



**CITY OF SOUTHPORT
BOARD OF ALDERMEN – REGULAR MEETING
COMMUNITY BUILDING
223 E BAY ST, SOUTHPORT NC 28461**

July 22, 2025 | 9:00 AM

Present Members:

Mayor Rich Alt, Rebecca Kelley, Marc Spencer, Frank Lai, Lowe Davis, Robert Carroll, Karen Mosteller

Absent Members:

Staff Present:

City Manager Noah Saldo, Deputy Clerk Tori Deviney, Public Information Officer ChyAnn Ketchum, Police Chief Todd Coring, City Engineer Tom Zilinek

Others Present:

A. Call to Order

Mayor Alt called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Alt led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Agenda

D. Old City Hall/Courthouse Architecture Firm RFQ Review and Building Tour

1. HDR

Bill Kincannon thanked the Board and stated that the team would be mindful of the time. He introduced the HDR team. Bill Kincannon identified himself with HDR's Wilmington office as the regional program lead.

Betsy Petrusic introduced herself as the project manager and point of contact for the project. She shared that earlier in her career she had been introduced to historic preservation and adaptive reuse projects, which made her

passionate about bringing history back to life and telling the story of a place. She referenced a recent historic courthouse project she had worked on and then turned the presentation over to Larry Lamacha.

Larry Hlavacek introduced himself as HDR's Director of Public Safety Facilities and stated that he has more than 30 years of public safety facility design experience. He added that he also has a personal connection to law enforcement because several family members are police officers.

Neal Andrew then introduced himself with Andrew Consulting Engineers in Wilmington and stated that he was born and raised in Wilmington and has provided structural engineering services across the Outer Banks and Cape Fear region for 30 years.

Bob Bittel introduced himself as the principal in charge with HDR and said that projects involving adapted, preserved, and reused buildings had been integral to his childhood and helped shape his interest in architecture. He said he had a deep appreciation for projects of this nature and commended the City for making this commitment to its community. He explained that the presentation included examples of projects their team had completed in the area and then turned the discussion back to Bill Kincannon to speak about the firm's Wilmington and coastal presence.

Mr. Kincannon stated that the Wilmington office currently has 15 staff members, including engineers and planners, and said the office includes personnel from the coastal area, from elsewhere in North Carolina, and from other parts of the country. He described HDR's range of work in eastern and southeastern North Carolina, including involvement with the Southport ferry dock area, emergency bridge design on Southport's Moore Street after storm damage, post-Florence washout work on U.S. 421, the Holden Beach pier replacement design, work with the Port of Wilmington, and work with NCDOT. He also stated that HDR wrote the grant for the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge replacement that secured \$242 million. He emphasized that the firm is committed to coastal communities in eastern and southeastern North Carolina.

Mr. Andrew then briefly discussed his preservation-related work, including the limited structural review report for the City Hall building completed in July of the prior year. He stated that his firm has annual service contracts with the City of Wilmington, the State Ports, and New Hanover County, and that they have completed numerous reviews of existing buildings, including courthouse structures and other historic buildings in the region, with the goal of salvaging those buildings in a challenging high-wind coastal environment.

Mr. Bittel stated that the team had recently worked together on the North Front Street project for the City of Wilmington and said that project was similar to Southport's project in size, scale, vintage materials, exterior finish,

and structural system. He said the team had recently received a preservation award for that project. He explained that the team strives to balance historic character with modern accommodations. He then outlined HDR's five-point approach to the project, which he described as local commitment, appreciation of existing character, collaborative spirit, thoughtful and safe design, and technical expertise. He said this approach would guide the team in developing a vision and scope of services that would best benefit the City of Southport.

Ms. Petrusic stated that the design process presents an opportunity to bring the story of Southport to life and carry its history and legacy forward. She said the project offers a chance to honor the past while designing the future home of the City of Southport Police Department.

Mr. Hlavacek said that as the City begins to think about its vision and how to accomplish it, HDR can bring forward its experience in law enforcement design and apply national best practices while still creating a customized local solution based on Southport's operational model. He said adaptable and flexible workspaces are important in police environments because operations can change over time. He added that officer health and wellness are important considerations, as is creating a professional workplace that can assist with recruitment and retention. He further stated that the historic nature of the building can be used not only to connect with the community but also to honor the history and service of the organization over time.

Ms. Petrusic stated that HDR is familiar with this type of project and has experience designing building renovations in a coastal environment. She said the team is people-first and has done this type of work before.

Mr. Hlavacek added that HDR has a deep understanding of the building codes applicable to the area as well as the building code requirements specific to police facilities. He stated that the team also has knowledge of law enforcement standards and best practices that can be applied to maximize operational efficiency. He said HDR analyzes every project for risk and would carefully incorporate safety and security measures in a manner that works operationally for a complex building with multiple user groups. He emphasized that HDR likes to involve all stakeholders in a collaborative design process and has built stakeholder interface opportunities into every phase so that everyone has ownership in the project.

Ms. Petrusic then discussed the proposed schedule and stated that the framework is intended to be solid while still allowing flexibility as the process moves forward and changes arise. She stated that the team anticipates nine months of documentation leading to permit ahead of bidding and then turned the presentation to Bob Bittel.

Mr. Bittel stated that the schedule is a tool used to protect the project, the budget, and ultimately the quality of the final deliverable. He said HDR has learned through recent market volatility that flexibility must be built into the process and that one successful strategy is to have the documents fully permitted before bidding. He stated that HDR has a trusted cost estimator on the team whose market knowledge can be used throughout the process to monitor conditions and identify opportunities to condense the schedule or adjust strategy.

