



Office of Business, Finance and Planning  
100 Walnut Street  
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TO: Dr. Anna Nolin, Superintendent

FROM: Amy Mistrot, Director of Business Operations

DATE: April 1, 2024

RE: Request Approval of the Food Service Management Contract

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The Newton Public Schools is required to go out to bid for a successor Food Service Management Company (FSMC) this year as the current five-year contract will expire on 6/30/24. After an extensive Request for Proposal (RFP) process required and dictated by DESE, NPS is seeking approval to award the next contract to Chartwells based upon the combined non-price and price evaluations of their proposal.

The FSMC RFP process is heavily regulated by the USDA at the federal level and - through them - DESE at the state level. From previous USDA guidance, DESE has created a new required FSMC bid template and contract, which districts are required to use and must be submitted to DESE for review and approval of the limited district-specific content to individualize the interests of each School Food Authority/district.

#### NPS RFP Timeline

1/17/24 = DESE released the required web-based RFP and contract template  
1/30/24 = NPS submitted RFP template for DESE review  
2/6/24 = DESE approved RFP template  
2/8/24 = City of Newton advertised RFP  
2/15/24 = City of Newton posted RFP  
2/21/24 = Pre-bid conference and facilities tour (Day, Underwood, Cabot, NN, NS)  
Attendees: Aramark, Chartwells, Genuine Foods, K-12 by Elior, Sodexo, Whitsons  
2/28/24 = Amendment #1 released - RFP Q&A  
3/8/24 = Amendment #2 released - RFP Q&A  
3/14/24 = RFP proposals due from bidding FSMCs  
Aramark, Chartwells, Sodexo, Whitsons submitted proposals  
3/20/24 = Interviews by 5-member evaluation committee  
Sharon Fugazzotto - Building Aide (Lincoln-Eliot)  
Ruth Hoshino - Director of Student Health Service

Liam Hurley - Assistant Superintendent of Business, Finance, and Planning, and Chief Administrative Officer

Amy Mistrot - Director of Operations

David Stickney - Director of Facilities

3/26/24 = Non-price evaluations submitted to City Procurement for review of price proposals

3/27/24 = Recommendation by City Chief Procurement Officer

4/1/24 = Award recommendation to School Committee for review and approval

The FSMC RFP process requires evaluation of both a non-price and price proposal by each qualifying bidder - see section A6 - Award Criteria (page 11) after the [RFP Minimum Criteria](#). To be a qualifying bidder, the companies must first meet the seven Minimum Criteria, including all required documents.

NPS had to eliminate Aramark from consideration as they were non-responsive to Minimum Criteria #3, which was affirmed by DESE.

Has the FSMC confirmed an on-site Food Service Director with at least two(2) year(s) of experience in K-12 food service and meets <a href="#">USDA Professional Standards</a> ?
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For the remaining vendors - Chartwells, Sodexo, and Whitsons - the evaluation committee reviewed the nine [DESE Comparative Criteria](#) and the nine [Additional Comparative Criteria](#) that NPS submitted to individualize our interests, which were approved by DESE. Additional Criteria #10.3 required an interview with each FSMC, during which each FSMC team was asked the same [interview questions](#) to help further contextualize their proposal and ability to service NPS effectively.

From the individual member evaluations, Kerry Mastroianni, NPS Purchasing Manager, created a [composite evaluation](#) for each FSMC. Only vendors with a Highly Advantageous composite evaluation are eligible for price proposal evaluation, first reviewed by the City Procurement Officer. Based upon the final non-price composite evaluations all three of the viable companies were moved forward for price proposal evaluation.

Upon review of the price proposals, Newton provided the included justification to remove Whitsons' proposal as non-responsive. The City Chief Procurement Officer, Nick Read, provided his recommendation based upon the remaining proposed guaranteed returns of both Chartwells and Sodexo. The award is made based upon the proposal that is most advantageous and responsive, taking into consideration all evaluation criteria, with price as the primary factor. Based upon both the non-price and price proposals evaluated, Newton is recommending Chartwells for award of the Food Service Management contract.

Chartwells understood Newton's desire to elevate our program to be an exemplar Food Services program in the state of Massachusetts. Chartwell's proposal committed to the following to improve the student experience:

1. A level of support - both in-district and regional - that is necessary to adequately service 23 sites (22 schools plus the Ed Center).
2. They proposed the highest food cost per meal reinforcing a fundamental focus on quality.
3. Menu development will be coordinated by an Executive Chef and in-district Registered Dietician.
4. They responded to our sustainability focus by staffing an in-district Sustainability and Engagement Manager.
5. Their operational focus is on being present in schools and staff training and development, which is essential to elevating our student experience.
6. Each of their references were consistently Highly Advantageous across five metrics: guaranteed return, implementation, customer service, quality of meals, and reporting.

**With this rationale, I am requesting School Committee approval to move Chartwells forward as the successor Food Services Management Company for a one year contract that allows for four additional contract extensions, based upon Newton's satisfaction with the ongoing operations.**

I would like to recognize the significant contribution of the evaluation committee: Sharon Fugazzotto, Ruth Hoshino, Liam Hurley, and David Stickney. Each member willingly agreed to participate and lent their considerable time, attention, and individual experience and expertise to this process, which was significantly improved by their participation.

Kerry Mastroianni, NPS Purchasing Manager, was an excellent partner throughout the RFP process, to whom I am grateful for her consistent collaboration. I am also grateful to the City Procurement Office. Nick Read, Chief Procurement Officer, and Karen Munro were both very supportive, which deserves special recognition given the DESE RFP process and template are a new and more restrictive process for their office.

I would also like to thank Philip Frehill, DESE Resource Management Program Reviewer, and Julie Valcour, DESE School Nutrition Programs Coordinator, who were a consistent and invaluable source of direction and support for me during this extended process.