



MEMORANDUM

To: Alderman Kevin Frost, Chairman
Finance and Personnel Committee

From: Sarah Leys, Director
Community & Economic Development Department

Date: June 8, 2026

Re: Extension of Contract: Fire Safety Consultants, Inc., Building Code Consulting Services

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sarah Leys".

CONTRACT DETAILS

Product/Service/Project: Building Code Consulting Services and Backup Code Official Duties

Vendor: Fire Safety Consultants, Inc.

Contract Amount: \$57,000 for Consulting Services
\$9,600-\$10,800 per month for Backup Code Official Services

Contract Extension: 6 months

Funding Source: Construction Services & Development Budget

The City is seeking permission to extend its contract with Fire Safety Consultants, Inc. to assist the Construction & Development Services with the following:

- Evaluating current staff and job descriptions
- Recommending management and staffing structure moving forward
- Reviewing policies and procedures and developing new SOPs
- Training staff thoroughly in the new expectations and roles
- Assessing code enforcement practices and making improvements where possible
- Onboarding a better software system for service requests, permits, licensing and plan review

The consultant's work has helped evaluate staff capacity, review efficiency in current software, and how the workload may be optimized by aligning roles and following best practices. Seth Sommer will continue as the contractor, and will provide a report of progress so far.

As a reminder, for the Community and Economic Development team, our first priority is advancing property improvement and development in Rockford, which will take focus from all of four of our divisions – Planning & Zoning, Construction & Development Services, Economic Development and Neighborhood Development. As Rockford has been experiencing success and attracting attention from businesses and developers, our department workload has filled with exciting opportunities to define future land use, lead efforts to preserve and create housing, offer more business

support programs, engage strategic partners in business and workforce growth, and so much more. This contract with Fire Safety Consultants will continue to advance improvement in code enforcement, centering this important City priority.

The extension will allow for the time to hire and train the new Deputy Director/Building Code Official, and will give overlap to ensure that the new software follows updated and development-friendly business practices. It will also give time for the new Deputy Director to become familiar with all policies and procedures and sign off on the final versions that are created by Mr Sommer.

If you have any questions, please give me a call at 779-348-7442 or 815-209-7077.

RESOLUTION
of the
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS
SUBMITTED BY: FINANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION AWARDING CONTRACT EXTENSION FOR BUILDING CODE CONSULTING SERVICES AND
BACKUP CODE OFFICIAL DUTIES

WHEREAS, the Code of Ordinances for the City of Rockford, Illinois, provides as in Chapter 4, Article VI, Division 4, that all purchases for and contracts for supplies, materials, equipment, and contractual services, the value of which is estimated to exceed \$25,000, shall be based on competitive solicitation and awarded by the City Council; and,

WHEREAS, competitive proposals were NOT received for the City of Rockford for the following, as the contract was not bid:

BUILDING CODE CONSULTING SERVICES AND BACKUP CODE OFFICIAL DUTIES

WHEREAS, the Finance and Personnel Committee of the City Council for the City of Rockford, Illinois has reviewed the staff recommendation for the aforementioned item(s) and recommends awarding the contract as follows:

Vendor: FIRE SAFETY CONSULTANTS, INC.
Amount: \$57,000.00 for Consulting Services
\$9,600.00-\$10,800.00 per month for Backup Code Official Services

WHEREAS, the Finance and Personnel Committee has determined that the funding for the aforementioned purchase shall be as follows:

CONSTRUCTION SERVICES & DEVELOPMENT OPERATING BUDGET

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Rockford, Illinois that the Mayor execute an agreement with FIRE SAFETY CONSULTANTS, INC. of ELGIN, ILLINOIS for BUILDING CODE CONSULTING SERVICES AND BACKUP CODE OFFICIAL DUTIES in the amount of \$57,000 for CONSULTING SERVICES and \$9,600.00-\$10,800.00 PER MONTH for BACKUP CODE OFFICIAL SERVICES, subject to the specifications in the contract.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall be in full force and effective immediately upon its adoption and the Legal Director is hereby authorized to prepare and deliver certified copies of this Resolution to the Central Services Manager.

The above and foregoing Resolution was adopted by the City Council of the City of Rockford, Illinois, this _____ day of _____, 2026.