Ms. Petrusic added that the team's goal is to be proactive rather than reactive and to position itself early to achieve the needed outcomes. She described that approach as a method of risk mitigation. She stated that one important part of that approach is early and regular discussion and coordination with SHPO, the City of Southport, and the Historic Preservation Commission because decisions involving historic elements are integral to the design process and the final outcome.

Mr. Bittel concluded the formal presentation by restating the team's five points of approach as local commitment, appreciation of existing character, collaborative spirit, thoughtful and safe design, and technical expertise. Mayor Alt thanked the team and opened the floor for questions from the Board, beginning with Alderman Lai.

Alderman Lai asked about the timeline for the project, including how long it would take and the steps involved. Ms. Petrusic responded that the current projection is 22 months to substantial completion, with a goal of reaching a permit set after nine months. She added that as the project progresses toward permit and bidding, there may be flexibility to compress the schedule and begin earlier than initially anticipated.

Mr. Bittel added that it is helpful to understand the City's needs and priorities in order to know what timeline to work toward. He reiterated that the schedule is a tool and that there are often opportunities to consolidate work, speed up the process, or take advantage of market conditions. He estimated that the overall duration could be in the range of 21 to 25 or 26 months depending on how conditions develop.

Alderman Lai commented that permitting would likely be one of the most difficult parts of the process because problems often arise during permitting. Ms. Petrusic agreed and stated that HDR had accounted for various review cycles with boards and would continue to work through those as the project advances.

Alderman Kelley asked whether HDR planned to meet with the Police Department in addition to coordinating with HPC, the City, and SHPO. Ms. Petrusic confirmed that the Police Department is included among the

stakeholders. Alderman Kelley stated that she simply wanted to make sure the department was not overlooked.

Alderman Davis asked whether the team had been inside the building and then apologized for its current condition, noting that it has been in that state since approximately 2016 or 2017. She stated that the City is in the process of reviewing, and he hopes passing, Historic Preservation Commission regulations regarding materials, appearance changes, and many factors within the historic district. She described the old courthouse as the crown jewel of the historic district and stated that permitting will have to occur within those parameters. She asked whether the team had reviewed those standards, and Ms. Petrusic confirmed that the historic district design standards had been reviewed.

Alderman Davis went on to state that there are many interior architectural features the City would like to preserve, including the ceilings and floors, and that those preservation goals would weigh against dropped ceilings, visible ductwork, and similar alterations. She remarked that some of the project images shown by HDR appeared more modern and stressed that the second floor of the Southport courthouse is one of only a small number of remaining antebellum courthouses in North Carolina. She said he understands the public's desire for the building to continue to look that way in perpetuity, while also recognizing the challenge of making it usable as a Board meeting place. She asked that during the site visit the team speak clearly about what they see and how they believe those goals can be achieved, stating that this would play a major role in her decision.

Alderman Carroll asked what engagement HDR had previously had with the City in relation to this RFQ, including interviews and meetings. Mr. Kincannon responded that the firm had not participated in interviews and had simply responded to the RFQ and asked some clarification questions in preparation. Alderman Carroll clarified that there had been no meetings and no interviews, and Mr. Kincannon confirmed that was correct.

Alderman Mosteller stated that although the building will be a police station, it will also function as a government center with meeting space and other public uses. She said she hoped the courtroom could remain intact in scale and character and agreed with Alderman Davis that preserving any remaining raw architectural artifact would be very important. She asked whether there were any project-specific challenges the team was already considering, while acknowledging that the question might be premature since several team members had not yet been inside the building.

At Ms. Petrusic's invitation, Mr. Bittel responded that the team had reviewed the RFQ, including the conditions assessment, and had walked around the exterior the prior evening after arriving in town. He stated that the building appears to be in better condition than some of the firm's earlier projects. He

also said he appreciated that some historic details still remain. He contrasted that with the Wilmington project, where so much had already been lost that the team had to reimagine what once existed. He said that in that project, the team reused flooring to create the front desk and to highlight the building's historic character in a different way. He stated that while there are certainly matters of concern, they are nothing the team has not encountered before, and he expressed confidence that HDR is prepared for the work.

Alderman Mosteller stated that she had many more specific questions that would likely arise as the discussion continued and noted that the RFQ itself addressed detailed needs such as public restrooms, ADA requirements, public restrooms upstairs, and other matters. She then asked whether the team had any questions for the Board.

Mr. Bittel responded that the walkthrough would be a good opportunity to take in the building with the Board, hear the Board's ideas, and begin more detailed conversations. He stated that, other than Mr. Andrew, much of the team's understanding so far was based on photographs and the contents of the RFQ. Based on some quick code-based calculations, he said the team sees a need to address accessibility throughout the facility but does not currently believe those changes would have to be dramatic because the existing layout appears to have good widths and arrangements that may be preserved while still making the building accessible. He said the building appears to be passing the initial test from what they can gather, but that the team is interested in seeing how those assumptions hold up in person.

Mayor Alt then asked about a reference in HDR's materials to raised floors for routing wiring. Mr. Bittel explained that raised floors were simply one possible idea and not necessarily something the team would need to do. Mayor Alt responded that the building contains 1844 hardwood flooring beneath a later floor layer that was removed during remediation and that the flooring is beautiful and could be buffed, waxed, and stained. He also described a stamped tin ceiling on the first floor, where the Police Department would predominantly be located, and said there is also a hardwood ceiling above that area. He said the challenge would be preserving the room with the brick wall, the 1844 floor, and the stamped ceiling while still installing modern wiring and additional outlets. He stated that the City would like that room to be capable of functioning as a backup Emergency Operations Center if necessary, which would require outlets and likely some phone lines. He said the challenge, as he sees it, is figuring out how to install that infrastructure without sacrificing the historic floor and ceiling.

