

Item 4-1318: Proposed Special Event Policy - 2025

Safety and Licensing Committee

Wed, Oct 23, 2024 5:30PM

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 01:00

All right, no scheduled public hearings or appearances, and is there anyone here from Delaire's tonight? No? Okay, then we're going to skip that and we'll go to the next item on the—action item on the agenda, which is 24-1318, is the proposed special event policy for 2025. This was at our last meeting. There are a number of attachments. Hopefully everybody had enough time to review everything and bring their questions. I will turn it over to Clerk Lynch to just summarize. I know you did last time, but if you could just summarize again, and I believe, Mayor Woodford, you're also here for this item? Okay, all right. Clerk Lynch, would you like to start? Director three. Okay, should be on.

Clerk Kami Lynch 01:50

Okay, first one to cover the attachments that have changed since last time. So, there was one additional policy revision to the policy itself. It was removing specific language in the reservation section. So, on page 7b "facility reservations", it references the policy that way. The reservation policy, if it changes, we don't have to [...] language there. It just allows that flexibility. So that was the only policy change.

Clerk Kami Lynch 02:23

And then the—at the request of Alderman Hartzheim, we included more types of events in the special event cost tracking sheet. So added some of the homecoming parades on there. And I wanted to provide a little more background on this document, if I could, to give clarity.

Clerk Kami Lynch 02:52

This document—the cost reflected in this document are based on staff used for the event in 2023. It is not based on actual costs incurred from 2023 because we were not tracking those numbers. So, these costs are utilizing our fee schedule attachment for the number of hours and number of employees worked. So just wanted to make that clear. So, these are actually probably already a little bit less than what was actually utilized in 2023. So, because specific personnel weren't designated to be tracked for special events at that point, we don't have that data. So, it was used—these numbers were used based off of our current fee schedule proposal.

Clerk Kami Lynch 03:44

And then with the fee schedule proposal that I—that document was also amended since the last time it was here just to provide—well, we had to adjust a tent permit fee for—to put in the "fire department tent permits," not "Parks and Rec tent permits." And then just clarifying language at the bottom of the fee schedule that these are the rates that services would be based off of, and after that, after they're all calculated for the 100% of the cost it would be 25% of that in increments of 25—or a quarter hours, is how they would be determined and assessed. And then just putting it out here that this will be updated at least every two years as that's when the new FEMA rates come out.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 04:37

Okay, thank you. Mayor Woodford, would you like to add anything at this point? No?

Mayor Jake Woodford 04:45

Not at this point.

Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 04:45

Okay, all right. Are there members in the audience (I know there are) that would that would like to speak on this, if you would come to—they're doing Rock, Paper, Scissors to see who goes first. You know the drill. Name and address for the record. Hang on right there. I'm looking for podium. It's right in front of me. Okay.

Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 05:17

Jennifer Stephany, I'm the executive director with Appleton Downtown, Incorporated. We are located at 333 West College Avenue, Suite 100. As event planners, we also work on very tight budgets, so we absolutely understand the direction that the city is going with the charge back approach. We definitely appreciate the opportunity to work with you towards a manageable structure so that we can all sustain and thrive.

Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 05:49

Some of the events may find it challenging to absorb some of these additional costs. I think it's realistic to think that we might lose some of our events. We may lose some features from special events as we're going to need to adjust some cost spending to be able to cover those.

Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 06:06

Losing key community events that have become synonymous with our identity could have damaging effect on our brand and our reputation as a city. We know that the events that are hosted in downtown and throughout the community play a significant role in supporting the local economy, as well as attracting investment in our community, attracting residents and new talent to our community. I'd like to share a quote if I may from Stephanie Lowney. She's the VP of Strategy, Innovation, and Marketing with US Energy. And I didn't bring my readers, so bear with me. "The vibrancy of downtown community and the array of attractions were driving factors in US Venture's decision to relocate its corporate headquarters to the 222 building. From a thriving business community to the arts restaurants, and special events, downtown Appleton offers a unique experience for our team members, which helps differentiate us in a competitive recruitment landscape." It's why creating community is so important for talent attraction. They recognize that. They selected a location that gave them an opportunity to provide something special for their employees, to help them attract, and they made a sizable investment, and will be making the significant investment.

Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 07:36

I urge the city to continue the strong partnership in cultivating special events by keeping the percentage of the charge back at or below the 25% that is being proposed. Investing in special events is not only a cultural benefit, but it's also an economic one. It helps to attract and boost our local businesses, and it overall impacts our quality of life for those that choose to live here in Appleton. By keeping the fees manageable and providing an opportunity for multi-year service agreements for the large-scale events, we can ensure that our city remains a thriving hub for special events and continues to attract residents and visitors alike.

Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 08:27

I have all kinds of quotes from other people that reached out, from real estate agents to building owners to investors. I won't read them all, but I would love an opportunity to send them to the committee and to the council members if that's agreeable.

Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 08:42

Yes.

Jennifer Stephany (Appleton Downtown Incorporated) 08:42

All right. And thank you for the opportunity to comment and for all your hard work. Thanks.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 08:47

Thank you, Jennifer. Anyone else? Who's next?

Eric Broten (Vice President, Business Growth & Development - Fox Cities Chamber Of Commerce) 08:51

Hi, I'm Eric Broten. I am the Vice President of Business Growth and Development for the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce. Address is 125 North Superior Street in Appleton. I'm going to echo a lot of what Jennifer said. Obviously, we both put on some rather large events right downtown Appleton here. But specifically, I want to speak about Oktoberfest and License To Cruise. And, as you know, that's obviously one our biggest event. Some numbers, I want to just reiterate—the economic impact associated with the draft that's coming to Green Bay is estimated to be \$90 million. Our one weekend event of License To Cruise and Oktoberfest brings in an estimated \$42.3 million, and we do it every single year with a staff of 12 people. So, I just want to make sure that people are clear that that's, you know, the impact that we're having. And it's not a huge money maker for the chamber. It's really a big give back to the community. We tie in—all our food vendors have to be partnered with nonprofit organizations to share their proceeds. We also have a grant program of our own that we give back money to nonprofits through this program and this event every year.

Eric Broten (Vice President, Business Growth & Development - Fox Cities Chamber Of Commerce) 10:13

So again, I totally understand where the city is coming from and trying to recoup some of these costs. We appreciate that the that you're making account for these larger events and willing to work with us on that. We are in the middle of budgeting for next year and the I guess the biggest fear for us is the unknown. You know, we know the big number could be up to 25% and obviously willing to work with us—again, much appreciated. If you do have any insight as far as when those kinds of conversations might be had, that would be really helpful as we go planning for 2025. And I'm also free if you guys have any questions at all. I also have some literature I'd like to send to the committee, if that's okay afterward.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 10:57

That is, that is fine. Thank you, and we can include that as part of the record. Thank you, Eric.

Eric Broten (Vice President, Business Growth & Development - Fox Cities Chamber Of Commerce) 11:03

Yeah, thank you.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 11:04

All right. Mr. Willems, all right.

Dave Willems (Mile of Music Organizer) 11:09

I did want to point out that, though they're not looking to speak, that folks from Art At the Park are here as well Trout. So, I just wanted to make that reference. Had a lot of conversations with a lot of folks in the community over the last couple weeks. We have Gibson Community Music Hall, so a lot of our music fans go there, and they're also appreciative of the fact that this looks like we gonna have a chance to have some conversation come to what we hope is a is a good solution for everyone. So, thank you.

