

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ST. PETERSBURG

AIR CONDITIONING PROJECT

The air conditioning system at the Church is old and unreliable. Further, due to constant leaks of water from rusted pipes, the system cannot be operated unless there is someone present to ensure that the leaks do not cause substantial damage. Accordingly, the Board of Trustees hired a professional engineer in late 2012 to provide options. Three options were considered by the engineer: 1) replace broken pipes and attempt to repair the current system; 2) replace the current system with a similar centralized system using chilled water as the coolant; or, 3) replace the current system with a more decentralized system using refrigerant as the coolant. The engineer recommended outright rejection of the first option (repair the current system) due to the long-term unreliability of the system and lack of certainty that the central unit would not break down entirely even in the short-term. The problem with the second option (replacing the current system with a similar system) is that the entire Church must be air conditioned when the system is activated; there is only an infrequent need to air condition the entire Church at one time; and, doing so wastes energy and is expensive. Hence, the engineer recommended the third option (installing a more decentralized system utilizing refrigerant). The Board of Trustees accepted this recommendation and authorized the engineer to proceed in formulating specific designs and plans. The President of the Board of Trustees has emphasized, however, that no final decisions would be made until after the engineer had completed his study and after the Church membership had approved the cost of the project and financing options related thereto.

The design drawings of the proposed replacement air conditioning system were received from the engineer on August 19, 2013. The proposed system is composed of several condensing units, each of which will have multiple air handling units. Each air handling unit will service a specific area of the Church.

The process required to initiate and install such a system will be time-consuming and complex. As noted earlier, the drawings from the design engineer have only recently been received; and the process could not proceed without these drawings. The following tasks must be accomplished to install an operational system.

- A structural engineer will need to assess whether the building has adequate supports for the condensing units and other equipment on the roof.
- A contractor will need to be hired to correct structural deficiencies.
- Preliminary agreements will need to be initiated with a professional architect and a project consultant (who will probably be the on-site supervisor when actual work commences) to provide ongoing advice as to technical considerations and local codes and other requirements.
- An Invitation For Bid (IFB) must be formulated. The IFB will utilize forms created by the American Institute of Architects. The IFB will need to be approved by the Church lawyer.

- The IFB will be issued in accordance with standard contracting practice. Each bidder will receive a copy of the specifications and structural drawings in order to develop a proposal; and a bidder's conference will be held to answer technical questions and to ensure transparency of the process.
- A team will be assembled to evaluate the proposals. The team will include members from the Building and Grounds Committee of the Church, the project consultant, the architect, and, perhaps, a member of the Board of Trustees.
- As the drawings indicate, there are both mechanical and electrical components of installing the system. It is not clear at this point whether one contract will be issued to address both the mechanical and electrical components or, alternatively, whether separate contracts will be awarded for the mechanical and electrical components. Time and work targets will be negotiated before the formal awarding of the contract(s) to begin work and will be incorporated into the contracts which, together, define the overall project.
- Before work can commence, a separate contract will need to be issued to the on-site supervisor of the work. The contract will provide authority for the on-site supervisor to hire occasional laborers or contractors to perform miscellaneous tasks related to the project.
- A sequence of work must be established for the primary contractors, and the on-site supervisor and members of the Church with technical training will need to ascertain that work has been performed satisfactorily. A payment schedule will be developed related to successful completion stages and will be incorporated into the contracts.

Until responses to the IFB are received, the total cost of the project cannot be estimated with any degree of precision. Preliminary estimates by members of the Building and Grounds Committee with technical expertise range from \$300 thousand to \$350 thousand.

In addition to the time which is implied from the tasks described above, all contracts and/or agreements will need to be reviewed by the Church's lawyer and approved by the Board of Trustees; and both parties are going to need a reasonable amount of time for review and comment. The Board of Trustees may also require considerable time to arrange financing for the project. Hence, it is not anticipated that work will begin until November at the earliest. Depending upon the time tables proposed in the responses to the IFB, the work may not be completed until a month later. Even if the contractual process takes less time than is now anticipated, the Church leaders will probably not want work to begin until winter in order to avoid the loss of air conditioning during hot weather.

Periodic updates on the project will be provided through INFONET. Questions can be directed to members of the Building and Grounds with technical expertise in building and construction (Fred Russell and Reggie Craig)./