



City of Homer

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Office of the City Manager

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Memorandum

TO: Mayor Lord and Homer City Council
FROM: Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager
DATE: June 4, 2025
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for June 9, 2025 Council Meeting

Kachemak Peatlands Project Parcels

At their June 17th meeting the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly approved the sale of two parcels that were being considered for the Kachemak Peatlands Project. We met with Mayor Micciche and Aaron Hughes, Land Management Officer on Thursday to discuss remaining parcels and share more information with the Borough on how storm water moves through that area.

Western Library Lot Project

We're continuing to see improvements at the Western Library Lot. Doug Baily, Taz Tally, and Ed Berg are working with the Friends of the Homer Library on a future geology display at the far end of the lot beside the Poopdeck Trail. Stakes were planted to mark where boulders will be placed and information about the boulders will be displayed in the display kiosk nearby. Also the reading bench has been installed along the path. This trail has been wonderful improvement to this quaint little area.



Fire Department Organizational Audit RFP

The draft RFP is attached for Council to review and provide comments on during my report. I believe this draft encompasses matters that have been raised in public discussions and in acquiring information that will be beneficial to understanding what the needs are for our community and the Homer Volunteer Fire Department.

City Manager Meetings and Events:

June 6th – Participated in the KBNERR Groundwater Research Watershed Presentation

June 12th – Met with AKDOT Central Region Director Sean Holland and Project Manager Aaron Hunting, Mayor Lord and City staff re: DCRA Underpass and other City/DOT matters.

June 17th – Attended KPB Assembly meeting virtually

June 19th – Met with KPB Mayor and Staff on the Kachemak Peatlands properties

Attachments:

- Fire Department Organizational Audit RFP and Memorandum
- 2025 Visitor Schedule
- 2025 Combined Schedule WS, COW, Regular



MEMORANDUM

Homer Volunteer Fire Department Operational Audit

Item Type: Informational Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor Lord and Homer City Council
Date: June 13, 2025
From: Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager

Included with this memo is a draft of the Homer Volunteer Fire Department Operational Audit RFP. I feel this draft addresses information that has been raised by the community and Council, and addresses information the administration will find useful in future planning for the Homer Volunteer Fire Department. I've attempted to highlight key matters that have come up and what sections of the RFP address the concerns. I look forward to any final input from Council before advertising this RFP.

1. The number of volunteers is inadequate.
RFP Lines 88-89, 94-99
2. Some volunteers report feeling disrespected and alienated.
RFP Lines 88-89, 94-99
3. Management stated there is a culture change in the department in that career positions no longer support volunteers, volunteers support career staff.
RFP Lines 88-89, 94-99
4. Turnover is resulting in loss of continuity and institutional knowledge and department is understaffed and unable to meet recommended personnel response levels.
RFP Lines 90-93, 102-103
5. There is concern that HVFD cannot adequately respond to structural fire, much less a community disaster.
RFP Lines 90-93, 102-103
6. Without a volunteer base to hire from, HVFD is required to hire staff from outside.
RFP Lines 90-93, 102-103
7. Personnel, promotion, disciplinary, and firing procedures may not have been followed.
Lines 88-89, 94-99
8. City has not been keeping up on operational funding and equipment and plant are deteriorating.
RFP Lines 100-101
9. HVFD does not have the staff or volunteers to respond with the number of firefighters needed.
RFP Lines 90-93, 102-104
10. Investigate if there are adequate staff and volunteer resources to cover present and future EMS and firefighting calls in our community.
RFP Lines 90-93

Memorandum

City Council

Date

11. Investigate returning to the culture of recruitment and promotion of fire fighter and EMS volunteers, supported by paid staff.

RFP Lines 102-104

12. Investigate unprecedented turnover, disciplinary actions and firing issues, including conducting exit interviews of past and future volunteer and paid staff to identify problems and prevent problems that create public safety risks in the community.