Dave Willems (Mile of Music Organizer) 11:09

I don't really have anything to add to what was said. Both of those were very on point. Just wanted to share what I said a couple weeks ago, which is simply that we're looking forward to having the dialog, the conversation. Appreciate the fact that there's an opportunity in there for the larger events to sit down at the

table and have those discussions. I think there's a lot of uncertainty by a lot of people about how these events come together, how much money they're making, whether they're making money, all those things. I know certainly we hear that all the time that we're making money hand over fist, and we put everything back into this event, and we also end up short falling it every year with whatever needs to be shortfall. So, whenever there's a look at a look at cost increasing, so that we at least need to look at those things and see how it impacts the event. So, we appreciate the fact that we'll be able to sit and chat and walk through some of that. We certainly expect that it's realistic to think that some costs would come back, and we'll just hopefully be able to budget for that into, like, the next three, five years, three or five years, or whatever that might be.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 12:38

Okay, thank you. Anyone else like to speak that's here for this item? No? Okay. All right, let's get a motion to get it on the table, and then we'll open it up for additional discussion here.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 12:51

So, move.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 12:52

Second.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 12:52

Okay, motion by Alder Siebers, second by Alder Fenton to approve the proposed special event policy?

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 12:59

Yes.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 13:00

Okay, all right. Alder Hartzheim. Thirteen?

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 13:06

Thank you, Chair. I'd like to start by saying I appreciate the time that I was able to spend with Clerk Lynch talking about some of the questions that I had in this regard. And one of the things that was a big concern to me at that point in time was our local schools and how much this will impact schools, because obviously we can't exempt nonprofits, because everything's a nonprofit. So, I asked her to add these last two columns, or to give me some idea of what we were looking at for some events that are very important to neighborhoods, but should the taxpayer bear all of that when the city has to charge—under charge for the current policy that we have. And with this information, I was able to determine that those two homecoming parades, the schools would incur about \$200 to \$300 more in fees than they currently do, or than they had in this last iteration. That seems bearable to me. I understand that my threshold might be different than a school's budget threshold, but I think that seems bearable for a school's budget as well. So, I'm satisfied that that is helpful information that makes me feel a little less trepidatious about moving into this. So that part is satisfied.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 14:29

The other question I did have, though, is how—I understand that the threshold of 10,000 or more is, you know, on the table for this, you know, special event. We'll, we'll talk, we'll pow wow with you individually based on your particular event and what your cost should be. I'm wondering how we will make those determinations, and how will we fairly make those determinations? In other words, we can't necessarily favor one organization over another and say "This one is going to be 20% but this one will be 15, or this one will be 10." I'm wondering how

we'll be judicious yet fair in making those determinations. And a case-by-case basis is sort of—that's the that's the description of what will happen, but what does that mean in real terms? Thank you.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 15:17

Okay. Thank you, Alder Hartzheim, that's a good question. Would some—would Clerk Lynch or the mayor like to address that?

Clerk Kami Lynch 15:25

I can start.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 15:26

Okay.

Clerk Kami Lynch 15:26

So, the—and I know there's a lot of uncertainty surrounding that, and what that means for the event applicants, and in terms of fairness, as was referenced, it allows us to really look at what the event entails, and are there services that the city is currently providing that the event holder could outsource or provide themselves for a cost savings, really, to all? So it's not intended to be, you know, each special event service agreement is going to mimic another one. It also—the duration—there's that flexibility so someone, a group or an organization, might be able to foot a little more up front, knowing this was coming. They had more budgeted, while another one is a longer duration, but we get to that same number charge back rate over time. So, I know that's not a great answer. It's still a little bit ambiguous, but that's why we want the flexibility in here to really consider the services rendered in hosting the events, and to look at what the event hole—holders, applicants can offer the city to help with some of that.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 16:49

Okay, thank you. So, looking at unique factors and different aspects of each individual event?

Clerk Kami Lynch 16:55

Exactly.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 16:55

Okay. All right. Anyone else like to...? Alder Hart—Alfheim. Which one? Sorry. 14? All right.

Alderson Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 17:07

Thank you, Chair. I appreciate this discussion. I think I've met with the community members that have spoken already, and everybody understands this is a team aspect. The reality is we are spending more on safety for the good of our people, and every organization embraces that and understands the costs are up, and sharing in that is valid.

