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Firm to study AA baseball prospects

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By [Kevin Welch](#)

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The Local Government Corp. board voted Wednesday to spend \$57,000 plus expenses to find out whether a national consulting firm thinks a higher level of baseball would succeed in Amarillo.

They voted unanimously to hire Brailsford & Dunlavey to do the preliminary studies to look at bringing AA baseball, affiliated with Major League Baseball, to the proposed downtown ballpark and event venue.

Deputy City Manager Bob Cowell told the board he had continued to confirm the credentials of the company since the Dec. 16 meeting when the group gave approval to develop a contract. He said he'd talked to officials in Columbia, S.C., and the Howard Hughes Corporation in Nevada, which have used the firm's services.

"Both those groups were very complimentary of the firm," Cowell said.

But the study, to include market demand, fiscal factors, what's required for a stadium and funding sources, will only provide information to make further decisions. A 2010 feasibility study found an independent league stadium would best serve the city. The new study will build on the last study since chances to get an affiliated team have improved, according to city officials and the consultants.

"It doesn't say there's anything wrong with the work we purchased," City Manager Terry Childers said. "Once we get this done, we can begin to have the discussions on whether affiliated is the path."

Board member William Biggs said the earlier study is still useful.

"Even though those numbers are a couple of years old, they're not invalid," he said.

Jason Thompson, a regional vice president at Brailsford & Dunlavey, said the study should take about nine weeks.

The LGC's goal is to have the stadium ready for play by the spring of 2018. The City Council told the LGC to proceed on a stadium costing about \$32 million after the Nov. 3 referendum showed voters favored that. A more advanced stadium for a AA team could cost more, and the study should show what that cost might be — possibly closer to \$50 million.

In other business, the board named members of three advisory committees and may add more members.

The outreach committee will be composed of John Lutz, Sunny Hodge Campbell, Dan Quandt, Beth Duke, Steve Pair, Ralph Roberts and Patricia Baca.

The facilities committee will have Biggs, Dana Walton, Brian Heinrich, Kent Ries and Victor Leal as members.

The operations and business committee members are Bryan Poff, Hodge Campbell, Don Powell, Richard Ware and Jerry Hodge.

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