RFP Lines 88-89, 94-99 address these matters, internal work on-going

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
By the City of Homer, Alaska
Professional Services to Perform
An Operational Audit of the Homer Volunteer Fire Department

The City of Homer, Alaska is seeking proposals from qualified consultants to conduct an independent, comprehensive operational audit of the Homer Volunteer Fire Department which consists of both volunteer and paid personnel. The goal of this evaluation is to assess current operations, identify areas for improvement, and provide actionable recommendations to ensure continued excellence in emergency services delivery.

It is the intent of this Request for Proposals (RFP) to have the successful consultant enter into a Professional Services Contract with the City of Homer to provide the services outlined herein.

The following subjects are discussed in this RFP to assist in preparing a proposal.

- I. Introduction
- II. Project Overview
- III. Scope of Work
- IV. RFP General Requirements & Submittal Instructions
- V. Proposal Format & Content Requirements
- VI. Evaluation Criteria & Selection Process
- VII. Schedule

I. INTRODUCTION

The Homer Volunteer Fire Department (HVFD) has a history spanning over 60 years starting with the formation of a fire company in 1952. The department officially incorporated as Homer Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. in 1954 and the HVFD Auxiliary was founded in 1960 to support the department through various fundraising activities. The current fire hall was built through a city sales tax and constructed at its current location in 1981. In the 80's the first paid staff were hired and in 1990, the HVFD entered into an agreement to transfer operations to the City.

The City of Homer recognizes the critical role the HVFD plays in ensuring the safety and well-being of our community. As a blended department comprised of both volunteer and paid staff, the organization has long benefited from the dedication and service of its members. However, like many fire and EMS service agencies across the nation, the department is facing evolving challenges—most notably, a steady decline in volunteerism, increasing service demands, and the growing complexity of emergency response.

In light of these challenges, the City is seeking an independent, comprehensive operational audit of the fire department to assess department culture, current operations, internal policies and procedures, and overall service delivery. The intent is to ensure that the department is well-positioned to meet both present and future demands with a clear, sustainable model that reflects best practices in volunteer and staff hiring and retention, improved volunteer engagement, and emergency services management.

This operational audit will also seek to align departmental capabilities with the actual needs of the community, identify opportunities for improvement, and support the development of clear, modernized internal policies and procedures that strengthen organizational consistency, accountability, volunteer engagement and performance.

The HVFD scope of services include:

- Fire Services -Structural Fire Suppression, Motor Vehicle Firefighting, Wildland Firefighting, Marine Firefighting, Aircraft Rescue & Firefighting
- EMS -Basic and Advanced Life Support Ambulance Services
- Rescue Services -Vehicle Extrication, Rope Rescue, Water Rescue, Confined Space Rescue
- Hazardous Materials Operations
- Disaster Response and Management
- Public Education, Prevention and Preparedness
- Plan Reviews and Code Consultations
- Participation with Kachemak Emergency Services and Western Emergency Services through Intergovernmental Agreements.

II. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The expectation of this operational audit is to give city leaders a clear, data-driven picture of how effectively the fire department serves the community and where it can improve. The review will analyze response trends, Fire and EMS deployment, and training outcomes. It will also benchmark policies, procedures, and practices against industry standards, and scrutinize volunteer and career staffing models to propose an implementation roadmap if changes are warranted. It will also evaluate culture, recruitment, retention, promotions, discipline, and regulatory compliance; examine budgets, revenue streams, reserves, and equipment apparatus and facility needs; and conclude with a SWOT analysis that distills strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the department. The audit will pinpoint operational gaps, fiscal challenges, and strategic opportunities, providing actionable recommendations to enhance service delivery and long-term sustainability.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

The selected consultant will be expected to provide the following deliverables as part of the project:

1. Project Kickoff Meeting

An initial meeting with city leadership and fire department representatives to confirm project scope, timeline, key contacts, and expectations.

2. Stakeholder Engagement Plan

A plan outlining how the consultant will gather input from key stakeholders, including fire department personnel (volunteer and career), city leadership, and community members.