Alderson Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 17:29

I think the biggest concern is the thought that anybody might suggest anything larger than 25%. That would be a hard no. That is that is something that the organizations cannot handle, and I hope that the committee will maintain it as is.

Alderson Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 17:45

The other is, again the lead time in the planning. So, when we have individual conversations that are in that the large aspect, the gray portion of the chart, I would ask that we can get them on the calendar as soon as possible,

so the organizations can plan for their budgeting purposes as well as if we would please consider, again, the economic impact of these organizations and these events when we work on the percentages, that would be less than 25. Again, this is a lot of giving that is going on with our partners in the community, and so I hope that we can embrace that and really, truly look at what they're bringing to us as a city, as opposed to what's taking. Thank you.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 18:25

Okay, thank you. Mayor, you had your hand up.

Mayor Jake Woodford 18:29

Thank you, Chair. In terms of how, how we would approach, or how I would propose approaching negotiations, if the council, if the committee and council do adopt the policy, be my intention to start our conversations with all of the large event organizers with the base policy as our starting point for the conversation. And I think there's something else to note when Clerk Lynch was referencing the nuances in terms of what different kinds of events need, it's important to note that there are things that we as a city will do, especially from a public safety perspective, that is not up to the discretion of event organizers, and we will not leave it up to the discretion of event organizers to employ certain assets if we feel it will be necessary from a public safety perspective. But just the same, in the interest of fairness, we don't—and because we are not having a negotiation—there are things that we do and that Public Safety does, particularly law enforcement, that cannot be outsourced, and we would not expect it to be outsourced. We wouldn't ask organizers if they want those types of services, and those would be the types of things that from an event cost perspective, we wouldn't—I wouldn't propose applying to the cost that we're trying to recoup in our negotiations. So, I just want to clarify that point.

Mayor Jake Woodford 20:08

But my intention would be to start with the base policy as our starting point. And I do think we will have some very productive conversations with event organizers, because up to this point, we haven't had a reason to have conversations about what it takes to put events on from a municipal perspective, just like some of the speakers talked about the fact that not everybody in the community understands what it takes to put on the kinds of events that our large event organizers in particular putting on. That's a very much a two-way street.

Mayor Jake Woodford 20:39

In terms of phasing in a service agreement, and ideally, we would, we would structure these in such a way that we're not at that every single year with our event organizers, especially for events that have a long-standing history in the community and expect to continue on in the future. We would set up a longer term, a longer term for the agreement, and I fully expect that in this initial round of conversations, we will have to develop some kind of on ramp for organizations, understanding that they are actively in budgeting right now, just like the city is actively in budgeting right now. So, we would, we would work to be pragmatic when it comes to setting up those on ramps and making sure that we're not going to destabilize events as we work to get to whatever we determine is our common target.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 21:32

Okay, thank you, Mayor. Clerk Lynch?

Clerk Kami Lynch 21:35

I just want to piggyback a little bit on what Mayor Woodford referenced, those really discretionary services that the city is providing that we wouldn't expect the special event applicant to be able to provide themselves or to put on. The events included in the cost tracking, they don't have those like discretionary services. So that wasn't—for example, for a homecoming parade, that didn't include, you know, officers that were already

working in that area that day, things like that. Or for like the SWAT team. Of course, a special event applicant can't have their own SWAT team to replace that. So that's a discretionary service that the city offers at our own discretion, that those costs are not included in these cost tracking and they would not be part of the 25% charge back that the applicants would be responsible for.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 22:36

Okay, thank you. Alder Fenton.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 22:38

Thank you, Chair. I've got a question and a comment if I may. So, the question looking at—and I think Clerk Lynch and I talked about this a little bit after our last meeting. So, I see all the different categories of events are—can I assume that for events that are a series of events, such as the Farm Market and the Thursday night concerts, and that those will—will those be treated as individual events or as a series? And then following up on that, something like, you know, a multi-day, like Art at the Park or Mile of Music. So how are you looking at treating something like that?

