ZEBULON

NORTH CAROLINA

Request for Proposals

Strengths-Based Leadership Team Building & Coaching Services

For

Town of Zebulon North Carolina

Due March 23, 2026

I. Purpose

The Town of Zebulon, North Carolina is seeking proposals from certified StrengthsFinder (CliftonStrengths) consultants to design and facilitate a full-day leadership team-building session, including individual one-on-one coaching, for the Town Manager's senior leadership team.

The purpose of this engagement is to intentionally build trust, shared understanding, and effective working relationships during a period of leadership transition and organizational growth, and to establish shared operating norms that can be reinforced over time.

II. Project Context

Zebulon is experiencing rapid growth and transitioning from a small-town operating environment to one that increasingly resembles a small city. This growth has increased organizational complexity, visibility, and service expectations.

Seven of the Town Manager's eleven direct reports have joined the organization within the past year. In addition, the Town Clerk—who works closely with the leadership team—also joined within the last year. The Town Manager is newly appointed.

This concentration of leadership transition presents both opportunity and risk. While it brings fresh perspective and talent, it underscores the importance of intentionally establishing shared expectations, communication norms, professional boundaries, and operating practices early to support effective collaboration and execution.

This engagement is intentionally sequenced in advance of the Town's Strategic Planning process to ensure leadership alignment before longer-term priorities are established.

III. Scope of Services

The selected consultant shall provide the following services.

1. Pre-Session Preparation

1. Verification of active StrengthsFinder (CliftonStrengths) certification

2. Coordination with the Town Manager or designee to confirm goals and expectations
3. Administration of StrengthsFinder assessments or use of existing results
4. Assessment Freshness Requirement:
    - Results must have been completed within the last three (3) years to be used without re-administration. Results older than three years shall be refreshed or re-contextualized to ensure relevance to current leadership roles and team dynamics.
    - Review and synthesis of individual and team strengths profiles

2. Full-Day Leadership Team-Building Session (Required)

The consultant shall facilitate a full-day, in-person leadership team-building session.

The session shall include:

- Introduction to the StrengthsFinder framework and shared strengths language
- Individual and team-level interpretation of strengths profiles

Exercises focused on:

- Trust and psychological safety
- Communication styles and preferences
- Conflict awareness and resolution
- Complementary strengths and blind spots
- Application of strengths to real leadership scenarios within a municipal context

3. Team Development Education (Required)

The consultant shall educate the leadership team on the stages of team development, including:

Forming
Storming
Norming
Performing
Adjourning

In addition, the consultant shall address organizational and team transformation as a distinct concept, recognizing that continued community growth, organizational scale, and cultural shifts may require leadership teams to adapt how they operate even when teams are stable.

This discussion should help leaders anticipate how growth-driven change can impact team dynamics and leadership expectations over time.

4. Leadership Team Operating Ground Rules (Required Deliverable)

The consultant shall facilitate the development of a Leadership Team Operating Agreement (Ground Rules) that can be implemented immediately following the session.

This deliverable shall include:

1. Facilitated discussion to establish shared expectations for:
    - Communication
    - Decision-making
    - Conflict resolution
    - Feedback and accountability
    - Leadership team meeting norms
2. A concise, written set of ground rules that are practical, observable, and enforceable
3. Guidance on reinforcing the ground rules over time

The consultant shall provide guidance on how Leadership Team Operating Ground Rules can be reinforced through leadership expectations, coaching, and performance evaluation conversations, serving as a shared reference point for professional behavior and collaboration rather than a standalone evaluation metric.

5. One-on-One Leadership Coaching (Required Deliverable)

The consultant shall provide one (1) individual one-on-one coaching session for each participating leadership team member.

The coaching session shall:

- Review and interpret individual StrengthsFinder results
- Identify leadership strengths and potential blind spots
- Identify areas of opportunity for professional development
- Support alignment between individual development goals and the leadership team's operating norms

Each session shall:

- Occur following the full-day session
- Be conducted in person or virtually
- Be of sufficient length to allow meaningful discussion (duration to be specified)

This coaching session is intended to support each participant's broader professional development expectations, including the Town Manager's goal of 40 hours of professional development.

IV. Required Deliverables

1. Full-day leadership team-building session
2. Education on team development stages and organizational transformation
3. Leadership Team Operating Ground Rules document
4. One (1) individual coaching session per participant
5. Summary of team strengths themes and development-stage insights (non-attributable)
6. Practical guidance for sustaining leadership practices

V. Desired Qualifications

Consultants should demonstrate:

- Active StrengthsFinder / CliftonStrengths certification
- Experience facilitating leadership teams during transition
- Executive or leadership coaching experience
- Public-sector or municipal experience (preferred)
- Ability to establish accountability, boundaries, and shared norms while maintaining a collaborative culture

VI. Submission Requirements

Proposals shall include:

1. Firm/consultant overview
2. Proof of certification
3. Relevant experience and examples
4. Proposed approach (agenda, team development education, ground rules, coaching)
5. Project timeline and availability
6. All-inclusive cost proposal

VII. Evaluation Criteria & Scoring Rubric (100 Points)

Category	**Points**
Strengths-Based Certification & Expertise	20
Understanding of Leadership Team Dynamics & Transition	20
Quality of Full-Day Facilitation Approach	20
Leadership Team Ground Rules Deliverable	15

One-on-One Coaching Approach	10
Public-Sector / Municipal Experience	10
Cost & Overall Value	5
Total	100

VIII. Interviews / Presentations (Optional)

The Town may invite shortlisted proposers to participate in an interview or presentation. Interviews may be conducted in person or virtually.

During interviews, proposers may be asked to describe how they have addressed complex team dynamics, leadership transitions, and the establishment of shared operating norms in prior engagements.

IX. Project Timeline

- RFP Issued: February 23, 2026
- Proposals Due: March 23, 2026
- Selection: Early March 2026
- Session Delivery: April-May 2026 (preferred)

X. Point of Contact

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XI. Additional Terms

- Electronic PDF submissions required
- The Town reserves the right to reject any or all proposals
- Scope and fees may be negotiated
- All work products become the property of the Town