3. Departmental Operational Audit

The operational audit will include:

- A review of current operations by conducting a data analysis of the past three years to identify trends, review the current deployment strategy for emergency calls, evaluate emergency medical service delivery and make recommendations on the level of EMS response appropriate for the community.
- A review of existing policies and procedures and evaluate them against industry best practices.

- A volunteer and staffing analysis by evaluating the coverage program and its effectiveness in meeting the demands of the department and the City. If changes are identified in the current volunteer and staffing model, a recommended roadmap for modifications and implementation plan will be provided.
 - A cultural assessment through an evaluation of the policies and practices applicable to the HVFD volunteers, staff, and leadership will be included along with an assessment of the volunteer and employees' record management system, recruiting and hiring practices, volunteer and employee retention programs, volunteer integration and support, the promotional process, the disciplinary process, and compliance with federal and state regulations.
 - An evaluation of the operational and capital budgets, and assessment of equipment, apparatus, and facility conditions and needs.
 - An evaluation of training over the past three years, training programs/curriculums, volunteer and staff certifications and professional development, and the training program, all while keeping in mind the size of the community and the department.
 - A SWOT Analysis, that documents an analysis of the department's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
4. **Recommendations Report**
The operational audit report should include clear, actionable recommendations prioritized by impact and feasibility from findings on:
- Operational improvements
 - Policy and procedural updates
 - Staffing models and recruitment strategies, both volunteer and paid
 - Culture of the department related to leadership, volunteers, and paid staff
 - Financial and budgetary practices, and equipment, apparatus and facility needs
 - Training programs
 - Long-term strategic planning and implementation
5. **Executive Summary**
A concise, non-technical summary suitable for presentation to elected officials, stakeholders, and the general public.
6. **Presentation of Findings**
At least one in-person or virtual presentation of key findings and recommendations to municipal leadership and fire department leadership.
7. **Final Report Submission**
A complete final report, including appendices and supporting documentation, in both editable (e.g., Word) and print-ready (PDF) formats.

IV. RFP GENERAL REQUIREMENTS & SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

To achieve a uniform review process and obtain the maximum degree of comparability, it is required that the proposals be organized in the manner specified below. Proposals that do not address the items listed in this request may be considered incomplete and may be deemed non-responsive by the City.

- A. **There will be an optional Pre-Close RFP meeting/teleconference held via Zoom on _____** This will give all proposers involved the opportunity for questions/ answers with City Staff to ensure all

information is open and concise. Zoom meeting invitations will be sent to all qualified entities listed on the Plan Holder's List.

B. **All proposers must submit a City of Homer Plan Holders Registration form to be on the Plan Holders List and to be considered responsive.**

C. **Sealed proposals must be received by the City Clerk's Office at the address referenced below no later than 4:00 p.m. on _____.** The time of receipt will be determined by the City Clerk's time stamp. Proposals received after that time shall not be considered.

D. Proposers must submit one original and five (5) copies of the completed proposal in an opaque envelope marked as follows:

City of Homer 2025 RFP
Independent Evaluation of the Homer Volunteer Fire Department
date _____
Bidders Name and Address

E. Proposal submittals shall be delivered in person or mailed to:

City of Homer
City Clerk's Office
491 E. Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603

F. Proposals may be withdrawn by written, email, or facsimile notice received prior to the deadline for proposal submittal.

G. Inquiries must be received at least 10 days prior to the RFP submittal deadline. Copies of all written requests and replies will be forwarded to each Proposer on the Official Plan Holders List. Only formal, written responses to properly submitted questions will be binding.

H. Inquiries regarding the Scope of Work or clarification of the RFP must be directed in writing to:

Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager
491 E. Pioneer Avenue
Homer, Alaska 99603
Phone: (907) 299-9354
Email: citymanager@ci.homer.ak.us

I. General RFP and proposal submission inquiries must be directed in writing to:

City Clerk's Office
491 E. Pioneer Avenue
Homer, AK 99603
Phone: (907) 235-3130
Email: clerk@ci.homer.ak.us

V. PROPOSAL FORMAT & CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

For ease of evaluation, the proposal should be presented in a format that corresponds to and references/labels the sections outlined in this RFP. Proposals should be prepared in such a way as to provide a straightforward, concise delineation of capabilities to satisfy the requirements of this RFP.