Clerk Kami Lynch 23:24

So, the series events are multiple day events. They are going to be—currently they're housed as one, but they are, I guess, fees are assessed for, like, the number that's under our current policy. Under the proposed policy, they're still going to be housed as one event, or one set of events in terms of the application, so just the \$75 application fee for the multiple day event, or for the series of event, and then with the proposed policy, it would be services rendered during that time in total.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 24:07

Okay. And the comment was, I appreciate all the work that has gone into this and getting the costs, and, you know, reaching out to our partners, because I agree with the people who—the people who put on the events. These are a really important part of our identity as a city. And for you know, some of them—not to be too specific, but there are certain four days in August that are kind of my high holy days of the year. But not everybody in the city takes part in these events, and under the way we were operating in the past, the taxpayers were on the hook for pretty much all of the costs. Because I think we can all look at what the fees were, and they were pretty small compared to the costs of what—so I think what we've—what staff has come up with, and especially given the idea of on ramp and onboarding the organizations, is a really good compromise. I think the amount is fair, so that there is some cost sharing, because, you know, benefits to both of us. But I do think that it does relieve the taxpayers of the 100% or close to 100% burden of putting these on. So, I will be in favor of this policy. Thank you.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 25:33

Okay, thank you, and I share a lot of those thoughts on the importance of these events and also the need to look at a policy like this. Alder Hartzheim. 13, and it should be back on.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 25:45

Thank you. Chair. Just one thing I was thinking of as this was continuing to move forward. What—does the policy—it doesn't look like it clearly establishes what happens if there's an impasse between the city and a large event. And if the city doesn't want to lose that event, where can we come—how how—what is the policy process then if they're just—if it can't be, it can't be reached—some agreement can't be reached?

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 26:17

Okay, good question. Clerk Lynch?

Clerk Kami Lynch 26:20

So that is in the policy on page nine with the charge back for city services, "failure to reach or complete a special event services agreement will result in the applicant being charged for 25% of actual costs incurred."

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 26:35

Okay.

Clerk Kami Lynch 26:36

So, if the event happens, or is planning to happen, then they would just be responsible for 25% of the incurred cost.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 26:45

May I follow up please, Chair?

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 26:46

Yes.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 26:46

But that—and I'm not saying this as a judgment—that puts the city in the driver's seat, because if a organization can't make an agreement with the city, they're actually going to end up paying more. Am I correct in that assumption?

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 27:05

I—was that—would? Yep.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 27:08

Okay, thank you.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 27:11

Okay. Any other questions, comments? Alder Doran, question? Oh, go ahead, Mayor.

Mayor Jake Woodford 27:19

Just on—just on—sorry to cut you off, Alder Doran. Just on Alder Hartzheim's point, we fully intend to work cooperatively and collaboratively with event organizers, and the reason that Clerk Lynch has included that provision in the policy is for exactly the kind of situation that Alder Hartzheim notes. I think that there's a strong incentive for all of us to work together to come to a reasonable agreement, and especially in the case of large events. So, I can only speak for myself and how I would approach negotiations, but it would be with every intention of working in cooper—in collaboration with organizers to come up with a workable solution so that we preserve their ability to hold events, and we also work toward reaching the goals that the Council's laid out for us in terms of recouping costs.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 28:19

Thank you. Yep, fully understand that the goal is to come to an agreement and not have to look at the section we just referenced. But it's also important, I think that it's in there. Alder Doran, go ahead.

Alderson Chad Doran (District 15) 28:34

Thank you. Just wanted, I guess, maybe a little bit more clarification. I know the mayor referenced in negotiations for larger scale events, the base is—the base sort of negotiation is the 25% meaning the minimum expectation for a large-scale event is paying at least 25% of the cost but potentially more than that, depending on kind of the services needed?

Mayor Jake Woodford 29:00

If I may, chair?

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 29:02

Sure, go ahead. That was my understanding of your comment.

