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Item 22-1463: Add \$1,400 to Public Works Concrete Reconstruction Delete \$1,400 of Council Training/Conferences

Common Council

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Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 25:01

Brings us to our next item 22-1463 add \$1,400 to public works concrete reconstruction, and delete \$1,400 of council training and conferences. So, we'll need a motion and a second. All right, we have a motion in a second. So, moving on to discussion then. There's anyone that wishes to speak on this? Alder Doran.

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 25:37

Thank you. This kind of goes along the same lines as some of the other amendments, I guess, that I proposed, which, you know, is, is pinching pennies to try and fund one of our priorities that's, I think, underfunded in in ways that we all agree with. I propose the amendment based on the information that were provided from the mayor earlier that it sounds like the, the Appcademy is being planned to be returned in, in here in the near future. And as sort of the person who created that program, I'm not sure what it will end up looking like in the future. But I could just speak to I guess that program, in my mind, being the best training ground for council members, beyond any workshop, anyone else could provide, because we're actually touring the facilities we have and talking with the staff that we have, and learning exactly what our staff does, and how that that process works from, from the time the budget's approved throughout the year and with the work that they do with the dollars that their department is allocated. You know, in my mind (maybe it's a philosophical difference) but I think this is this is public service and we do this with the intent of serving the public to the best of our abilities, and we take on a lot. We all put in a lot of time and effort, well above what the pay rate that that we get for this work, because we believe it's important to do this as a service to our community. And I think, while the dollar amount might be small, I believe it's still important, you know, from that standpoint, that we're doing our best to find dollars anywhere we can to fund one of our critical needs. And when we're balancing those priorities, I believe that's a much more important need than what this is given that there's an opportunity for us and for future council members who might be interested to take advantage of a free training that the city itself will provide

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 27:50

Alder Van Zeeland.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 27:53

Thank you Chair, I guess I'll start off by saying that the type of training that we look for reimbursement with is not with city staff, it's not about learning what the city does. It's about learning how to be an effective leader, an effective alder, honing skills in leadership or negotiation or collaboration so that we can be more effective for our constituents. And I think \$94 per person a year is, is a very low amount to pay for the knowledge that you receive in these trainings, and no one's being forced to go to training. So, anything that is not used, does not rollover, it just goes back into the general fund.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 28:38

I'll also say that I'm in a neighboring district with the alder who has brought this to us and we had a really important issue to our constituents this year. I sent out a survey to my residents, because a very small corner of my district was affected, and when our colleague was asked to do the same, he said that he couldn't he didn't have the budget for that. And I don't fault him for that. That's the right thing to do. You have to stick with a budget. But I don't see how adding more expense to being an alder is helpful for communicating with our

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constituents if we're already picking and choosing how and when we reach out to them. So, I would encourage my fellow alders to defeat this. Thank you.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 29:29

Alder Meltzer.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 29:31

Thank you. I think that if we support this amendment, then we're saying that \$1,000 worth of concrete is more valuable and helpful to the community than investment in the intellectual assets of our leadership. I have a question for Director Block, if I may. The question is how much concrete? Does \$1,000 get you in a reconstruction project?

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 30:02

Alder Block—or sorry, Director Block.

Director Danielle Block (Department Of Public Works) 30:04

Thank you chair. A, for instance, concrete reconstruction of an alley (I had it broken down in miles) is about \$1.1 million per mile. To put it to scale with about, you know, \$1,400, that would get you 10 sidewalk blocks. A sidewalk block is roughly \$140. Block five by five concrete.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 30:33

Thank you. So, I think that when you compare that on a matter of scale, 10 blocks versus having access to training that would otherwise be prohibitively expensive for our personal finances. Trainings include things like meeting people from the DNR, meeting people on from the state, meeting people and learning from people who have best practices in departments that are the same or different from ours all around the state. There are many different ways in which having access to these trainings is unique, and cannot be done without this portion set aside in the budget. And we have a lot of discussion about the fact that this money isn't being used, or isn't being used as much as it could be, and I think it's really important for us to remember we are still coming out of the pandemic. A lot of things changed. People aren't necessarily aware or haven't been able to take advantage of a lot of new virtual opportunities, just because we're all struggling to catch up with the fact that everything in the world is online again, and every all these events are happening again. So, I think that if we take this money away, then we certainly doom ourselves to being unable to have training. But we need to keep this money here so that people are able to have access to those opportunities. Thank you.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 32:02

Next is Alder Thao.

Alderson Maiyoua Thao (District 7) 32:07

Thank you Chair. I'd like to share that I had used the training funds in the last four years that I've been here. I use it the first year that I came to council and also just recently. I find that it's very helpful. And I think that we should leave training dollar funds in here available to us Council. I know that we've been busy with you know, Covid, like Alderson Meltzer mentioned. It is important for us to keep funds available to us council. So, you know, not everyone can afford on their own to pay for their training. So, I would recommend that we were we should keep this funding available and, you know, for future council members that are coming along and for us that are here that would like to continue to get more um, more training. You know, it's helpful. We can do training internally by the academy training that Alder Doron mentioned, but I feel that it is so important for us to get external training to meet and also to learn about what other cities are doing or, you know, to meet and, you

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know, to share our ideas with others out there too. So, I would like us to keep this funding available to us Council member. Thank you.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 33:41

Alder Schultz.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 33:43

Thank you Chair, just another, I guess perspective. 10 blocks of concrete sidewalk or, if you look at the numbers, it's 1/100th of 1% of the Public Works budget. So, I don't even know why we're having this conversation. Thank you.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 34:03

Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 34:06

Thank you, Chair. There's a developer on the north side who would like to add to District 13. I presume it'll be District 13. But we can't get Lightning Drive built. 10 blocks of sidewalk might mean nothing, but it might mean a lot to getting an entire new development on the north side of Appleton, increasing our tax base. If we can find \$1,000 in six different budget items, seven different budget items, shouldn't we? Thank you.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 34:49

Alder Wolff.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 34:55

Call the question.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 34:58

There is no one in the queue. All right, we'll take a vote on calling the question.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 35:13

We have a motion our second. So, we'll do a voice vote. All in favor? Aye. Opposed? Abstentions? Motion passes 14 Zero. So, we will now vote on the item

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 35:52

All right, the amendment fails on a 2 to 12 vote. Alders Hartzheim and Doran voted yes. The rest of the body has voted no.