

ITEM TITLE:

Approval of the Selection of the West Wing of Hermon Hutchens Elementary School as the Site Location for Future Child Care Center Development. Postponed on 09/17/24.

SUBMITTED BY: Elise Sorum-Birk, Deputy City Clerk

FISCAL NOTES:

Expenditure Required: n/a

Unencumbered Balance: n/a

Funding Source: n/a

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Selection of the West Wing of Hermon Hutchens Elementary School as the Site Location for Future Child Care Center Development.

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

At the regular city council meeting on September 17, 2024, the city council postponed action on this item to the meeting of October 1, 2024. Purpose of postponement was to meet in a joint work session with the school board prior to taking final action on this item.

Part of the work of the Child Care Crisis Task Force (CCCTF) was to identify potential buildings that could be renovated for use as a child care facility. The CCCTF formed a Facilities Subcommittee to assess options, and the subcommittee did an analysis of various potential sites. The CCCTF Facilities Subcommittee was composed of Susan Love (0-3 with Families Alliance Representative), Tim Bauer (Valdez City School Representative) and Tim Mason (USCG Representative). Staff support and assistance for the subcommittee work was provided by Capital Facilities Director Nate Duval. One of the CCCTF's key recommendations for site selection in their final report was: "Contract with an architect to assess top facility (or facilities) and establish a timeline for financing and renovation of the space."

City Council held a work session on February 20, 2024 to consider next steps for implementing CCCTF recommendations. Council identified contracting with an architect on facility assessment as a logical first step since a portion of the INNOVATION grant funding was available for the work and since identifying a facility location would help inform other aspects of the planning process. The City of Valdez has also received \$3 million federal discretionary spending grant through HUD, with the help of Senator Murkowski, for this purpose.

The City of Valdez solicited Requests for Proposals and selected Bettisworth North Architects and Planners, Inc. to conduct the analysis in April 2024 based on their extensive experience with designing child care facilities. Bettisworth North Architects David Popiel and Heather Kapala visited Valdez in May of 2024 to conduct site visits, which included visits with stakeholders and VCS administration.

The architects then worked with their subcontractors and the city staff (Project Manager/ Capital Facilities Director Nate Duval and Deputy City Clerk/ Former CCCTF Staff Liaison Elise Sorum-Birk) to complete their feasibility analysis for developing four existing sites into a future childcare facility and an equivalent new construction facility at an undetermined site.

Their final report was presented to City Council at a work session on September 3, 2024, and their overall recommendation was to move forward with the Hermon Hutchen's site. The VCS Interim Superintendent/ Elementary School Principal was present at the work session and spoke in favor of the proposal. Council members were in consensus to move forward with the site.

Site selection is now being brought forward for official action.

The final report from Bettisworth North as well as the CCCTF Final Report are attached for reference.