Mayor Jake Woodford 29:05

Yeah, so when I say the base, the base, what I what I mean is that when we get together, get around the table to talk about specific events, we will use the data that that's been assembled and put before you as a starting point for those conversations. I—we would not seek to exceed that amount, 25% of cost, in negotiations. What we what we would try to do is actually work together to look at ways that we can start whittling away at that in terms of, are there services that we're providing that could be provided differently, or could we think about how an event is set up to try and reduce the impact of on city services? That's not going to be possible with certain large events, and that's part of the reason that large events are going to be treated separately with a service agreement. Because there—it's an unreasonable ask. It's obviously unreasonable to say to the Octoberfest committee, "Hey, what if you held your event in a different location?" That's—it's, it's, it's, it's absurd. And so, we wouldn't ask that of an event like Octoberfest. However, for the dozens of other events that happen in the community, there may be some opportunities when we have those conversations around policy to say, "Yeah, look, this is what it takes. If it's a street closure, or we're dealing with complicated traffic control planning or we're entirely providing security services through the police department; let's work together and think about ways that we could reduce that overall cost for you as an organizer."

Mayor Jake Woodford 30:45

So, when I say 25% the base amount, that's really just the starting point for our conversation, to say, "All right, here's what it is from our perspective. What's your perspective? And how can we, how can we ideally try to try to reduce the overall impact?" Because this isn't just about recouping costs, because the other component of this is that all of these costs are connected to human beings and human capacity from the city, and it has gotten increasingly more difficult to fill special shifts, to fill overtime slots. The days of long like waiting lists and queues—the police department used to have this elaborate system, I'm told, for sorting out who was going to get those overtime shifts for events. It's different now in terms of filling those shifts. And so, where we can, we also want to try and reduce that overall burden, because it does take human capacity to do these things.

Alderson Chad Doran (District 15) 31:43

Thank you, and I appreciate the complexity of the large-scale events and what goes into it. I think my concern is just that, you know, if we're telling smaller events, you know, you have to pay back 25% of the cost, yet we could work with large scale events that ostensibly require much more or much larger amount of city service that they might pay less than 25% I'm not sure how that sits with other event organizers, I guess, and that's the concern there.

Alderson Chad Doran (District 15) 32:12

I know we're trying to do the right thing here, and a lot of thought has gone into this so far. Appreciate that we're working with our event organizers to try and find something that works for them, still allows events, but

also helps the city recoup its costs, because we—ultimately our job here as this committee and Council is to be accountable to how tax dollars are spent. And I think the fact that not everybody partakes in all of these events is a consideration for us. I don't know where that necessarily falls for all of us on, you know, in terms of priority here, but I recognize that this is, this is a difficult decision.

Alderson Chad Doran (District 15) 32:50

I'm not sure that I'm set on 25% yet. I think that mount feels a little bit low to me, but I'm sort of interested, I guess, in also finding out a little bit more about conversations staff might have had with other communities that, as was noted in in the memo, that all charge 100% for their service—they charge back 100% for their services. Just curious what the feedback was from maybe events held in some of those communities, or how they felt that they could charge the full amount versus what we're looking at.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 33:22

Would you like to comment on that, Clerk Lynch?

Clerk Kami Lynch 33:24

Yes. So, we didn't really have detailed conversations about how their event holders felt. A lot of these communities have operated under the 100% charge back for many years, so I think they were—they didn't get a lot of pushback from event organizers because they were used to doing that or expecting those fees. But if that's something that's requested, I can reach out and get more information from our cops on that.

Alderson Chad Doran (District 15) 33:53

Thank you. And I guess my last question is, I'm not sure what discussion staff has had, but just out of curiosity, if this is the proposal at a base of 25%, obviously we know our costs, just like the event organizers costs, are going up every year. How is staff looking at adjusting that for the for the future? Was that what kind of you were referencing before, Clerk Lynch, about every two years reviewing the policy? Would that also include reviewing the cost of fees, or what has staff had, as far as conversation on that goes?