Mr. Bittel responded that those are exactly the kinds of issues the team needs to keep in mind. He said the goal would be not to damage the historic character-defining elements, but instead to preserve them, show them off, or restore them if they are currently covered. He explained that one possible approach learned from prior projects is using the crawl space to address

certain needs. He said that if work in that area is necessary for remediation or other reasons, it may provide an opportunity to upgrade electrical systems, make the building more secure and weather-tight, and then reinstall the flooring after the limited work is complete. He stated that it is ultimately a matter of balance and again noted that Southport is fortunate to still have so many historic elements remaining.

Mayor Alt stated that the prior remediation appears to have been done relatively well because the building had sat vacant for seven or eight years and had asbestos and mold issues. He said many of the more modern interior walls had been removed during that process, which is why the piping is visible, and stated that the team would see those conditions during the site visit.

Alderman Carroll returned to the subject of the RFQ process and stated that for a project of this scale, he would normally expect a firm to be interviewed, present its response, and answer questions before a recommendation was made. Mr. Bittel responded that this has typically been HDR's experience, although the exact format can vary from a 10-minute presentation to a longer interview. Alderman Carroll stated that his concern was that a recommendation for another firm had already been presented at a previous meeting and that it came as a shock to him that HDR had not been interviewed before now. Mr. Bittel replied that the team was happy to be there now and appreciated the opportunity.

Alderman Davis reiterated the significance of the building, stating that the second floor should feel like a time machine taking a person back to before the Civil War. She said there are people in Southport whose grandparents or great-grandparents were judges or court clerks there, and he emphasized the strong local sensitivity tied to that history. He stated that he could not overemphasize how important that is to the town and said that it would weigh heavily in his decision-making.

Mr. Kincannon responded that he agreed with that observation. He stated that he is not an architect, but an engineer who retired from the Department of Transportation three and a half years ago and also retired from the U.S. Navy. He said that throughout his career he learned that the best thing a person can do is listen. He stated that the team hears the Board's concerns clearly and that its goal is to listen to the Board, the stakeholders, the Police Department, and everyone involved in order to understand those needs and bring them to fruition.

Mayor Alt then asked for clarification on whether the team had said the building was in better condition than most similar buildings they had seen. Alderman Lai echoed that question. Mr. Bittel replied yes. Mr. Kincannon responded that when he first saw the Wilmington building shown in the presentation, it had only part of the floor, two side walls, a back wall, no front

wall, and a roof that was largely gone. He said that in comparison, the Southport building is in better shape.

After no further questions were raised, Mr. Kincannon asked whether there were any additional questions. Mayor Alt then asked whether the group was ready to proceed to the site visit and called a recess so that everyone could go over to City Hall.

Recess at 9:30 AM.

Mayor Alt reconvened the meeting at 10:13 AM following the site visit and asked whether the HDR team had any comments before the Board asked any final questions.

Mr. Bittel stated that it was helpful to collect thoughts after seeing the building in person and said the walkthrough had been very beneficial. He stated that the visit reaffirmed his view that the building is in better and safer condition than many similar projects his team has encountered. He said he observed a great deal of original detailing and many signs of strong historic construction, including the thickness and density of the lumber, coloration indicative of the original construction, and old windows showing movement that suggested they were original. He stated that most of the detailing appeared to be in very good condition and that while some paint would need to be removed and finishes restored, much of that work appeared cosmetic. He also said the team had already begun discussing how to best sort and plan for the materials that remain in the building. He noted that some tin ceiling pieces would require custom replacement, but said replacements could likely be used in less visible areas while original pieces could be preserved for more prominent locations to maintain consistency. He added that even details such as the original door hinges were still present and said the building retained many signs of high-quality construction that are not commonly found in projects of this age.

Ms. Petrusic stated that one of the things that stood out to her was hearing how each Board member had a personal connection to the building, whether through paying water bills there or seeing the building in various stages over time. She said the team was excited by the opportunity to tell the story of the building and the story of Southport without dictating what that story should be. She said that standing inside the building, the history and significance of the place could be felt.

Mr. Hlavacek stated that from a law enforcement planning perspective, the existing building in its current state offers many advantages. He said the high floor-to-floor heights and ceiling heights provide room to accommodate new infrastructure, and that the newer wings on each side of the building could be used to route trunk lines while helping preserve the integrity of the large

community room. He stated that when designing law enforcement facilities, he looks for opportunities to maximize the use of spaces like the community room, which may only be used a portion of the time for one purpose but could serve many functions with proper planning. He said the location of that room near the center of the building would allow security access to be controlled effectively so that it could be opened to the public at certain times or restricted for staff use when needed. He also stated that there may be opportunities to reduce construction costs, including through the possible use of one double-sided elevator instead of two separate elevators, with one side serving police operations and the other serving the public. He said he saw opportunities for strong interaction with the chief's administrative areas on the first floor and noted that, based on what he had heard, there did not appear to be a need to fortify the building to a high ballistic or blast standard. He emphasized that law enforcement design standards should not simply be applied wholesale, but instead tailored to the actual risk and operational needs of the community. He added that privacy could potentially be improved with relatively limited measures, such as translucent film on office windows, and explained that his team always considers CPTED principles, or Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, including how views, movement, and security are controlled from both outside and inside the building. He stated that the building's layout appeared to lend itself to fairly easy restriction and control.

