

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION  
RFI No. 20-03-02-REV 1

Operation and Management of the  
Colonial Theatre in Downtown Laconia, NH



March, 2020

## I. SUMMARY

The City of Laconia (hereinafter "the City") is presenting a rare opportunity for a qualified management entity to join a strategic partnership to operate and manage the historic Colonial Theatre in downtown Laconia.

This opportunity commences with the issuance of this Request for Information (RFI) through which qualified management entities are invited to present their qualifications, management plans, financial backgrounds, and most importantly their vision as the exclusive manager of the Colonial Theatre.

The selection process will take place in two parts. The first shall detail the qualifications of the submitter to perform the work detailed in this RFI. Once a decision has been made concerning which submitters are qualified, as determined by the Colonial Theatre Planning Committee, those determined qualified shall be requested to submit a full proposal detailing how they will approach the project and their estimate of cost. Interviews and/or presentations, to the Committee and/or various invited parties of interest, may be required of any submitter at any time in the process in order to determine qualifications and a recommendation to the Laconia City Council, which will make the ultimate selection.

Information submitted will be evaluated in the context of two primary goals:

1. Securing a financially stable entity that will effectively manage, operate and maintain a facility which will result in becoming a first class, cultural and civic venue and will provide a wide array of programming for Laconia and its surrounding areas.
2. Operating the Colonial Theatre in a manner that will support and foster the presentation of artistic and/or cultural activities in the City of Laconia as well as maximizing the economic impacts of the Theatre in downtown Laconia and the Lakes Region.

The selected 3rd party operator will oversee and manage the venue including the following areas:

- The 750 seat auditorium
- Onsite storage space dedicated to the theater
- Front of the house space intended to be used as concession areas, ticket offices and any marketing space
- Manage 5000 square feet of Back-of-the-House space that could also accommodate receptions and meetings

*\*\*The residential and retail spaces are not included as part of this opportunity\*\**

## **II. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this RFI are to:

1. Start the exchange of information by outlining in this RFI the desires of the City.
2. Continue the dialogue through written submissions, interviews and/or presentations.
3. Set forth a process under which the City, through the Colonial Theatre Planning Committee, can identify qualified proposers, evaluate proposals received and ultimately select and negotiate an agreement with the successful proposer.

## **III. INTRODUCTION AND LOCATION**

The Colonial Theatre, located in the heart of Downtown Laconia at 617 Main Street, is one of the most significant historic structures in the Lakes Region of NH. The Colonial Theatre revitalization project is comprised of three distinct mixed-use developments which include renovations of the historic Colonial Theatre, renovation of former apartment units into upscale marketable residential use, and four storefront commercial units. The total sq. footage of the property is approximately 39,000. The project is one of the largest historic preservation projects in state history, while its' design, performance, and technical capacity will make it one of the most advanced civic auditoriums in New Hampshire.

Laconia is the county seat of Belknap County, with a year-round population of 16,000. A significant economic driver of the community is travel and tourism and the Colonial Theatre will play a critical role in supporting the local economy. The City, Belknap Economic Development Council (BEDC) and other state and federal partners have joined forces for the redevelopment of the Colonial Theatre block in Laconia. With more than ten government and private funding partners augmenting over 300 community leaders investing in the project, the renovated theater, housing, and commercial spaces will provide cultural enrichment to our region and drive economic activity in downtown Laconia.

## **IV. VISION FOR THE COLONIAL THEATRE**

The City and BEDC envisions the Colonial Theatre becoming the preeminent center for all civic performances, performing arts clubs, and third party organizations to hold, host and drive cultural arts, community events, and professional performances into our community. When completed, the Colonial Theatre will be the largest indoor performing arts stage in central New Hampshire providing an economic stimulus for future generations. With a planned opening in January 2021, the Colonial Theatre will also be a catalyst for the development and enrichment of the arts in the Lakes Region.