ATTEST:

Angela L. Hammer, Legal Director and Ex-Officio
Keeper of the Records and Seal
City of Rockford, Illinois

Thomas P. McNamara, Mayor
City of Rockford, Illinois

Rockford, Illinois

Date: June 8, 2026

RECOMMENDATION FOR RESOLUTION

TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKFORD:

Council Members:

The Committee on Finance and Personnel having received a request hereby begs leave to report recommending **approval** of the contract extension with FIRE SAFETY CONSULTANTS, INC. of ELGIN, ILLINOIS for BUILDING CODE CONSULTING SERVICES AND BACKUP CODE OFFICIAL DUTIES in the amount of \$57,000.00 for Consulting Services and \$9,600.00-\$10,800.00 per month for Backup Code Official Services. The Legal Director shall prepare the appropriate resolution.

Kevin Frost (Chair)

Chad Tuneberg (Vice Chair)

Frank Beach

Dawn Granath

Jamie Salgado

Committee Action Taken:

Frost:	Ayes:___	Nays:___	Absent:___
Tuneberg:	Ayes:___	Nays:___	Absent:___
Beach:	Ayes:___	Nays:___	Absent:___
Granath:	Ayes:___	Nays:___	Absent:___
Salgado:	Ayes:___	Nays:___	Absent:___

City Council Update Outline

Building Code Consulting Services and Interim Building Code Official Support

City of Rockford | Consultant Update Framework

Framing note: The contract began as a broader observation, evaluation, and process-improvement engagement, with Building Official services available as needed. After Nelson’s retirement, the operating reality shifted to approximately 80% interim Building Code Official/department operations and 20% process-improvement consulting. This outline keeps the update council-facing while preserving a format that can be expanded with dates, examples, metrics, and next steps.

1. Executive Summary

- The engagement was initiated to provide observation, evaluation, process improvement, and Building Official support as needed, while allowing day-to-day Construction & Development Services operations to continue.
- Following Nelson’s retirement, the consultant role shifted substantially toward interim Building Code Official coverage, operational leadership, and day-to-day decision support.
- Current workload allocation is approximately 80% Building Code Official/department operations and 20% process improvement, SOP development, software/RFP support, policy support, training, and strategic planning.
- The process-improvement work remains tied to the CDS division goals identified in the staff update: permitting/planning/code enforcement software, staffing and organizational structure, process improvement, training, developing priorities, and vision/mission/values.
- The value to the City is both immediate and long-term: maintaining reliable code official coverage now while documenting procedures, improving systems, developing staff, and creating a more consistent operating model for the future.

Suggested short verbal summary for Council:

- “The consulting engagement has provided operational continuity during a leadership transition. While most of the current work is spent serving as Building Code Official and supporting daily operations, the remaining time is being used strategically to advance SOPs, software modernization, staff development, policy clarification, and process improvement.”

2. Work Performed - Organized for Council Update

Use this section as the main body of the update. Each subsection can be expanded with specific examples, dates, outcomes, and next steps before the final Council presentation.

2.1 Interim Building Code Official and Department Operations

- Serving as interim Building Code Official two days per week, with full support for code interpretations, escalated decisions, and operational direction.
- Providing leadership and day-to-day support for permit review, inspection issues, code enforcement matters, and applicant coordination.
- Leading weekly CDS staff meetings to maintain communication, accountability, priority tracking, and consistency across staff groups.
- Supporting continuity of service during the leadership transition and helping staff resolve issues that otherwise may delay permits, inspections, or enforcement outcomes.
- Participating in job meetings, site meetings, and inspections where Building Official input is needed.

2.2 Development Project and Field Support

- Assisting with development projects, including both smaller applicant-driven issues and larger, more complex projects requiring code-path coordination.
- Meeting on site for job meetings, inspections, and project coordination when early code official involvement can resolve issues or reduce avoidable delays.
- Coordinating with applicants, staff, and other City departments when projects involve cross-departmental review, infrastructure, inspections, code enforcement, or rehabilitation work.
- Providing professional recommendations and practical code guidance to support development while maintaining code compliance and public safety.

2.3 SOPs and Process Documentation

- Developing and refining SOPs to document repeatable workflows, reduce staff-by-staff variation, and preserve institutional knowledge.
- Current Rockford SOP topics include demolitions, vacant property process documentation, roofing permit valuation, and reroofing with solar process.
- Documenting and enhancing existing processes while evaluating where workflows can be simplified, clarified, or made more defensible.
- Recommended build-out for each SOP: trigger, responsible staff, required documents, approval path, software/data-entry steps, inspection/enforcement steps, handoffs, and closeout criteria.