Clerk Kami Lynch 34:28

So the every two years is specific to the appendix one, the fee schedule, and these rates in the fee schedule are averages of the rates of pay and fringes for a department so the average of that position that would provide that service. So that's why we have in the two years (that's when FEMA rates change for the equipment use) that we would make sure we're looking at that so we're not falling too far behind.

Alderson Chad Doran (District 15) 34:57

And is there a plan to sort of, I guess, share with event organizers that costs are going up, or how do we—what is the idea for staff or Council, I guess, to proceed with if a rate increase is needed, you know, beyond 25% do we have—I don't think there's anything in the policy right now that sort of states how that procedure works.

Clerk Kami Lynch 35:18

So as—we have this as an appendix to the to the policy. So, policies are approved by council. So, the appendix as being a portion of the policy would come back before Safety and Licensing and Common Council for approval with those proposed changes.

Alderson Chad Doran (District 15) 35:35

Thank you.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 35:36

Okay, all right. Anyone else? Alder Schultz? Oh.

Mayor Jake Woodford 35:40

Chair, just on Alder Doran's point, first, just in terms of the question that I think I was hearing, and hopefully have this right, but the question was about if there came a time where 25% cost recovery was not sufficient to cover the cost of city services. I would say, you know, on this point, you know, there's been a lot of conversation and ideas thrown around, especially since the policy was introduced, you know, about establishing some kind of budget for special events or some kind of fund. The challenge that we run into when we consider an option like that is that we, we are going to be faced, then, with situations where staff or a committee would be forced to make value judgments about an event which could easily veer into content-based decision making on the part of the city with respect to, you know, saying, what event is more valuable. So if we, if we established a budget for this, and said, this is our special event budget, and we have, instead, we—instead of the events we had last year, we have 10 more events that get added, and we use up that entire budget, then we're gonna be forced to be making value solutions that could easily veer into content, which is, which is certainly a place we do not want to go. And I see I see the attorney shaking his head yes, and so we do not want to get into content-based decision making when it comes to events.

Mayor Jake Woodford 37:15

The other point I would make is that this this is not purely a budget balancing exercise for us, and I think that's important to note. We are we are trying to make some progress on cost recovery to support city services and operations, but it is not something that I would necessarily count on as a budget balancing tactic. So, in a in a future budget year, where we're saying, "Well, how do we how are we going to land this budget? Let's stick another 10% on the special event cost recovery." To me, that's not a lever that that makes sense. This is—that's a longer-term decision, and that's something that that needs deeper consideration.

Mayor Jake Woodford 38:01

So, in terms of the annual rate adjustments or the biannual rate adjustments with FEMA rates, that's how that that plan will lift over time, and that that's what we would rely on to increase the rate of cost recovery. When we start working out the details of multi-year agreements, we will certainly take that into consideration because if we, if we enter into a five-year agreement, for example, with an event organizer, we will have to account for the fact that FEMA rates do adjust over time, but that's a detail that we would sort out in the process of creating the agreement.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 38:41

Okay, thank you Mayor. Alder Schultz.

Alderman Alex Schultz (District 9) 38:43

Thank you, Chair. I just want to express appreciation for staff's work on this, particularly separating out these large-scale events from smaller events. It's easy to look at these things as here's an event in the city, this is the cost that the city has to incur to support that event, and this is the fees. But it's important for us to remember that if a organization, nonprofit, rents a park and it's three to 400 people and it's for their own private thing, there's probably not much that goes back into the community, but when you're talking about these large-scale events, we have, huge amount of financial benefit for the city writ large, for people staying here for multiple days, people eating in restaurants, bars. So, there's, there's a huge and significant benefit to the city itself for the influx of income that comes in, not just for businesses, but just general impact on the city itself. So, it's important to keep that in mind as we're having this sort of flat discussion about, these are the fees, this is what the city is required to pay, because we've got to recover that, and these are just—they're all events categorized

the same. So, I appreciate that there's a separation, and I'm going to—I have some confidence that those memorandum those understandings are going to be beneficial for both parties. So, I do support this. Thank you.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 40:01

Thank you. Mayor, you have your hand up still.