Mayor Alt then opened the floor for questions, beginning with Alderman Carroll. Alderman Carroll stated that one of his priorities is preserving the integrity of the entrance and ensuring that it leads to a common upstairs space that can be used by the public. He asked whether HDR believed the structure could successfully serve both police operations and public use.

Mr. Hlavacek responded that he believed it could. He stated that there appeared to be a natural progression through the building from the entrance, with the grand staircase off to the side, and suggested that an elevator could possibly be added in one of the newer additions, where doing so would be structurally easier than in the historic core. He explained that this could help create a public zone within the building, with access control separating that zone from secure staff areas. He said that public access could extend to the upper level and that the room itself could be controlled depending on its use. He explained that when the police need to use the room for training or as an Emergency Operations Center, access could be restricted, and when the City wants to open the space for public use, the access controls could be adjusted accordingly. He emphasized that flexible rooms like that are valuable because they can support a variety of uses and increase operational efficiency.

Alderman Carroll stated that he liked that concept and commented that one requirement would be that the current tables not be used in that space. Mr. Hlavacek responded that furniture selection in a police facility is a very

different conversation from furniture selection in a typical office building. He stated that police facilities operate continuously and that standard office furniture does not hold up under those conditions. He explained that chairs and other furnishings need to be selected with law enforcement equipment and 24-hour use in mind.

Alderman Davis then commented on the windows, stating that preserving them is one of her priorities. She compared the issue to churches that preserve elaborate stained glass windows through protective coverings or other means. She said the courthouse windows are old and in some cases show signs of rot, but she wanted efforts made to preserve them if possible. She also shared information about Legacy Architectural Salvage in Wilmington, describing it as a resource where materials from demolished historic homes are stored and made available, including flooring, tin ceiling tiles, and other historic materials.

Mr. Bittel agreed and stated that his team has used similar salvage networks in the past to source period-accurate materials, including brick, for historic restoration work. He noted that these resources can be both historically appropriate and cost-effective, and said the team would prioritize matching existing materials with those from the same era whenever possible rather than using modern substitutes that only appear similar.

Alderman Davis then asked whether the Board and staff would receive initial sketch proposals during the design process to confirm that the project is progressing in the right direction and to allow coordination with the Police Chief regarding functional needs. Ms. Petrusic responded that HDR's process includes review periods following both schematic design and design development phases, each lasting approximately two weeks, and that the team would be meeting regularly with the City and Police Department throughout the design process to refine details.

Alderman Carroll stated that while preservation is important, he also believes it is necessary to consider long-term durability and maintenance. He referenced modern materials, such as fiberglass windows designed to replicate historic proportions, and expressed that the City should not become overly focused on restoring original materials if modern alternatives could provide longer life and reduced maintenance while maintaining the same appearance.

Mr. Bittel responded that those are appropriate considerations and said the team would evaluate all options during the early phases of the project. He explained that HDR would conduct a detailed assessment of the windows and other materials to determine whether repair, replacement, or a hybrid approach would be most appropriate. He referenced examples from other projects, including churches where historic windows were preserved by adding protective glazing, which can improve environmental control while

maintaining historic character. He stated that a similar hybrid approach may be appropriate depending on the condition of the courthouse windows and emphasized that local craftsmen and resources would be valuable in that process.

Alderman Kelley asked the team whether anything observed during the site visit differed from their expectations based on the RFQ materials. Mr. Bittel responded that the building was in significantly better condition than expected, noting that assessment reports often emphasize deficiencies without fully capturing positive aspects. He stated that the building contains more strengths than weaknesses and that the interior scale felt larger than anticipated, which provides additional design opportunities. He added that there appear to be viable ways to install new systems while maintaining the building's architectural integrity.

Mr. Kincannon added that the building is in much better condition than when he had previously visited approximately a year earlier, when there had been water intrusion through the roof.

Alderman Kelley stated that she was encouraged by the team's understanding of police facility needs and emphasized the importance of creating a functional space that also preserves the building's historic character and supports the City long-term.

Mr. Hlavacek stated that police departments are long-standing institutions with significant history and that integrating that history into a historic building presents an opportunity to strengthen community connection. He suggested incorporating display areas and architectural elements that highlight both the building's history and the Police Department's legacy, noting that modern design trends emphasize community integration rather than separation.

Alderman Kelley agreed and stated that inclusion is an important value for the Southport community.

Alderman Spencer stated that she appreciated the walkthrough and the discussion, emphasizing her focus on safety, security, and creating a space that is both welcoming and resilient. She noted that during past hurricanes, the City lacked safe shelter options and expressed a desire for the building to serve as a secure location during emergencies.

Alderman Lai commented that it was clear the team was actively evaluating solutions during the walkthrough and stated that the Board appreciated the focus on cost-saving opportunities.

Alderman Spencer added that the facility should serve multiple boards and committees, including the Board of Aldermen, Planning Board, and Board of

Adjustment, and emphasized the need to balance police functions with public use.

Alderman Davis noted that the current meeting spaces are sometimes displaced by other uses, such as weddings, which creates scheduling challenges.

Mayor Alt commended the team for their discussion of flexible design and security, stating that he appreciated their experience in balancing access and protection. He noted that the Police Chief has identified historical materials and artifacts that could be incorporated into displays within the building, including previously unknown departmental history.