## **V. SERVICES REQUIRED**

The City, BEDC, and many other stakeholders have identified the renovation and reuse of the Colonial Theatre, together with the historical preservation of the building, as a priority for the future of Laconia. The unique potential and location provide an exceptional opportunity for the enrichment of the City and the community.

The City recognizes the need for professional marketing, operations, and management of the Colonial Theatre over a three-to-five-year lease term. It has set the following operational priorities for the selected respondent including but not limited to:

- Provide an on-site manager, acceptable to the City, to manage the day-to-day building operations of the Colonial Theatre in a cost-effective and high-quality manner.
- Work strategically to achieve a high level of activation of the building for events and programming.
- Create a vibrant entertainment, education, and cultural hub in the center of downtown Laconia.
- Develop and implement strategies to engage with existing community groups, attract new strategic partners and events.
- Support the City's investment in the Colonial Theatre through exercising the highest standard of maintenance and preservation of the building with respect to its historic significance.
- The Colonial Theatre is a civic auditorium, as such, it will be a priority to facilitate the use of the space by local, civic, educational or other groups through rental or alternative arrangements.
- Work collaboratively with civic organizations, non-profits, and the Laconia schools so that they may use the facility, without cost to them, for up to 28 days per calendar year.

## **VI. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION**

The Colonial Theatre is over 100 years old and is currently undergoing an extensive, multi-million dollar renovation which will be completed by the end of 2020. Once completed, the theater will seat 750 patrons and be equipped with state of the art A/V and lighting equipment. Reception and concession spaces will be available adjacent to the theater as well as off-street parking. The Colonial Theatre block will also include privately owned, high-end residential units on the second and third floors and four commercial retail units fronting Main Street. When completed the Colonial Theatre block will be a vibrant mixed-use facility in the heart of downtown Laconia.

## VII. MASTER LANDLORD OBLIGATION

Once renovations are completed the City of Laconia and the BEDC, as master landlords, will be responsible for costs associated with utilities including electricity, heating fuel, property insurance, water, sewer, and internet. This obligation will run concurrently with the contract term for the theater's management and operations. The annual lease rate of the facility shall be \$1.

## VIII. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The City of Laconia invites interested parties to respond to this RFI with the information requested below which will be used, in conjunction with interviews and /or presentations, to determine qualified respondents who will then be asked to submit a full proposal detailing how they will approach the project and an estimate of cost.

- A. Each submission must be accompanied by a respondent's background statement that includes the following information:
- Firm / Organization Name;
  - Address, contact name, phone number and e-mail addresses for the applicant;
  - Structure of firm /organization, e.g. nonprofit, corporation;
  - Years that firm /organization has been in business;
  - Names of firm /organization principals / directors;
  - Financial information in the form of a current financial statement and balance sheet;
  - Listing of any actions (within the last 10 years) taken by any regulatory agency involving the firm /organization or its agents or employees with respect to any work performed;
  - Listing of any litigation (within the last 10 years) involving the firm or its agents or employees with respect to any work performed;
  - Names of persons, with contact information, who can be contacted as references. At least 3 references must be provided;
  - Demonstration of ability to obtain all appropriate casualty /liability insurance coverage applicable to the services.
- B. As part of the submission, a description of the intended management structure of the building must be included and must also include the following material:
- **Building Operations**
    - Provide a description of the submitter's approach for building operations including ongoing daily or routine maintenance that preserves and enhances the significant investment made by the City of Laconia in the facility.
    - Include services that will be provided internally and outline services that will be provided through contracted services.

- Who will be responsible for production management of events and operation of all technical fixtures of the theater?
- **Management of Event Activities**
  - Provide a description of the operation of the Colonial Theatre as an assembly/event space that fulfills its mission.
  - Provide information on strategies and procedures that will be utilized in managing the Colonial Theatre and creating beneficial use in supporting the goals of initial activation in January of 2021.
  - Include a strategy for consistent use and activation of the Colonial Theatre.
  - Also include information on the contemplated users and events to be solicited, services to be provided internally related to event sets/strikes & production and services that may be chosen to be subcontracted to other entities, organizations, or businesses to support the activation.
- **Qualifications**
  - Summarize the respondent's experience on similar projects, activities managed, or properties operated. Include the listing, sizing, and description of other facilities that applicant has managed.
- **Sales & Marketing Plan**
  - Create a description of a communication and marketing plan that would be implemented for the Colonial Theatre. Plans should involve periodic events which invite and encourage public viewing and use of the space. Include an innovative and creative strategy for selling and marketing events for the specific opportunities within the Colonial Theatre.