2.4 Permitting, Planning, and Code Enforcement Software

- Assisted with development of the RFP for new permitting, planning, and code enforcement software.
- Supported evaluation of current system limitations and the operational need for software that is easier to use, more intuitive, and better aligned with best practices.
- Current staff-update framing: vendor review has been narrowed to approximately 3-4 vendors.
- Key desired capabilities include fewer clicks, streamlined workflows, mobile inspection functionality, field access to data, customer access, reporting, and workflow tracking.
- Recommended build-out: add RFP status, vendor evaluation stage, demonstration status, major decision points, anticipated benefits, and remaining City action items.

2.5 Staffing and Organizational Structure

- Observed and evaluated division needs and staff functions as part of the broader department assessment.
- Working toward an updated and aligned organizational chart that reflects current duties, reporting lines, supervision needs, and practical service delivery.
- Continuing to evaluate staffing versus budget and the level of service that can reasonably be provided with current resources.
- Helping identify where role clarity, workload balancing, or supervisor alignment can improve consistency and accountability.

2.6 Training, Certifications, and Staff Development

- Supported a holistic approach to staff training, including technical, leadership, administrative, and soft-skill development.
- Assisted in two supervisors and one staff person obtaining ICC certification.
- Continuing to support certification readiness, practical code-application consistency, and employee/division betterment.
- Council message: certification progress improves internal capacity, reduces dependence on outside support over time, and strengthens the quality and consistency of service delivery.

2.7 Developing Priorities, Level of Service, and Accountability

- Helping determine priorities for each staff group based on current staffing levels, budget, workload, and community/development needs.
- Supporting communication regarding what the division can provide, what level of service is realistic, and where priorities should be clearly documented.
- Continuing to evaluate all aspects of the division, including procedures, staffing, software, training, customer service, and metrics.
- Integrating a vision/mission/values framework: why the division does the work, how the work matters to the community, guiding principles, and measurable accountability.

2.8 Vacant Property, Problem Property, and Demolition Coordination

- Participating in Demo Team meetings.
- Participating in Problem Property / Property Solutions discussions.
- Continuing process documentation for vacant property identification, tracking, enforcement, and resolution.
- Supporting coordination between code enforcement, legal, inspections, demolition, rehabilitation, and property-solutions workflows.

2.9 Policy, Board, Energy Code, and Rehabilitation Support

- Prepared or supported Mechanical Board memos regarding statutory authorization and reciprocity.
- Assisting with Energy Code update work, including administrative impacts, applicant clarity, permitting effects, and staff implementation needs.
- Assisting with Community and Economic Development rehabilitation projects as requested.
- Supporting policy clarification where code administration, board authority, licensing, reciprocity, enforcement procedures, or energy-code implementation need a defensible written basis.

3. Status Matrix - Fill-In Format

Use this table to convert the outline into a final Council update. Fill in dates, examples, current status, metrics, and next steps where available.

Work Area	Current Status	Council-Friendly Update	Build-Out / Metrics to Add
Interim Building Code Official / Operations	Ongoing	Approx. 80% of current time; code decisions, department leadership, weekly CDS meetings, permit/inspection support.	Add reporting period examples; add count of escalated issues, meetings, inspections, or decisions handled.
Development Project Support	Ongoing	Supports small and large development projects; attends job meetings/site meetings/inspections.	Add 2-4 representative project examples and outcomes.
SOPs / Process Documentation	In progress	Demolitions; vacant property process documentation; roofing permit valuation; reroofing with solar.	Show each SOP as draft / under review / implemented; identify next SOPs.
Software RFP / Vendor Evaluation	In progress	RFP developed for permitting, planning, and code enforcement software; narrowed to approximately 3-4 vendors.	Add vendor-evaluation stage, demonstration schedule, scoring/evaluation status, and next decision point.
Staffing and Organizational Structure	In progress	Observed/evaluated division needs; working on updated and aligned org chart; staffing vs. budget analysis.	Add proposed org chart status, staffing gaps, and level-of-service implications.
Training and Certifications	Ongoing	Holistic training approach; technical, leadership, administrative, soft skills; assisted two supervisors and one staff person with ICC certification.	Add certifications obtained, in progress, and recommended next training priorities.
Priorities / Vision / Metrics	In progress	Developing priorities by group; communicating abilities and service level; vision, mission, values, metrics, and accountability.	Add 3-5 core metrics Council can understand and track over time.
Vacant / Problem Property / Demolition Coordination	Ongoing	Demo Team participation; Problem Property / Property Solutions participation; vacant property workflow documentation.	Add property/process metrics if available: verified vacant properties, demo cases, backlog, resolution status.
Policy / Board / Energy Code / Rehab Support	Ongoing	Mechanical Board memos; Energy Code update; CED rehab project support; defensible policy clarification.	Add completed memos, pending decisions, ordinance/checklist/training status, and remaining policy questions.