Mr. Bittel stated that he appreciated the opportunity to participate in the discussion and found the experience valuable. Mr. Kincannon thanked the Board for their time and reiterated the importance of the project to the City, stating that the team would continue to listen to stakeholders throughout the process.

Mayor Alt then asked for clarification regarding the timeline for obtaining approvals and permits for a historic project, confirming his understanding that the process would take approximately nine months. Betsy Petrusic confirmed that the nine-month timeframe relates to the development of drawings and that coordination with stakeholders would occur concurrently throughout that process.

Mayor Alt stated that the City is working to improve its contracting processes, noting that past contracts have lacked clear timelines, milestones, and accountability measures. He explained that the City is seeking to address those issues moving forward and that the discussion is not directed at HDR specifically, but reflects broader challenges experienced by the City and other local governments.

Alderman Carroll then suggested that the City have the building professionally photographed in its current condition to document its historic state. Mayor Alt asked whether he was making a motion, and Alderman Carroll made a motion to instruct staff to hire a photographer to professionally photograph the structure. Mayor Alt seconded the motion.

During discussion, Alderman Davis asked for clarification, comparing the concept to real estate-style interior photography. Alderman Carroll confirmed that the intent was to document the building's current condition for future reference. Alderman Spencer stated that such documentation could serve as a record of the building's transformation. Alderman Kelley added that detailed photography, including lighting and close-up documentation of

materials and conditions, would be valuable before restoration work alters those features.

City Engineer Zilinek recommended incorporating the photography into the scope of work for the selected architectural firm rather than issuing a separate contract. Alderman Carroll amended his motion to reflect that recommendation.

Mayor Alt confirmed the amended motion and called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously. He thanked the HDR team for their presentation and stated that the Board would take a short recess before continuing.

2. Moseley

Mayor Alt reconvened the meeting and invited the next firm, Moseley Architects, to begin their presentation, noting that the Board would have questions following the presentation.

Josh Bennett introduced himself as the civic sector leader for Moseley Architects and stated that the firm has worked with the City of Southport over the past few years on planning efforts related to Town Hall and the police station. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to present again. He introduced Lisa Bricker of Golden Leaf Studios, explaining that she specializes in historic preservation and has worked on hundreds of similar projects, and would serve as a key consultant on the project.

Mr. Bennett outlined the project team structure, explaining that Moseley Architects would hold the contract with the City, with WithersRavenel providing civil consulting services and Golden Leaf Studios providing historic preservation expertise. He noted that the team would also utilize a consultant for three-dimensional building scanning with TrueScan, explaining that this technology allows for accurate documentation of the building's current condition and helps identify areas that may not be readily visible during a standard inspection. He emphasized that Moseley operates as an interdisciplinary firm with architects, engineers, and interior designers in-house, which allows for a more integrated and responsive design process, particularly for complex facilities such as police stations.

Mr. Bennett discussed the importance of technical expertise in designing public safety facilities, noting that specialized knowledge is required for systems such as evidence ventilation, locker rooms, and the separation of public and secure areas. He added that structural engineering is also critical, particularly given the building's classification and the need to integrate

structural improvements without compromising the historic fabric of the building.

He then reviewed several law enforcement projects completed by Moseley Architects, including police stations and training facilities across North Carolina and Virginia. He explained that experience with Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) facilities provides insight into how officers are trained and how they operate in the field, which informs the design of functional police facilities.

Mr. Bennett also discussed Moseley's experience with historic preservation, highlighting the firm's headquarters in Richmond, Virginia, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was renovated as a LEED Platinum building. He described how the building was adapted for modern use while maintaining its historic character, including the use of specialized restoration techniques and the installation of new structural systems that remain independent of the original masonry structure. He emphasized the importance of designing improvements that are reversible and compliant with historic preservation standards.

He noted that incorporating accessibility features, such as elevators, into historic buildings is a key consideration and requires careful planning to meet both code requirements and preservation standards.

Mr. Bennett then discussed design considerations specific to police facilities, stating that these buildings experience significantly more wear than typical office buildings due to their continuous operation. He highlighted the importance of durable materials, thoughtful corridor design, and security features such as controlled access points and bullet-resistant construction in public areas. He explained that community meeting spaces should be flexible and may require upgrades for audio-visual systems and support spaces such as kitchenettes.

He further described operational needs within a police facility, including areas for report writing, equipment charging, and officer collaboration. He emphasized the importance of properly designed interview rooms, noting that integrated recording systems are essential. He also discussed the critical nature of evidence storage, explaining that proper design aligned with departmental procedures is necessary to maintain chain of custody and reduce the risk of errors.

Mr. Bennett stated that Moseley Architects utilizes a robust quality control process, including three-dimensional modeling and scanning, to identify and resolve coordination issues early. He emphasized the importance of clear communication and documentation throughout the project, including

providing visual representations and material samples to ensure alignment with the City's expectations.

He also addressed cost and schedule management, stating that the firm evaluates total project costs, including furniture, fixtures, equipment, and signage, and works with the City to maintain budget control throughout the process. He added that detailed scheduling and regular updates would allow the Board to track progress and maintain oversight.

Alderman Lai asked whether the team had previously visited the building or if the upcoming walkthrough would be their first visit. Mr. Bennett responded that he had previously been inside the building and that some of the photographs included in the presentation were from that visit.

