

Item 24-0353: Request to approve the 2023-2024 Budget carryover appropriations (2/3 vote of Council required)

Finance Committee

Mon, Mar 25, 2024 5:30PM

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 40:11

Next up is 24-0353 request to approve the 2023-2024 Budget carryover appropriations.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 40:22

Move to approve.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 40:22

Second.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 40:23

All right, we have a motion and a second. Any comments or questions on this? Alder Hartzheim?

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 40:30

Thank you, chair. I am interested in more information regarding the two charges to—two carryover expenses for the Housing Task Force implementation. They're shown under legal services. Can someone share any more detail on that?

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 40:51

Yes. If anyone's prepared to answer that question, just a quick show of hands, please, so I know which mic to turn on. Oh, sorry, I didn't see that. Thank you.

Director Kara Homan (Community And Economic Development) 41:07

So, the 15030 and 15040 are CED account numbers. I think it's just a Scriveners error in the spreadsheet. It should read Community and Economic Development.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 41:18

Okay, that's helpful. So, then you'll speak to that?

Director Kara Homan (Community And Economic Development) 41:27

Sorry, what was that?

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 41:27

Then you'll speak to that? You'll speak to what these added expenses are?

Director Kara Homan (Community And Economic Development) 41:31

Yeah. So, the development service process improvement—one of the recommendations that came out of the task force (and it was something that I observed during my time here at the city) is we need training as well as strategic consulting around teaching staff how to do process mapping. If any of you have are familiar with the term "Lean" or "Six Sigma", that is—part of my vision for these funds is really bringing in training and empowering staff within CED, as well as other departments involved in the development approval process, to learn how process flow and process improvement works.

Director Kara Homan (Community And Economic Development) 42:13

Another piece that we know we need some assistance on is how we do communication and marketing for development approval processes, not just for things that are complex like a subdivision development, but also for things that to us are simpler, but to the outside world are not simple. Like how do we communicate how to build an accessory dwelling unit? How to get it through the permit approval process, scope it appropriately, and get a shovel in the ground. So that was the thought behind these two is really better communication as well as training and resources to teach our development approval teams what process improvement, Lean, and different tools of that nature are so that we can carry that forward into our work as a city.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 43:01

Thank you for that. But how does that relate then to the Housing Task Force? Why is it stated as Housing Task Force implementation?

Director Kara Homan (Community And Economic Development) 43:08

Yea, so if you if you—we will be having a communication item at CEDC and Plan Commission for the meetings in April. I believe the mayor will put it as an item, information item, on Council to follow. There's recommendations in the task force specifically to communication as well as process improvement for the development approval process, because some of the feedback we've heard from developers is it's not clear—we're not communicating what the process is. And even for those who do understand the process, it's not always the most efficient terms of how they get through it or how we work internally within city hall.

Director Kara Homan (Community And Economic Development) 43:50

So, part of part of the key to housing is time is money. So, the quicker you can move a development through approval process or an entitlement process, the developer saves money, carrying cost, risk, and it also incentivizes them—if I'm going to make an investment, if I can get through the entitlement process quickly, smoothly, and I know what to expect from beginning to end, they're going to choose Appleton as a less risky and quicker place to invest their capital versus a community that might have a onerous and difficult process. That makes sense?

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 44:27

Thank you. That does make sense. I'm still grappling with how the two of those pieces fit together, but I do understand the need for those things just based on my—some of my neighborhoods. Thank you.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 44:43

Okay. Anyone else? Alder Doran.

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 44:49

Thank you. Just as a follow up on that note from when you mentioned kind of trying to improve communication and marketing of some of these recommendations and training for staff in doing that work, do you—do you foresee that work still being still utilizing outside consultants to actually do the work? Or do we think in house staff will actually have the time and capacity to do that once they've gotten the training in that?

Director Kara Homan (Community And Economic Development) 45:19

My primary goal is to focus on training. I know Fox Valley Tech has a pretty thorough offering of Lean and Six Sigma training. Typically, once you have a team that's trained in process improvement, understands how to think about it and how to do it, I would anticipate that that's just built into our day-to-day work, and it's something that we live and breathe moving forward. And once the investment of training—similar to the

neighborhood investment, once we're trained (assuming we're doing a good job of retaining our talent) we'll be able to carry that knowledge through for years and years. I took a Lean process improvement training, when I worked for the city of Menasha, and it just blew my mind, and it taught me how to look at things differently. And that was about 14 years ago, and I'm still using the tools that I learned there. So that's my vision for this.

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 46:10

Okay, thank you. I appreciate that. I'm not opposed to the knowledge piece, just wanted to make sure that, you know, staff will actually be able to implement it. If you're talking about trying to market some of this stuff, or do communication and outreach following these recommendations—that if we're gonna invest in the staff being able to learn it, we still aren't ending up having to farm out that work because we don't have the time and capacity. So, thank you.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 46:38

Thank you, anyone else? Alder Van Zeeland.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 46:41

I'll just back that up. I took my Lean training about 20 years ago, and it's something that's still rattles around up here. So, I agree. Thank you.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 46:50

All right. One more check. Anyone else? Seeing none. Let's go ahead and vote. All those in favor? Aye. Opposed? Abstentions? Motion passes five to zero.