

## Assembly Postpones Road Service Area No. 1 Contract

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

A road maintenance and repair contract was postponed last night due to differing recommendations on who it should go to. Road Service Area No. 1 is the largest service area and includes Spruce Cape, Island Lake, and other areas just outside city limits. The current road maintenance contract for the area expires this summer and the assembly was set to award a new contract during last night's meeting. Borough staff recommended the contract go to B&R Fish, which was not the lowest bidder. Borough Manager Bud Cassidy explained the situation.

"The low bidder was AIM Maintenance with a bid of \$637,975. After staff evaluation they're recommending that it be rejected. Really that's based on KIB 3.30080, which says not only is the low bidder to provide the lowest bid, but also to have the ability, capacity and skill to perform the work. Staff has found really no evidence that AIM has had contracts to repair roads in the past. We know that they're skilled at plowing snow and doing other work such as that, but again this is the largest service area and there's a fairly ambitious schedule of projects to do within that service area."

Instead, staff recommended the contract go to B&R Fish in the amount of \$774,575. The staff's recommendation of the second lowest bidder wasn't a problem, except for the fact that Road Service Area No. 1's board favored AIM Maintenance. This left the assembly with differing opinions, and as Assemblyman Mel Stephens explained, little explanation.

"Now here's my problem: you can't simply cite this code section and say that's why we're awarding it to other than the lowest bidder. You must be specific as to why you are finding that the lowest bidder was not a lowest responsible bidder within the meaning of this code section and I don't think that has been done."

Stephens said he needed more reasoning behind why AIM is seemingly

unqualified before he could vote for a higher bid. Assemblywoman Louise Stutes agreed, and said the borough has service area boards for a reason.

“We as a borough and as an assembly have them there to get their input. They’ve worked hard, they’ve put a lot of time into this, they’ve perused all the information, they’ve got first hand experience with it and when they make a recommendation, I feel they’re pretty solid with that recommendation. My other concern is I’ve heard is that, well, AIM is a new company. It would be nice for this borough to be opening it up an giving new people and new companies an opportunity to participate in this community.”

Assemblywoman Carol Austerman said she is all for giving new companies an opportunity, but was uncomfortable doing so with such a big contract.

“This just makes me nervous that it is such a big contract, such a big commitment financially for this borough to award for the road repairs.”

In the end, the assembly decided to postpone the vote so borough staff could better clarify why they weren’t selecting AIM, and hear more from the road service area board. That contract is now set to revisit the assembly sometime in July.