Alderman Lai asked, since the Moseley team had already been inside the building, what their assessment was of its current condition. Mr. Bennett responded that when the firm first began working with the City several years ago, he had been unable to enter the building due to its condition at the time. He stated that the building is now in far better condition than it was three to four years ago and described it as being in serviceable condition. He added that, based on the team's observations, the building is in sufficient condition to be rehabilitated for the proposed use.

Alderman Davis stated that the presentation had focused heavily on police use of the building and emphasized that the structure is intended to serve dual purposes, both as a police facility and as a public civic space. She stressed that both uses are equally important and reiterated the Board's strong desire to preserve the building's interior architectural features, particularly the upstairs courtroom. She noted that the courthouse is one of the oldest still in use in North Carolina and is a critical part of Southport's historic district, and stated that both the exterior and interior must be preserved. She expressed concern that the presentation had not addressed the upstairs space in sufficient detail.

Lisa Bricker responded that maintaining the courtroom as a civic space is a highly appropriate and positive approach for a historic rehabilitation project. She stated that continued public use of the building aligns with preservation principles and supports the building's historic function. She added that, based on photographs, there may be significant historic finishes concealed beneath later modifications such as dropped ceilings or flooring, and that uncovering and preserving those elements would be important. She emphasized that preservation involves not only materials, but also maintaining the integrity and function of spaces, and stated that using the courtroom as a public meeting space would itself be an important form of preservation.

Mayor Alt then raised several questions regarding the scope of services outlined in Moseley's earlier submission. He referenced a list of exclusions in the proposal and expressed concern about items such as security design services, furniture design, and site-related work. He questioned how security would be addressed if it was listed as excluded. Josh Bennett acknowledged that the reference to security design services was an error carried over from another document and clarified that Moseley does provide security design services when required. Alderman Carroll questioned how such an omission could have occurred, and Mr. Bennett explained that it was the result of reusing a previous document where security services were not applicable. He confirmed that Moseley does provide those services and that a security systems designer would be included as part of the project team.

Mayor Alt asked additional clarifying questions regarding other listed exclusions, including utilities and site lighting. Mr. Bennett explained that references to utilities pertained to external utility services rather than interior systems, and that site lighting referred to larger site elements such as parking lot lighting, not building-related improvements. He clarified that the project scope would include relevant building-related exterior work, such as stucco repair and accessibility improvements, while broader site redevelopment would not be included unless specifically required.

Mayor Alt then asked if there were any further questions from the Board. Hearing none, he stated that the group would recess to allow those who wished to participate in a walkthrough of the building.

Before recessing, Lisa Bricker provided a brief historical timeline of the building, stating that it was constructed in 1854. She explained that a fire occurred in 1922, which resulted in the remodeling of the courtroom and many of the interior finishes, as well as the addition of the front porch and fanlight. She noted that another fire took place in 1957, which appeared to have been more contained based on available records. She further stated that in 1968, wings were added to either side of the building, and stucco was applied to the exterior, reportedly as a waterproofing measure to protect the brick per the newspaper.

Ms. Bricker explained that, in her experience, stucco-coated brick buildings can develop issues over time if the stucco is painted with materials that do not allow moisture to escape. She cautioned that this can lead to trapped moisture within the walls and indicated that this would be an important consideration when evaluating the building, particularly with regard to potential moisture infiltration within the interior wall systems.

Mayor Alt responded that the City had undertaken remediation work on the building, including installing climate control measures to manage humidity and temperature. He stated that the City believes the original flooring remains in place and is in good condition, and noted that portions of the

ceiling may also contain historic materials. He indicated that the Board would be interested in the team's professional assessment of these features during the walkthrough.

Mayor Alt then called for a recess of approximately 30 to 40 minutes to allow for the building tour.

Recess

Mayor Alt called the meeting back into order following the site visit and invited the team to provide their observations.

Ms. Bricker shared her impressions of the building, stating that it retains a significant amount of historic character. She explained that many of the interior elements likely date to the 1920s, particularly noting that the wood flooring appears to be narrow, machine-cut boards, which would not be consistent with construction from the 1850s, when wider planks would have been typical. However, she emphasized that the flooring is still historic and falls within the building's period of significance, making it important to preserve. She further noted that the windows appear to be original to the 1850s, potentially along with some of the trim, particularly on the upper level. She distinguished the later wing additions from the 1960s as non-original elements, explaining that those areas would allow for more flexibility in design, whereas the original portions of the building would require a higher level of preservation sensitivity. She stated that the team would develop historic integrity diagrams to guide decision-making, identifying which areas require strict preservation and which areas can accommodate more adaptation.

Mr. Bennett added that the walkthrough reinforced the need to carefully balance the building's dual functions as a secure police facility and a public civic space. He explained that these uses have different operational requirements, particularly regarding security and accessibility, and that the design process would involve working closely with the Board to determine how best to integrate those needs while preserving the building's historic character.

Alderman Lai asked about the anticipated project timeline from start to finish and potential obstacles. Mr. Bennett responded that the design phase would likely take between six and nine months for design, followed by a procurement period of approximately two to three months. He estimated construction would take between twelve and fourteen months, resulting in a total project timeline of roughly two years or longer, noting that this would be an aggressive but achievable schedule.

Alderman Spencer commented that the project would involve a balance between preservation and functionality, emphasizing that safety, security, and long-term durability are his primary concerns. He reiterated the importance of ensuring the building can serve as a safe gathering space during emergencies, including functioning as a secondary Emergency Operations Center.

