

ESTIMATES TOP \$1,764,000

Bids For Community College Are Studied

Construction bids for Western Piedmont Community College are being analyzed today after a long-awaited bid opening.

Moving toward a physical plant costing almost \$2 million, trustees of Burke County's comprehensive community college took no action on awarding contracts pending recommendations from the architects and approval of federal and state agencies which are participating in the building costs.

Apparent low bidders on five contracts set the base cost at \$1,819,701 if an all-electric heating system is installed and \$1,764,628 if an oil-fired heating system is used.

Bids were called on both types of heating systems so that a final decision can be made before contracts are awarded.

Laxton Construction Company of Charlotte was apparent low bidder for the general contract with an estimate of \$1,007,700 for base bid No. 1 (electric heating), and \$1,026,200 for base No. 2 (oil heat).

Other bidders for the general contract were: W. E. Dale Construction Company, Morganton, \$1,109,000 or \$1,125,000; Twin City Builders, Newton, \$1,056,000 of \$1,072,000; Juno Construction Company, Charlotte, \$1,106,500 or (add) \$23,000; F. N. Thompson Construction Company, Charlotte, \$1,027,290 or \$1,045,290.

For the plumbing contract, Tompkins - Johnson Company, Charlotte, was apparent low bidder at \$87,785 or \$88,915.

Other bidders on the plumbing work were Estes of Morganton, Hickory Plumbing and Heating Company and Moser Plumbing Company of Asheville.

For the mechanical contract, which includes heating and air conditioning, Estes of Morganton was apparent low at \$532,000 as base bid No. 1 or \$463,000 for base bid No. 2.

Hickory Plumbing and Heating and the Moser company also submitted bids on the mechanical work.

Sigmon Electric Company of Statesville submitted low bid for the electrical contract on bids of \$166,088 and \$160,385.

Other electrical bidders were M. B. Haynes Company of Asheville and Howard P. Foley Company of Oak Ridge, Tenn.

The elevator contract brought a low bid from Westbrook Elevator Company of Danville, Va., with an estimate of \$26,128.

Other elevator bidders were Southern Elevator Company of Greensboro and Park Elevator Company of Charlotte.

Robert P. Carr, chairman of the building committee of the college's board of trustees, welcomed the bidders to the opening, held at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday at the college's temporary quarters in the old Central school building.

Then A. G. Odell Jr., head of the architectural firm of A. G. Odell Jr. and Associates of Charlotte, opened the sealed bids, assisted by James Cope-

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land, a member of his staff.

Present were representatives of the State Property Control office at Raleigh and the U.S. Housing and Urban Development commission in Atlanta, in addition to the building committee and other trustees of the community college.

Dr. Herbert F. Stallworth, college president, and Roy N. Walters Jr., business manager, joined in tabulating bids.

The construction program calls for three buildings with a total of approximately 65,000 square feet of space. The largest will be called the learning resources center. Adjoining it will be a science-vocational building, while a third and smaller building will house the automotive mechanics department.

The site is off U.S. 64 at Interstate 40 on land formerly part of the farm of the N. C. School for the Deaf.

The close range of bidding on the general contract brought from Carr as building committee chairman the observation that the plans and specifications must have been prepared clearly, because if there had been any doubt or uncertainty the bids would have shown it through greater variations in estimates.

Bidding on the general contract included a series of seven alternates which the college may or may not choose to accept. As an example, here's how the Laxton company, low bidder for the general contract, proposed to make deductions for the alternates set forth in the bidding form: Alternate No. 1, Delete 20-year roofing manufacturer's guaranty bond, deduct \$1,150; alternate No. 2, delete fine grade concrete curbs, stone base course, bituminous paving bumpers, deduct \$72,000; alternate No. 3, change marble partitions to metal, deduct \$3,000; alternate No. 4, change exposed aggregate to smooth finish, deduct \$2,000; alternate No. 5, change mortise hardware to cylindrical, deduct \$500; alternate No. 6, change factory finished doors to job finished, deduct \$3,300; alternate No. 7, delete plaster finishes and S.G.F.T., deduct \$26,200.

The alternates were included in the bidding to give the college board an opportunity to make changes in the interest of economy if the savings proved to be worthwhile, it was pointed out.

There was local interest in the fact that the Laxton company appeared to be low bidders for the general construction. Erwin M. Laxton, who represented the company at the bid opening, has links with Burke County, both of his parents having been from Morganton.

In addition to the contracts on which bids were received, the cost of the college's physical plant will include purchase of the site at \$95,000 and the architects' fees. To come later is the purchase of furnishings and equipment.

Voters of Burke County authorized a bond issue of \$1 million to go toward construction of the college. The State through a special appropriation approved \$500,000 as a grant toward the building cost, and the Federal government through the Higher Education Facilities Act has approved a \$350,000 grant, and an application for another U. S. grant is pending.