To be considered responsive, each proposal must include (at a minimum) the following:

A. Letter of Transmittal (one-page maximum): The transmittal letter shall briefly state the consultant's understanding of the City's request, make a positive commitment to provide the professional services specified, and give the name, title, address, and phone number of the person(s) authorized to make representations for the consultant. The letter shall be signed by a corporate officer or other individual who has the authority to bind the consultant.

B. Proposal Narrative: The proposal narrative must provide the following information:

1. Specify in detail the consultant's ability to fulfill the Scope of Work that has been outlined in this RFP, including any additional contractual requirements the consultant chooses to propose. Other items that must be included in the proposal:

- Standard, all-inclusive cost schedule that is to be used in this contract, including staff time per task, travel expenses, and incidentals. *Please include cost schedules with and without the optional site visit described in item 4 of the project scope.*
- Schedule – An outline of the anticipated schedule for completing the Scope of Work beginning with issuance of a notice to proceed to submitting the final work product.
- Insurance – Prior to commencement of work, the Proposer shall be required to provide proof of insurance and to keep it in full force and effect, at its own expense, the following minimum policy limits:
 - i. The City of Homer shall be named as additional insured during the project's duration.
 - ii. Worker's Compensation in accordance with the laws of the State of Alaska, and Employer's Liability Insurance with minimum limits of \$1,000,000/ \$1,000,000/ \$1,000,000.
 - iii. General Liability Insurance in an amount not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence; \$1,000,000 personal and advertising injury; \$2,000,000 general aggregate; and \$2,000,000 products/completed operations aggregate for bodily injury or death and for property damage.
 - iv. Professional Liability with minimum limits of \$1,000,000 aggregate and each claim.
 - v. Automobile Liability Insurance covering owned, non-owned, or hired vehicles used by the consultant, with limits not less than \$1,000,000 combined single limit for bodily injury and property damage.

2. Proposed Project Manager and Team Members and Statement of Qualifications and Experience: This section shall introduce the project manager (Single Point of Contact) and members of the consultant that will be performing the work for this project. This section will cover the project team/consultant's qualifications for the proposed work and experience with similar projects. Full resumes are not required but can be included; 1-2 paragraphs on each member of the team will be sufficient.

3. Methods and Work Plan: Proposer will outline a work plan detailing the consultant's step-by-step procedures for accomplishing the Scope of Work and the City's objectives for this project.

4. References: List the names, titles, and phone numbers of at least three clients who obtained similar services from your consultant. Ideally, projects/contracts managed by the proposed project manager and completed by the proposed project team should be referenced.

VI. EVALUATION CRITERIA & SELECTION PROCESS

A. Evaluation Criteria

All proposals must meet the following minimum requirements.

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria and scored according to the point scale:

Proposed Contract, Work Plan, and Cost	
• Consultant Overview and Qualifications	15 points
• Project Understanding and approach	20 points
• Work plan and timeline	10 points
• EITHER prior work of this nature OR first-hand familiarity with local dynamics	25 points
• Quality of 3 references.	10 points
• Conformance with RFP requirements, including compliance and timely submission of all documents requested.	5 points
• Cost	5 points
Total Possible Points 90	

B. Selection Process

A selection committee comprised of two City Councilmembers, one Homer Volunteer Fire Department Captain, one active Homer Volunteer Fire Department Volunteer, and one member of the public will be confirmed by the Mayor to evaluate the proposals and make a recommendation to the City Manager and Homer City Council. If the Council approves, the City will offer the highest ranking Proposer an opportunity to negotiate a Contract.

