



## **MEMORANDUM**

Date: May 20, 2025

To: Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway  
Common Council  
Finance Committee  
Water Utility Board

From: Pete Holmgren, PE – Chief Engineer  
Krishna Kumar – General Manager

Subject: Authorizing the amendment of a non-competitive selection contract with Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc. for design services related to the reconstruction of Madison Water Utility's Unit Well 12 (District 11)

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommend amending a non-competitive selection contract with Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc. for design services related to the reconstruction of Madison Water Utility's Unit Well 12.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Madison Water Utility's (MWU) Unit Well 12 (801 South Whitney Way) was established in 1958. It operates year-round and delivers water to Madison's Near West neighborhoods including University Hill Farms, Sunset Village, Midvale Heights, Westmorland, Crawford-Marlborough-Nakoma, Orchard Ridge, Summit Woods, Meadowood, Allied Dunn's Marsh, Arbor Hills and Leopold. In 2024, Well 12 pumped 550 million gallons compared to its 5-year average of 559 million gallons annually. The site consists of a well pump house and a detached 150,000 gallon above-ground water reservoir.

As constructed, Unit Well 12 operated in Pressure Zone 7 of MWU's water system. Master plan documentation dating back to 2006 has identified that system operations would benefit by upgrading Unit Well 12 to a dual-pressure zone well by making pipeline and facility improvements to allow it the ability to supply water to Pressure Zones 7 *and* 8.



#### 2014-2015:

MWU sought to make facility improvements to Unit Well 12's well house that would allow for dual-pressure zone operations and bring the building into compliance with modern building code requirements, including but not limited to isolated chemical rooms; an extension of the deep well discharge piping; and an isolated bathroom.

Through a competitive request for proposal process, Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc. (SEH) was selected as the engineering consultant to work with MWU on the design. The concept that was developed aimed to build an addition onto the existing facility and rework parts of the interior existing building to accommodate new pumps and piping. This was viewed as a balance between cost and need, however when the project was bid for construction in 2015, bids that were received exceeded the project's budget by an unexpectedly high amount. Contractors cited the difficulty in working within and maintaining much of the existing (and aging) structure as one of the key drivers behind the high construction bids. MWU elected to reject the bids for this project concept and reassess the potential for a complete facility reconstruction project instead.

#### 2016-2018:

MWU proceeded with an expanded project scope of work at Unit Well 12 that would include a complete reconstruction of the well house and also incorporate the needs addressed in the 2014-2015 project concept, with the added benefit of a completely new and updated building. SEH's consulting contract was amended to encompass this new project scope and pick up where they left off in 2015. The project design was completed and bid in 2018, however due to emerging financial concerns the decision was made to retract the bid posting until financial conditions improved.

In parallel with these efforts, however, MWU did complete a series of hydraulic pipeline improvements to the water system in and around Unit Well 12, so that it could support the dual-pressure zone capabilities when the facility was upgraded.

#### 2019-2023:

MWU's updated Master Plan document continued to identify the complete Unit Well 12 project as high priority work. In parallel with an updated Financial Plan document, the project was rescheduled for construction from 2026 to 2027. Ahead of the major project, however, MWU made a booster pump upgrade along with a few site modifications in order to take advantage of some of the dual-pressure zone piping that had been installed in 2017. That work was completed in 2022.



2024:

To fund the upcoming Unit Well 12 project, MWU filed its Intent to Apply (ITA) with the Wisconsin DNR for the 2026 fiscal year of Wisconsin's Safe Drinking Water Loan Program (SDWLP). The ITA also added work to replace the site's reservoir, in addition to the pump house. In anticipation of 2025 redesign work on the project, MWU initiated preliminary work with SEH under an analysis contract to re-evaluate their "shelved" plans and specifications from 2018 and assess opportunities to revise those documents with modern design standards. The preliminary work also further analyzed the potential for replacing Unit Well 12's reservoir, through the lens of hydraulic benefits; sizing; cost; and feasibility.

2025:

With recommendations from SEH's 2024 reservoir analyses, MWU has elected to move forward with the updated pump house design from the previous bidding process, as well as a new design for replacing the site's reservoir. While awaiting the Wisconsin DNR's Project Priority List (PPL) for the 2026 SDWLP, MWU initiated a design contract with SEH so that the SDWLP application deadline of June 30<sup>th</sup> could remain on schedule regardless of the loan eligibility determination. Given both the age of SEH's original scope of work contract for Unit Well 12 and the potential expanded design needs for the reservoir and SDWLP coordination, a new design contract was deemed appropriate in lieu of further amending the one that started back in 2014.

In mid-April, MWU received the PPL which indicated that the pump house portion of the Unit Well 12 project would be eligible, and the reservoir portion of the project was "undetermined". With this information, MWU will still aim to apply for both elements of the project by June 30<sup>th</sup>, and coordinate with the DNR on further determining SDWLP eligibility of the reservoir reconstruction between now and the fall of 2025. To capture SEH's full remaining scope of design and construction bidding work through the end of the year, MWU will amend the 2025 contract that was previously initiated.

Basis for Sole Source:

SEH was originally selected competitively for this project, and continuing to utilize their services for this work remains in the best interest of MWU. Professional design continuity is economical to MWU on the basis of time and money. Furthermore, the nature of this work is such that other design professional firms would not certify another's work in a situation like this, and instead would essentially be re-designing this Unit Well 12 design from scratch again. The proposed contract amendment meets the exception in MGO 4.26(4)(a)7. for the use of a consultant who has provided services to the City on a continuing project.



## **FISCAL IMPACTS:**

This 2025 contract amendment will be written not to exceed \$400,000 in total contract value.

This work has been budgeted for as part of the 2025 Capital Budget, and the funding is available in project account number 10452-86-140.

### Previous Related SEH Consultant Expenses:

- 2014-2015: \$82,000
- 2015-2018: \$253,000
- 2024: \$50,000

## **LEGISLATIVE PATH:**

5/20/2025 Common Council (Introduction)  
5/27/2025 Finance Committee  
5/28/2025 Water Utility Board  
6/3/2025 Common Council (Final Action)

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Memo (This Document)
2. Noncompetitive Selection Form (of Contract to be Amended)
3. Draft of Contract Amendment Form