

To: Southborough Select Board

From: Craig Williams, Chair, Southborough Elementary School Building Committee

Subject: Feasibility Study - Architectural Services Contract

Date: May 4, 2026

---

As the Chair of the Southborough Elementary School Building Committee, I am writing to provide an overview of the procurement process for architectural services and to recommend awarding the contract for the Neary Feasibility Study to Tappe Architects.

A competitive Request for Services (RFS) process was conducted in accordance with the Designer Selection Law M.G.L. Chapter 7C Sections 44-58 requirements. The process was structured to ensure transparency, fairness, and the selection of the most qualified firm for the project.

The key milestones were as follows:

- **RFP Issued:** Wednesday, March 18, 2026
- **Site Visit:** Monday, March 23, 2026 – 10:00 AM
- **Questions Due:** Friday, March 27, 2026 – 11:00 AM
- **Addendum Issued:** Monday, March 30, 2026
- **Submissions Due:** Thursday, April 2, 2026 – 11:00 AM
- **Proposal Review:** April 9 – April 13, 2026
- **Interviews and Selection of Consultant:** Wednesday, April 15, 2026

The Southborough Elementary School Building Committee reviewed the proposals using the evaluation criteria outlined in the RFS and selected three firms for interviews. Those firms were Arrowstreet, RGB Architects, and Tappe Architects. Each firm was provided with a series of questions in advance that they were expected to address in their presentation, including experience with similar projects, approach to the work, qualifications of the project team, and ability to support a public process.

Following proposal review, interviews, and reference checks, the Committee identified Tappe Architects as the firm best suited to lead the Neary Feasibility Study.

Tappe demonstrated a clear and structured approach to feasibility work, including thorough evaluation of existing conditions, development of multiple viable options, and a strong ability to guide decision-making through cost, scope, and educational trade-offs.

While all finalist firms brought strengths, key distinctions emerged. Arrowstreet's experience was evident, but the Committee did not hear a sufficiently clear articulation of prior challenges or how their approach would be refined moving forward. RGB presented a strong understanding of facility needs and code compliance, but did not demonstrate as clear a process for option development or community engagement.

Based on these factors, the Committee selected Tappe Architects as the most qualified firm to lead this work.

References consistently described Tappe Architects as a highly experienced and professional firm with strong performance across multiple public school projects, including new construction, renovations, and feasibility studies.

- **Project Experience:** Demonstrated success across a range of school projects (new construction, renovations, feasibility studies), with strong familiarity navigating MSBA processes and public building committees.
- **Existing Conditions & Option Development:** Thorough and thoughtful in evaluating existing facilities, bringing forward multiple viable options while maximizing value and usable space within budget constraints.
- **Communication & Community Engagement:** Highly effective communicators who lead a team-oriented process, clearly explain complex decisions, and engage a wide range of stakeholders through public meetings and outreach.
- **Budget Awareness & Cost Management:** Strong cost discipline; consistently aligned design decisions with budget realities and educational priorities, with accurate estimates and minimal surprises during bidding.
- **Project Management & Scheduling:** Organized and reliable, maintaining clear timelines, holding regular meetings, and demonstrating flexibility to meet project needs.
- **Overall Performance:** Viewed as professional, collaborative, and dependable, with multiple references indicating they would work with Tappe again.

Based on the strength of their proposal, interview, and favorable reference checks, Tappe Architects is recommended as the most qualified firm to perform the requested services as outlined in the RFS.

Accordingly, I recommend that the Southborough Select Board vote to award the contract to Tappe Architects and authorize contract execution.

Please let me know if you would like any additional information.