

CONDO

MANAGEMENT

The process of analyzing bids for a painting and waterproofing project

by James L. Brown

The bidding process for a painting and waterproofing project is lengthy. To help you through the process, I've developed the following eight-step format, which outlines each step and offers some time-saving and frustration-reducing advice. You can use these specifications and your scope of work each time you send a painting and waterproofing project out to bid, and you can use some of these same methods to bid other major projects. This will provide your owners with truly professional service.

- 1) When considering which contractors you will ask to bid on your painting and waterproofing project, it is very important to do a complete background check on each company and its owners. This background check will tell a lot about the company. How well does the company pay its bills? Does the company owe anyone? Have the owners of the company ever been in trouble? This is important information that you need in order to make an intelligent decision.
- 2) Make sure all bidders are bidding the same specification. The managers and their owners should develop a scope of work based upon their painting and waterproofing needs. After the scope is decided upon, it is time to create a set of specifications. Deciding which paint manufacturer or painting contractor is providing the best specifications, including products, for an association's needs is always difficult for the board and its manager.
- 3) If you cannot afford an independent painting and waterproofing specifi-

cation writer, you can do it yourself. The next few steps will outline how ...

Start by asking three paint manufacturers with solid reputations to write the specifications. Request that they submit their package to you with the following: A) specifications, B) material data sheets with chemical percentages and breakdowns of the products, and C) a sample warranty in which you receive a list of projects where these products have been on for one or two years longer than the warranty being offered in their sample.

Managers, beware. Many times paint manufacturers advertise so you, the consumer, will remember their name. But don't assume that just because you recognize the name, the products are the best for your needs.

- 4) Take three different paint manufacturers' specifications and analyze the paint products from each company. Make sure you check the percentage of acrylic resin per weight volume. This is an important ingredient for acrylics. When checking for elastomeric contents, the acrylic resin is also an important item.

- 5) After choosing the product based on quality, warranty and longevity, you can now take the specifications from each company and compare them to one another. Each company will have similar specifications. Take the good parts out of each one and make your own. Your specifications are now finished, and include your specific intentions and scope of work.

- 6) You should now call three or four of the best contractors. These contractors should have passed your background check, be able to obtain a performance and payment bond from an A-rated bonding company for the cost of

your project, be licensed and be insured up to at least \$1 million. All of the company's employees should be working directly for the contractor; they should not be leased. The reason for this is that many times the workers' compensation rate is changed when workers are leased, and you become responsible if anything should happen. The contractor must carry an up-to-date workers' compensation policy on all its employees. This is important, because the state has exempt certificates for people who work by themselves or have just one employee. A contractor filing exempt or claiming employees as subcontractors leaves its clients wide open for lawsuits in case of an accident.

- 7) After you have chosen contractors to bid, it is time to schedule a pre-bid meeting. At this meeting you bring in the contractors and talk over the scope and specifications. Make sure that while discussing this you point out areas of concern, conditions and items in the scope. At this time the contractors will get a clear picture of their bidding responsibilities. Also at this time they might bring up items or changes that need to be made in the scope and specifications. This could, with your approval, become an addendum to the specifications and become part of the bid.

- 8) After the pre-bid meeting is over, the bidders should be given a week or two to turn in their bids.

By this point you have come a long way in the bidding process. Professionally, you have accomplished a great deal. You have three or four contractors, licensed and bonded, carrying the proper levels of insurance, bidding "apples to apples," using top-quality products and offering the most economical warranty.

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