More detailed descriptions, such as photographs, video or project brochures of specific activities referenced as relevant experiences may also be included, but are not required.

## **IX. General Terms and Conditions**

The RFI is being issued by the City of Laconia with contact and submission directed to:

City of Laconia  
Attn: Jonathan Gardner  
45 Beacon Street East  
Laconia, NH 03246  
603-524-3877 ext. 222  
[jgardner@laconianh.gov](mailto:jgardner@laconianh.gov)

- Proposals, requested from qualified respondents, shall be valid for not less than ninety (90) days from the date of the letter notifying respondents of their qualified status.
- The duration of the operational agreement shall be for a three-year period with consecutive recurring two-year options for renewal with the consent of both parties.
- The successful Proposer will work with the City to provide an annual update on facility operations including, but not limited to, the amount of activation which took place throughout the year and an operating financial report.
- The City shall provide no funding to support the day-to-day operations or programming of The Colonial Theatre beyond that outlined previously under the Master Landlord Obligation section.
- The City assumes no liability for any fees, costs or expenses incurred in connection with the preparation and / or submission of the RFI response by the respondent or the corresponding proposal requested of the qualified submitters, or for any other fees, costs or expenses incurred prior to the official selection.
- All information contained in this RFI is believed to be complete and accurate. Nevertheless, it is the respondent's sole responsibility to conduct its own due diligence and verify all factual statements contained herein.
- The respondent acknowledges any building modifications, including any temporary improvement affixed to the building, will require City and/or State approval along with receipt of required permits.

**Site Tour:**

Prior to submission, potential respondents are invited to tour the site. To schedule a site tour please contact Jonathan Gardner (contact information below) for arrangements.

**Submittal Date:**

Submissions to this RFI are due to the City by **12:00 PM local time on April 17, 2020.**

Submissions must be clearly labeled as follows:

TITLE: "Operation and Management of the Colonial Theatre RFI No. 20-03-02"

FROM: Names and Address of Applicant

TO: **City of Laconia**  
**Attn: Jonathan Gardner**  
**45 Beacon Street East**  
**Laconia, NH 03246**  
**603-524-3877 ext. 222**  
[jgardner@laconianh.gov](mailto:jgardner@laconianh.gov)

**Submittal requirements:**

Respondents must provide one (1) original, one (1) electronic, and ten (10) copies of their submission.

- Submissions shall be no more than 20 face pages printed double-sided.
- Shall include a short biography of the firm including relevant experience of key personnel including the proposed staff assigned as the contact/liaison with the City.
- Relevant responses to Sections A & B of proposal requirements

**Rejection of Proposals:**

The City of Laconia reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all proposals or any part thereof, to waive any formality in the process, and to accept the proposal considered to be in the best interest of the City. Failure to submit all information called for may be sufficient grounds for disqualification. The City of Laconia reserves the right to cancel this request at any time for any reason.

**Review of Proposals:**

A review committee shall be established to evaluate the submitted qualification statements and corresponding proposals to provide a recommendation to the City of Laconia. No specific date has been identified for review.

**Interview:**

The City may require the respondents to provide an interview/presentation to the review Committee and/or City Council. If this is determined to be required, a separate time will be established for the interview/presentation, not to exceed the length of 2 hours, with key staff personnel outlined in the responses.



**RFI No. 20-03-02**

**Acknowledgment of RFI Requirements:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, of  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title Firm/Organization

hereby acknowledge that I fully understand the terms, conditions and requirements contained within the Request for Information for the Operation and Management of the Colonial Theatre.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date