The plan to retrofit a Solomons storefront to serve as a temporary location for a public library branch continued to move forward Tuesday, Nov. 1. Acting on a recommendation by the Department of Finance and Budget, the Calvert Board of County Commissioners voted unanimously to award an $84,062 contract for architectural/engineering services to Gant Brunnett Architects of Baltimore for the Interim Southern Branch Library. The library branch will be in a leased storefront that was previously the location of Woodburn’s Food Market.

According to a memo from Purchasing Officer Roberta Baker, Gant Brunnett Architects submitted “the most responsive, responsible” offer for the project “based upon their extensive experience, including the design of public libraries.”

Twelve other bids, including three by Calvert County firms, were submitted. Those bids were technically evaluated by a three-person panel. According to Baker, the firm with the highest combined score, Murphy & Dittenhafer, also of Baltimore, “did not meet specifications.” Gant Brunnett Architects met all the terms and conditions of the county’s request for proposal, Baker stated.

Commissioners’ President Susan Shaw [R] lamented the fact that the three Calvert County firms did not offer competitive bids. “I really want to support local companies but we want to get a good job,” said Shaw, who indicated the three Calvert companies had a lack of experience with library designs, perhaps because the county infrequently builds libraries. “A architectural business couldn’t make a living in this county designing libraries,” said Shaw.

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