Mr. Bennett acknowledged Alderman Spencer's concerns and agreed that multi-use functionality is an important goal. He explained that spaces such as the courtroom or meeting room could serve multiple purposes, including public meetings, police training, and emergency operations, but cautioned that the design should avoid compromising the primary function of the space. He emphasized that the goal is to enhance the intended use of each area while allowing for flexibility, without creating conflicts between operational needs or diminishing the effectiveness of the space for its primary purpose.

Alderman Kelley asked whether anything observed during the walkthrough differed from what had been expected based on photographs and prior documentation, directing the question primarily to Ms. Bricker.

Ms. Bricker responded that there were no major surprises. She noted that she had anticipated the presence of the wood ceiling based on earlier images, but seeing the extent of it in person was encouraging, particularly because it remains largely intact and has not been significantly cut or damaged. She stated that the condition of the materials observed was consistent with other historic projects she has encountered and that, in her opinion, the issues present are repairable. She indicated that solutions exist for preserving key elements such as the windows, including restoring them and potentially incorporating protective measures such as interior ballistic glazing in a manner consistent with preservation standards. She also noted that the removal of plaster in certain areas could simplify the installation of electrical and audio-visual systems, and suggested that outlets and wiring could be concealed within moldings to minimize visual impact.

Alderman Davis asked whether there were any interior architectural features that Ms. Bricker believed could not be saved. Ms. Bricker stated that she did not observe anything that appeared beyond saving, though she noted that the windows would require closer inspection due to evidence of deterioration, particularly at the sills. She emphasized that while repairs may be extensive, restoration remains feasible and that there are specialized companies capable of undertaking that work.

Mr. Bennett added that many of the architectural profiles used in the building are still commonly available, which would allow for accurate repairs or replacements where necessary. Ms. Bricker also inquired whether original materials such as beadboard removed during prior remediation efforts were

still available, noting that salvaged materials can be useful in restoration efforts.

Alderman Kelley responded that most materials removed during remediation were in poor condition and likely not retained.

Alderman Davis then raised a follow-up question regarding the windows, asking whether restoration combined with protective measures, such as adding an additional pane of glass, could be a viable alternative to full replacement, particularly given the high cost of new windows.

Ms. Bricker responded that restoring the existing windows with added protection is a viable approach and one she has implemented on past projects. She explained that because operability would likely not be required for security reasons, costs could be reduced by focusing on restoration rather than full functionality. She stated that her preference would be to retain the existing windows if at all possible.

Mr. Bennett added that Moseley Architects had faced a similar situation with their own historic office building in Richmond. He explained that the firm was required to preserve specific glass types and frame profiles, and ultimately found that rehabilitating the existing windows was both practical and successful. He noted that those restored windows have performed well for over a decade.

Alderman Davis then asked whether the team was familiar with the City's Historic Preservation Commission standards, noting that the Commission had spent several years developing guidelines governing materials and design within the historic district.

Ms. Bricker responded that while she had not yet reviewed Southport's specific standards, she has extensive experience working within historic districts across the Southeast, including in highly regulated areas such as Charleston and Richmond. She stated that, based on her experience, the project would likely align well with preservation requirements, particularly since much of the work would focus on the interior. She emphasized that the goal would be to maintain the building's historic character while introducing modern updates in a way that is distinguishable but still compatible with the original structure.

Mr. Bennett added that certain non-historic elements, such as exposed ductwork, could be removed as part of restoring the building's character.

Mayor Alt asked a follow-up question regarding the upstairs windows, noting that he and others have observed what appear to be very old characteristics, including possible waviness in the glass, and asked for the team's thoughts.

Ms. Bricker responded that the windows are configured as eight-over-eight and noted the presence of shutters, which she found notable. She also observed that gutters and downspouts had been added at some point in the past but are no longer present on the building.

Mayor Alt then offered an additional observation for the team's awareness, noting that the stair railing on the second floor does not meet current code requirements for height. He stated that while the railing may be historic, it will likely need to be modified or supplemented in some way to comply with modern safety standards.

Hearing no further questions from the Board, Mayor Alt thanked the team for their time and participation.

The Board took a five-minute recess.

Mayor Alt reconvened the meeting and stated that the Board had reached the point of discussing next steps regarding selection of an architectural firm. He outlined several options, including asking staff to further explain their recommendation, postponing the decision to a future meeting, or proceeding with a motion for selection. He clarified that one firm, Creech, was no longer under consideration, leaving the Board to choose between the remaining options.

Alderman Mosteller stated that, based on the interviews conducted that day, she was inclined to move forward with HDR. She noted that the firm demonstrated strong qualifications, relevant experience, and a local presence, having completed projects within the community. She also highlighted the benefit of having historic preservation expertise on their team.

Alderman Carroll agreed with that assessment, stating that HDR delivered a polished presentation and appeared to listen carefully to the Board's priorities. He expressed confidence that the firm would work effectively with the Police Chief to design a functional facility while also respecting the importance of the public and historic aspects of the building. He stated that he would be comfortable making a decision that day in favor of HDR.

Alderman Davis echoed those sentiments but indicated she would also like to hear input from staff, specifically the City Manager and City Engineer who had been involved in the process.

City Manager Saldo responded that he agreed, and HDR provided a strong presentation and demonstrated their capabilities effectively. He noted that Moseley also offers valuable experience and familiarity with the City, but stated that HDR's presentation helped highlight their strengths and what they

could bring to the project. He added that either firm would be capable of completing the project successfully.

