



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0228, **Version:** 1

TO: Mayor Richard C. Irvin

FROM: Daniel Barreiro, Chief Community Services Officer

DATE: March 24, 2021

SUBJECT:

A Resolution Authorizing Approval for a contract to Clean and Restore Murals at the G.A.R. Memorial Hall.

PURPOSE:

To obtain City Council approval for a resolution to accept a bid from Third Coast Conservation L. Liparini Studio from Chicago, Illinois in the not to exceed amount of \$41,134.50 for the restoration and cleaning of the murals at the G.A.R. Hall.

BACKGROUND:

Four stucco-fresco paintings, colloquially called murals, were painted in the Angel Room of the G.A.R. Hall in 1877 and have been heavily damaged from over a decade of oil smoke, tobacco smoke, and improper climate control within the building. In addition, a good portion of the original murals have been painted over, but this project will not attempt to uncover those lost sectors to ensure no further damage is done to the visible portions. The North mural depicts George Washington, the East mural is of Admiral David Farragut, the South mural is of Abraham Lincoln, and the West mural is of General George Thomas. The murals of Washington and Lincoln need little explanation, as the building was fundraised by the Soldiers Monument Association after the Civil War. Admiral Farragut, the famous Civil War Naval Officer, led the capture of New Orleans, assisted General Grant's forces at the Battle of Vicksburg, and led his fleet to victory in Mobile Bay, Alabama. General George Thomas was one of the few Southern-born military officers to remain loyal to the Union during the Civil War. The 36th Illinois Infantry, the Fox River Regiment, fought under Thomas at Chickamauga, Chattanooga, during the Atlanta Campaign, the Battle of Peachtree, and the Battle of Nashville.

Museum staff believe the frescoes were previously touched up, but the work done led to further damage. Some portions of the West mural were repainted, and all four murals were coated with a protective barrier. Unfortunately, this protective barrier encapsulated the smoke damage and any light source produces a glare to where the murals are not visible.

Previous staff have consulted with numerous experts in fresco restoration throughout the years, but funding has always been limited. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources grant, original awarded in 2014 and subsequently frozen the next year, has been awarded to the museum once

more. The IDNR grant allows for the project to commence. The work planned includes removing the old barrier, cleaning the murals of the soot and smoke damage, and putting a new protective layer over the restored painting. This new protective barrier will not have a glare and will allow visitors to appreciate the history of these leaders as well as the artistic expression within the G.A.R. Hall. The exact composition of the protective barrier will be determined once the bid is awarded and the selected contractor can properly examine the underlying paint to ensure no chemical reaction will occur. The most likely substance to be used is Paraloid B-72, a commonly used thermoplastic, non-yellowing, acrylic resin. This substance is currently recommended for use by the G.A.R. Curator on objects within the collection for marking with the accession number (cataloging system), as well as most of the museums in Illinois.

DISCUSSION:

Bid documents for the cleaning and restoration of the G.A.R. murals were completed by three bidders in January 2021. A non-mandatory bid meeting was held on January 14, 2021 where four respondents attended. The bid deadline was January 27, 2021 at 2:00pm, where three bids were received. The amount below reflects the totals of the bid.

John Canning & Co. Ltd	\$46,000.00
A.R.T. of Southwest Chicagoland	\$179,400.00
Third Coast Conservation LLC	\$41,134.50

Due diligence included reference checks and review of all required paperwork for Third Coast Conservation. As a result of favorable reviews and satisfactory submittal of all required documents, Third Coast Conservation, LLC. of Chicago, Illinois is being recommended as the successful lowest bidder for Bid 21-02. Funding is available in the 2021 City Budget GAR Capital Outlay-Improvement account (101-1361-465.73-42)

IMPACT STATEMENT:

The restoration and renovation of the G.A.R. Memorial Hall and Museum is nearing completion. Many of Aurora's residents have inquired about the status of this project in the past and have expressed interest in seeing the frescoes returned to their original appearances. Once this project is complete, all internal projects of the G.A.R. Hall will be finished and the IDNR grant will be nearing completion. This project will also allow visitors to appreciate and remember the sacrifices and challenges these leaders overcame to ensure this nation remains the United States of America.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the resolution to award Bid 21-02 to Third Coast Conservation L. Liparini Studio from Chicago, Illinois and authorize the Purchasing Director to execute all necessary documents.

cc: Public Health Safety and Transportation Committee



CITY OF AURORA, ILLINOIS

RESOLUTION NO. _____
DATE OF PASSAGE _____

A Resolution Authorizing Approval of the Restoration and Cleaning of the G.A.R. Murals Contract to Third Coast Conservation L. Liparini Studio from Chicago, Illinois in the amount of \$41,134.50.

WHEREAS, the City of Aurora has a population of more than 25,000 persons and is, therefore, a home rule unit under subsection (a) of Section 6 of Article VII of the Illinois Constitution of 1970; and

WHEREAS, subject to said Section, a home rule unit may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs for the protection of the public health, safety, morals, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the Restoration and Cleaning of the G.A.R. Murals (21-02) will return the frescoes to their original appearances in memory of the Veterans of the Civil War from Aurora; and

WHEREAS, funding will be available in the 2021 City Budget GAR Capital Outlay-Improvement account (101-1361-465.73-42).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Aurora, Illinois, as follows: that the City's Mayor, Director of Purchasing, or their designees are authorized to execute a contract Third Coast Conservation L. Liparini Studio in the amount of forty-one thousand, one hundred and thirty-four dollars and fifty cents (\$41,134.50) as well as any other documents associated with these approvals.