs to the project included buying a small adjacent parcel and soil inspections and site improvements. Also, the initial construction bids exceeded the budget. All told, the project is about \$554,159 more than anticipated two years ago. Tuesday, Council authorized use of capital fund balance reserves to cover the added costs.

At the time the project concept originally was approved, land hadn't been acquired and the effects of the geotechnical report about soil conditions and drainage wasn't complete. Once both of those became known, staff advised City Council that there would be additional site costs.

Further, it was determined that land adjacent to the main property would need to be purchased to gain access to the alley behind the fire station, which would improve both safety and efficiency and was part of the City's long-range plan.

The new fire house site is ideally situated for fire protection, Fire Chief Negron said. The site is geographically positioned between Port Royal's main station and Beaufort's current Fire Headquarters near the intersection of Ribaut and Boundary Street.

The new facility will replace the outdated one beside Beaufort Middle School and across from Mossy Oaks Elementary on residential Mossy Oaks Road. City Council hasn't decided what to do with that property after the new facility opens.

With City Council's approval of the contract, the new fire station is expected to be completed by Fall 2015.

Since the city bought the original property 1120 Ribaut Road property in September 2013, it also acquired a smaller parcel adjacent the Love House Ministries' bowling alley. The additional land addresses access, stormwater management and other site conditions. The fire station will be accessible from Bowling Alley Lane, a street to the rear of the property.

Negron said the Ribaut Road location offers:

- Direct access to the main artery between Beaufort and Port Royal
- Easy and efficient travel times to the entire coverage area for this fire station
- Excellent geographical positioning to reinforce and enhance the ISO 2 rating that helps reduce commercial fire insurance premiums
- Limited impact on neighborhoods
- Greater distance from large schools than the current Mossy Oaks station
- Smooth traffic flow for fire vehicles, including direct access to the rear of the facility (eliminating fire trucks having to back into the bays).

"We are very excited to have this project ready to move forward," Negron said. "The attention to detail will help make this a safe and efficient fire station for many years to come."

END