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High school project goes out to bid

By Nadine Wandzilak / Staff Writer

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The School Department has officially begun the search for an architect to handle the next phase of the high school project, should the \$54 million project be approved by voters at the town's special election on Feb. 25.

The application deadline for interested architectural firms is the same day as the special election Feb. 25, according to the Request for Proposals listed at the state's Central Register.

School Superintendent Dr. Harry Harutunian has received 52 inquiries about the high school project, he told the School Committee Monday night. "The market is hungry," he said.

The notice specifies that Flansburgh Associates, the architect for the first phase of the project, the schematic design, may apply for the job construction phase - as long as the firm's work is reviewed independently. A question based on the way the architect, Flansburgh, was selected for the construction phase of the town's newest elementary school led to a 10-taxpayer suit against the town under the state Designer Selection Statute. The suit contended that the wording of the Request for Proposals legal advertisement for the elementary school projects discouraged other firms from applying. The suit was dismissed when the court decided the town, which had already spent several hundred thousand dollars, had a greater interest in proceeding despite the advertisement's technical flaws.

The selected architect must be prepared to meet the state School Building Assistance program submission requirements for June 1, the legal notice states.

The School Committee, the awarding authority, is soliciting proposals from "qualified architectural firms interested in contracting to perform design development, contract document bidding and construction administration" to renovate the 1970 wing of the high school - the science and library wings and the field house, and to replace the 1953 wing with new facilities. Renovations will include "replacing virtually all mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems. Windows will be replaced and roofs and walls repaired "to increase thermal efficiency to current codes and standards."

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