Other Proposal selection terms, conditions, and exceptions:

1. Evaluators may discuss factual knowledge of, and may investigate proposer's prior work experience and performance. This includes projects referenced in the proposal, available written evaluations, and contacted references that were listed or other persons knowledgeable of a proposer's past performance. Factors such as overall experience relative to the proposed contract, quality of work, cost control, and the ability to meet schedules may be addressed during the evaluation.
2. This request for proposals is designed to be qualifications based, with cost playing a secondary role in the selection process. The City of Homer reserves the right to award a contract to the highest ranked consultant based solely on the written proposal or request oral interviews. The highest ranked proposer will be invited to enter into negotiations with the City of Homer for the purposes of contract award. If an agreement with any proposer cannot be reached, the next

highest ranked proposer may be contacted for negotiations. The City of Homer reserves the right to terminate contract negotiations with any proposer should it be in the City of Homer's best interest.

3. The City reserves the right to alter, amend, or modify any provisions of this RFP, or to withdraw this RFP, at any time prior to the award of a contract pursuant hereto, if it is in the best interest of the City to do so.
4. The City reserves the right to waive informalities and minor irregularities in proposals received. Alterations, modifications or variations to a proposal may not be considered unless authorized by the RFP or by addendum or amendment.
5. The City reserves the right to reject any and all proposals submitted and shall not be liable for any costs incurred by any proposer in response to this solicitation or for any work done prior to the issuance of a notice to proceed or signed contract.
6. Proposals will be kept confidential until contract is awarded, subject to law.

VII. RFP TIMELINE & AWARD SCHEDULE

These dates represent a tentative schedule of events. The City reserves the right to modify these dates at any time, with appropriate notice to applicable proposers on the Plan Holders List.

ACTIVITY	DATE/TIME
RFP Publish Dates	City of Homer Website Homer News
Optional Pre-Close Meeting	
Submittal Deadline for Proposals	
Evaluation Period and Proposal Selection	
Authority to Proceed by Homer City Council	
Contract Signing/Notice to Proceed	
Project Kickoff Meeting	

VISTORS

AGENDA CALENDAR 2025

Council Meeting Dates	Visitor Scheduled
Monday, January 13	Senator Stevens
Monday, January 27	
Monday, February 10	Patty Relay Pratt Museum — Budget Appropriation Request
Monday, February 24	
Monday, March 10	
Monday, March 24	South Peninsula Haven House
Monday, April 14	HoWL Annual “Dirt Bag” Clean up Event — Todd Hineman Legislative Update Senator Stevens BDO USA LLP Bikky Shrestha
Monday, April 28	Legislative Update (Rep/Sen)? Homer Harbor Expansion Status Update Japanese Club — Megumi Beams
Monday, May 12	Safe & Healthy Kids Fair Presentation — Lisa Asselin-Martin KPEDD Presentation — Cassidi Cameron
Tuesday, May 27	Representative Vance Legislative Update Homer Foundation Stacey Schultz Grant Reports Update
Monday, June 9	South Florida University Presentation on Bridge Creek Watershed Study — Dr. Mark Rains, Dr. Kai Rains, Tyelyn Brigino University of South Florida Ecohydrology Research Group South Peninsula Hospital Presentation Derotha Ferraro and Ryan Smith
Monday, June 23	
Monday, July 28	
Monday, August 11	
Monday, August 25	
Monday, September 8	
Monday, October 13	
Monday, November 10	
Monday, November 24	

WORKSESSION SPECIAL COW SCHEDULE

AGENDA CALENDAR 2025

Monday, June 9	Regular Meeting Public Hearing & FY26/FY27 Budget Ordinance Adoption
Monday, June 9	COW—Visitor Presentation USF Bridge Creek Watershed Study
June 10th/11th Joint WS with PC	Draft Comp Plan Review
Monday, June 23	Worksession on Lease Policy and Lease Code – Rescheduled from 5/27
Monday, July 28	
Monday, August 11	COW Land Allocation Plan Presentation Julie Engebretsen 15 min.
Monday, August 25	
Monday, September 8	
Monday, September 22	
Monday, October 13	Certify Election Results, Swearing In of Councilmembers
Monday, October 27	
Monday, November 10	
Monday, November 24	