

## DESIGN/BUILD RFP

### DETERMINATION DECISION MEMO

#### RESTORATION AND REFIT OF THE U.S. BRIG *NIAGARA*

**Project Number:** D.G.S. 974-9

**Contract Number:** 974-9.1

**Project Location:** Erie County

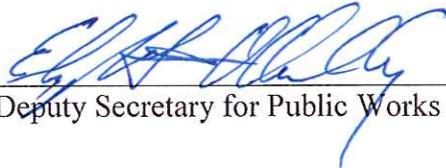
#### **DETERMINATION REGARDING THE USE OF THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) METHOD OF PROCUREMENT**

The Department is seeking a qualified maritime architect and maritime builder knowledgeable and experienced in the restoration and reconstruction of large historic wooden sailing vessels to design, fabricate, construct and manage the restoration and refit of the U.S. Brig *Niagara*, currently located in a leased facility in Erie. The Commonwealth is currently conducting an evaluation of existing conditions of the ship which will clarify the final scope of work, but at a minimum, the scope will involve:

- Utilizing the expertise of a maritime architect to design all the necessary modifications to make the *Niagara* fully sound and seaworthy; and
- Upgrading the vessel to meet maritime standards necessary to obtain recertification to allow continued use as a sailing school vessel, with particular attention to CRF 46 Subchapter R for service on partially protected waters as defined by the U.S. Coast Guard; and
- Obtaining the expertise of a maritime builder to repair and/or replace any decayed wooden elements, increase hull volume, raise the deck and add more external ballast, strengthen the ship with additional timbers (sister keelsons, garboards, shelf and clamps) and to also modernize the vessel with more powerful engines, increased tank capacity and increased pumping capacity; and
- Maintaining the historical authenticity to the greatest extent possible without compromising safety or stability; and
- Providing exceptional quality materials and workmanship to ensure longevity and ease of maintenance; and

- Providing a living history experience in Erie during the entire construction phase to accommodate public viewing of the workmanship from a safe viewing distance; and
- Since there is such a small community of firms who engage in the design and construction of large historic wooden sailing vessels, the traditional approach of design/bid/build will hamper participation and possibly create a situation leaving the Commonwealth with insufficient participation on the project. To alleviate this hardship, the use of a design/build process will ensure that a single entity selected as the successful contractor has the ability to design and perform the physical reconstruction and maritime testing necessary for the full scope of the project.
- Schedule is a critical factor on this project to coordinate the dry-dock inspection, the architectural design, procurement of appropriate materials, haul out the *Niagara* to a floating barge, perform all necessary work, including assessment of the original timbers, re-launch the vessel, re-rigging all masts, bowsprits and standing rigging and completing all applicable inspections by the U. S. Coast Guard (including sea trials) by July 2018 to ensure participation in regularly scheduled events.

The above factors demonstrate the unique design and construction considerations for this project, which requires specific contractor knowledge, skill and experience to complete the project work successfully and to expedite the construction schedule. The use of the standard competitive sealed bid method of procurement for the design, restoration, repair and modifications of the historic wooden sailing ship US Brig *Niagara* is neither practical nor advantageous to the Commonwealth. Consequently, the Commonwealth will utilize a Design/Build RFP to procure the successful vendor to complete this project.

  
Deputy Secretary for Public Works

4/22/15  
Date