



An architect's rendering by Koch Hazard Architects of Sioux Falls shows Phase III of the remodeling and additions to Brookings High School. The illustration gives an idea of what the new cafeteria on the west side of the building will look like when the project is completed. The project, with a cost of \$5.54 million, was awarded to Mills Construction at Monday's school board meeting.

Board sets fall school start date, Mills Construction gets Phase III

District to survey teachers, parents, students on school start

BY VICKI SCHUSTER
The Brookings Register

Brookings school board members made two key decisions Monday:

The district's K-12 students will head back to school early again this year, beginning the fall term on Aug. 18. And Mills Construction of Brookings will soon begin work on Phase III construction at Brookings High School. The work will cost \$5.54 million.

The board says the district is getting a real "bang for its buck" with Phase III of the remodeling and additions to the Brookings High School.

The board unanimously voted to award the bid for the final piece of the project to Mills Construction, with a price tag of \$5.54 million.

Of 16 companies that submitted bids for the project, the three lowest bids came from local companies: Mills Construction, Clark Drew Construction and Waltz Construction.

Prep work for the final part is already under way as the gas mains were redirected in January.

Phase III includes new classrooms located on the northeast, a new cafeteria, remodeling of the auditorium, moving guidance counselors into the main office and a theater storage and green room.

Brookings High School Principal Paul von Fischer and members of the bid committee were present and discussed the process they went through to come up with the right bid.

The committee met last week to review the proposals, all of which von Fischer said were very close.

School board officials had expected the project to cost about \$5.5 million, but the lowest bids came in at \$5.7 million to \$5.8 million.

Von Fischer said this forced the committee to go back to the drawing board. "We needed to find things we couldn't live without and make sure they were on the list," he said.

"The second thing we did was took some things off that could be done later and weren't immediate needs," von Fischer said.

He then said the committee then discovered that number was lower than the budgeted amount. "So we went back in and put things back onto the list ..."

Von Fischer said to meet the project's budget, his group had to eliminate three alternate add-ons.

Two of them were air handling units for the main gym and the auditorium. Both units currently in use are functioning and noisy, but adequate. The architect base bid for Phase III includes ways to dampen the noise.

The third item that didn't make it back into the plans was roller shades in the commons area, which will be added at a later date.

"The bids were extremely close," said von Fischer. "We were very pleased with the turnout and the amounts. I

think we are going to have an exceptional facility when this is all done."

"We got quite a bit of additional value," said board member Steve Bayer. "A lot of things that we didn't think we were able to provide, we were able to get."

"We got everything we wanted

to. And I'm glad locals were in the final three," said DeGroot. Rames says some credit needs to go to Koch Hazard Architects of Sioux Falls.

"They made sure we had a base bid so we got a project off the ground."

DeGroot also reported that a tunnel connecting the basement

below the band room to the boiler room is now complete. This will link all of the services going into the building.

Phase III work is scheduled to start April 1 and should be completed by October 2011.

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