

April 10, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

In the past eight years, the City of Woburn has had three different Mayors, three different building committees, and numerous changes in the City Council and School Committee. During this same period, the City was building three new elementary schools, a new High School, undertook substantial renovations to three schools, and withstood a major flood in a middle school and a significant fire in an elementary school. The reason the City was able to do all these projects successfully, on time and on budget, was because of the guidance we received from the Project Management firm that we had chosen.

Public construction is a very difficult process for any community but it is especially difficult for a community that undergoes change in the positions of leadership. Many communities rely on their Architectural firm to guide them through the entire process, start to finish. Quite often however, architects have a conflict of interest because of design interests and/or financial considerations. A good project manager can operate as a overseer of the city/town's best interest in the areas of construction, design and finance with no conflict of interest. This oversight of all three functions gives valuable information to city/town officials for sound decision making.

During the preconstruction/planning phase, the project manager can educate city/town officials and offer guidance on how the process will work. Most building committee members do not understand things like the filed sub bid process and certainly need guidance through things like the prequalification process. Architects may have strong design teams and public relations groups but often seem to be weak in contract administration. The project manager fills this gap to ensure the city/town officials make informed, educated decisions which avoid conflicts that could lead to litigation. This is one of the most important contributions a project manager can make as litigation can be costly and often is avoidable. If it is not avoidable, it is important for the city/town to know what their options may be and what type of financial exposure they may have.

Members of building committees are volunteers who often are not experienced or knowledgeable concerning public construction. The project manager educates them on how the process works and how to evaluate decisions placed before them. A good project manager will have oversight on all phases of construction (including finance) and will communicate that to the committee. As construction moves from design to bid to construction to closeout, the project manager will educate the committee on what to expect and how to deal with unknown or unforeseen situations. The day to day oversight and month to month requisition review done by the project management team is critical for financial decision making by the building committee. The negotiation of change orders often become areas of conflict. This process, usually done between architect and general contractor, often has less negative impact on a job when the project manager is involved to mediate and represent the interests of the city/town. If there is a negative impact, whether financial or job delay, the project manager can help city/town officials how to handle it appropriately.

The City of Woburn has spent over \$100,000,000 on construction of new and renovated schools in the past eight years. All projects have been on time and on budget. There has been a minimal amount of litigation. We owe our success to the tremendous leadership we have received from our project manager, Pat Saitta of Municipal Building Consultants.

Respectfully submitted,

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