

Building Official Employee vs Contractor Comparison

The purpose of this comparison is to provide a platform to compare the Pros and Con's of continuing with an Employee option vs contracting with a firm to provide Building Official Services. It is not meant to imply that any specific interviewed candidate or firm has agreed to, or not agreed to, these terms. This is meant to assist in answering the question of whether we should continue to pursue hiring an employee or contracting with a firm to provide Building Official services.

Variables	Employee	Contractor A	Contractor B	Comments
Cost	Wages per posting (hourly) \$32.16 - \$40.20 (hourly) \$66,893-\$83,616 (annual) Benefits =approx 25%-28% of salary	% of permit and site review fees additional services on hourly basis (see below for additional services)	% of permit and site review fees additional services on hourly basis (see below for additional services)	Salary range per current posting; % varies from 65%-90%, will get specifics per requested proposal
Incidental Expenses	Truck, cell phone, laptop, uniform allowance	Provided by Contractor, built into rates	Provided by Contractor, built into rates	
Availability for inspections	M-F during business hours	M-F, variable schedule, Saturday 8-noon	M-F during business hours, Saturdays possible w/Surcharge	
Scheduling for Inspections	Provided through city office, historically provided by Admin Tech	Clients (residents/contractors) schedule directly with contractor	Clients (residents/contractors) schedule directly with contractor	
Response Time for Inspections	Depends on volume of requests-may be same day to several days later. Difficult to hold to a standard	Same day possible, guarantee inspection by next day	Same day possible, guarantee inspection by next day	
Familiarity with City	Employee would become very familiar with city and contractors. Potential for developing high trust relationships	Owner would spend two weeks learning city business and expectations and then assign contractors based on our business/expectations. Most of their employees live in the north metro area. We would have the same people working with us consistently, so opportunity to develop high trust relationships. Firm staffs other nearby communities such as Circle Pines, Linwood, East Bethel, so are familiar with this area.	Owner would assign contractors based on our business/expectations and where the inspectors live (would choose from those living in north metro). Those contractors that would remain stable (i.e., we would have the same people working with us consistently) so opportunity to develop high trust relationships. Firm staffs a broader geographical area but has contracts in Lake Elmo, Forest Lake, North St. Paul.	
Depth of Services	Depends on applicant and prior experience. Very difficult to find employee with deep experience in residential, commercial, & septic.	Has 12 employees with certifications in residential, commercial, septic. Firm was established in 2009, low turnover. Husband wife team manages firm. Additional services provided are listed below.	Has 26 employees, firm was established in 1987. Has an established management hierarchy, inspectors with certifications in residential, commercial, septic. Additional services provided are listed below.	
Availability for Questions from public and developers	Available in between inspections, this means callbacks or return of emails may be delayed depending on volume of permits/site review	Firm has a team of inspectors assigned to do site reviews only. This team is available during business hours for questions and initial consultations. No extra charge for this service. Clients would be directed to call or email them directly, reducing calls to city office. Most calls are answered immediately, but all would be expected to be responded to within the day. Firm is willing to also pilot test having a computer terminal that clients may use to "Zoom" with inspectors to facilitate review of questions or quick appraisal of plans (e.g. for a deck).	Firm has a team of inspectors assigned to do site reviews only. This team is available during business hours for questions and initial consultations. No extra charge for this service. Clients would be directed to call or email them directly, reducing calls to City office. Most calls are answered immediately, but all would be expected to be responded to within the day.	
Additional Services Offered		Ordinance enforcement on an hourly basis. Educational handouts available Potential for virtual inspections in select cases or for re-inspections	Ordinance enforcement on an hourly basis. PDF informational handouts available on Contractor website Sediment/erosion control (helpful for Sunrise District otherwise RCWD/CCWD takes care of these)	

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			Commercial Plumbing Inspections in lieu of using state inspectors at same cost that state charges, which we currently utilize state inspectors. Having this service would be a big benefit on commercial projects, as the state is often backlogged for weeks. Fire inspections (to determine habitability post fire)	
Team Culture	Employee becomes integral part of the Office Team, available to fill in on other duties if available and when necessary. This is an important bonus with such a small city staff	Contractor is willing to office some part of their time from city offices if that is what we desire. The assignment of a known team would be similar to the contract we have with Engineering (TKDA and Bolton/Menk)	The assignment of a known team would be similar to the contract we have with Engineering (TKDA and Bolton/Menk)	
Volume Fluctuations	Full time employee, more difficult to adjust to downturns or upturns in economy/development	No minimum commitment. If the work isn't there, you don't pay them. Provides better ability for city to respond to upturns and downturns	No minimum commitment. If the work isn't there, you don't pay them. Provides better ability for city to respond to upturns and downturns	
Back up	Would need to use contract services for back up (we have historically needed to do this)	Back up is provided through their team	Back up is provided through their team	
Availability for hire	Pool of applicants is small. Competition for those available is fierce. Tough to compete with contractor pay scale. Most would need to give a minimum of 2 weeks notice, 3-4 weeks is preferable	Available by April 1	Available by April 1	