Mr. Zilinek explained that when the RFQ was issued, staff used a formal grading system with assigned point values for various criteria. He stated that staff, including himself, Chief Coring, Planning Director Meehan, Public Services Director Stanley, and City Manager Saldo, individually evaluated the proposals. Based on that scoring, Moseley ranked approximately 20 points higher than the next firm. He noted that this ranking reflected the completeness of their submission, their process, and their overall approach. He also emphasized that Moseley's proposed timeline was a significant factor, as their schedule to reach the bidding phase was approximately six months faster than other firms, which staff viewed as important.

Alderman Carroll responded that, based on the presentations given that day, both firms appeared to be more aligned in their timelines than what had been indicated in the RFQ responses.

Mr. Zilinek clarified that HDR's original RFQ submission indicated approximately twelve months to reach bidding and a total project duration of roughly twenty-six to thirty months.

Alderman Davis asked Mr. Zilinek whether, after hearing both presentations and participating in the site visit, he still believed Moseley to be the better choice. Mr. Zilinek stated that he did, citing Moseley's prior work with the City and their involvement in earlier planning efforts, which provided them with a foundation of background knowledge on the project.

Alderman Carroll expressed concern that Moseley's presentation included limited examples of historic restoration comparable to the courthouse, noting that the example provided was a warehouse rather than a civic building of similar character.

Alderman Davis added that she did not feel Moseley fully understood or aligned with the Board's priorities regarding preservation of the building's historic interior. She noted that their presentation focused heavily on police facilities and did not adequately reflect the Board's emphasis on maintaining the historic character of the space.

Mr. Zilinek reiterated that his role was to provide professional input and that staff would work with whichever firm the Board ultimately selected. He emphasized that both firms are qualified and capable of completing the project successfully.

Alderman Davis then asked whether he saw any potential risks or drawbacks in selecting HDR. Mr. Zilinek responded that the primary concern from a staff perspective was the longer projected timeline compared to Moseley. He

again noted that both firms are professional and capable, and that staff is comfortable working with Moseley due to the existing relationship, but affirmed that they would work effectively with whichever firm is chosen.

Alderman Kelley stated that she found HDR's presentation to be very polished and noted the timeline they provided, which she understood to be approximately 22 months to completion, including about nine months for permitting and 21 to 26 months for entire project. She acknowledged that Ms. Bricker, who was brought in by Moseley, was highly knowledgeable and had clearly done extensive research on the building. However, she expressed that Ms. Bricker appeared to be more of an external consultant rather than a fully integrated member of Moseley's team, which influenced her inclination toward HDR.

Alderman Spencer stated that he was not yet ready to state her preference but shared his observations. He noted that Ms. Bricker provided valuable insight into the building's historical evolution, including changes over time and analysis of materials. He emphasized that understanding the building's history is critical when undertaking restoration work and stated that Moseley's presentation was stronger in that regard. He also observed that HDR's presentation benefited from having a larger team present, which allowed for a broader discussion across disciplines, contributing to a more comprehensive presentation.

Alderman Lai commented on the importance of presentation style, referring to "mood and manner," and stated that HDR demonstrated a higher level of enthusiasm and professionalism in their delivery. He noted that HDR's team members interacted seamlessly during the presentation, which contributed to a strong impression. He contrasted this with Moseley's presentation, stating that it lacked the same level of energy and polish. He also referenced a detail in Moseley's materials that appeared to be an oversight, suggesting that greater attention to detail would have been expected in a presentation of that importance. Overall, he indicated that his initial impression favored HDR based on presentation quality and engagement.

Mayor Alt clarified that some of the concerns raised about Moseley's materials were tied to a document that may not have been the final or complete version, noting that the firm had acknowledged an error in including certain information. He stated that he did not intend to weigh that mistake too heavily in the decision-making process and indicated that he remained neutral, preferring to allow the Board to determine the next step. He asked whether the Board wished to proceed with a motion that day or defer the decision to a future meeting.

Mr. Zilinek provided clarification on the process, explaining that any motion at that time would authorize staff to begin negotiations with a firm regarding scope and pricing, rather than constituting a formal award of a contract.

Alderman Kelley made a motion directing staff to open negotiations with HDR for the restoration and reuse of the historic courthouse for use as a police station and public chambers. A second was made by Alderman Mosteller, and Mayor Alt called for discussion. Hearing none, he called for a vote.

The motion passed unanimously.

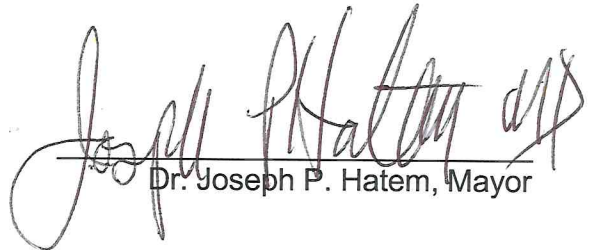
City Manager Saldo stated that staff would proceed with negotiations and return to the Board with a proposed contract and budget amendment for consideration. He expressed that staff was ready to move forward with the project.

3. Creech
Creech did not attend the meeting.

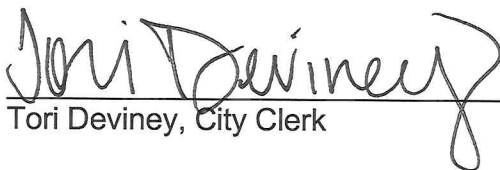
E. Adjourn

Mayor Alt then asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Alderman Kelley and seconded by Alderman Spencer, and with no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned.


Dr. Joseph P. Hatem, Mayor

(ATTEST)


Tori Deviney, City Clerk