Mayor Jake Woodford 40:04

I do. Thank you, chair. When we think about market comparables, on the one hand, when we say, well, some communities are charging 100% for the cost, I think it's also important that we take into account comparable events, and Oktoberfest does not happen in another community. Mile of Music does not happen in another community. Art at the Park doesn't happen at another community. So, I think those are important comparables for us also to consider. In addition to saying, okay, what is market telling us around what different communities do for cost recovery, I think it's just as important we look at the nature of events and programming that happen in our city and take that into account when we're when we're thinking about cost recovery, because these are, these are extraordinary events that happen in the City of Appleton, for not only our community, but for the Fox Cities, and we're very proud of that, and we want that to continue. So just another comparable to keep in mind as the committee [consultant].

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 41:09

Okay, thank you, Mayor. Any other comments? Questions? Alder Siebers.

Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 41:14

Yes. I just want to say that I really appreciate the fact that the community and the mayor and the city is willing to work together in terms of coming up with a just fee, and I sincerely hope that in the future, that idea of working together continues. I'd hate to see it go the other way.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 41:39

All right. Thank you. I completely agree with that. All right. Alder Doran.

Alderson Chad Doran (District 15) 41:43

Just want to, I guess, ask maybe for further clarification. The mayor had mentioned, sort of working with event organizers as they're already in budgeting planning for next year, as we are. I think that's a fine idea. I don't have any issue with that. I guess. I'm just curious about sort of the on ramp and timing of that. Is the intent then, that we, you know, our at the what's being proposed here by 2026? How long is the on-ramp period, I guess, we're talking about?

Mayor Jake Woodford 42:14

That's a that's a great question, and it is going to be based on the discussions we have with individual event organizers. In terms of what been what's been assumed in the budget the council is currently considering, we did include an increase to special event fee recovery in the clerk's office budget. Clerk Lynch can speak to that in greater detail, but I would say, you know, this is really more an objective we will work toward then then a, you know, we have a hard and fast it's got to be by '26; it's got to be by '27. Because, again, the economic models for events in the community are very different from event to event, and so, as the representative from the Chamber of Commerce, Eric, mentioned, while Oktoberfest has a huge amount of outlay from the event organizers and then also an enormous amount of sales, there's a lot of overhead that eats up any proceeds that that event generates, and so building in additional costs, you know, the you add this on to the stage costs and the book—booking the bands and buying all of the things up front, all of the all of the beer and supplies up front—all of those costs that they have already factored into their model, an additional expense for event fees is not

something that a budget like that can easily absorb in one shot, and so they're very—honestly for most of our events in the community, it's a very fragile economic model that they work off of, and that's in part because of the way that many organizers have set up their events where they're not charging for people. If they just want to come and enjoy that event, they make it free and open to the public. Certain activities, of course, have a cost, but many of those are optional.

Mayor Jake Woodford 44:13

So, we will work individually with event organizers to sort out an on ramp that makes sense. I will say this is not going to be something that I would like to see be a long, dragged out process—oh, we'll get there in 10 years. You know, we're going to have to have a reasonable on ramp period to get where we want to go, but also being respectful and mindful of the fact that we don't want to destabilize the events that are occurring and that are defining for the community.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 44:44

Okay, thank you, Mayor. Good conversation here tonight. Any other comments questions? Does the committee have all of the information they need? All right, we do have a motion and a second to approve. Any final comments? We're ready for a vote? Seeing no hands. All right, let's take a vote. All those in favor of the proposed special event policy for 2025 signify by saying, aye.

Alderspersons Siebers and Fenton 45:09

Aye.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 45:10

All opposed?

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 45:10

Nay.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 45:12

Four one.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 45:13

Abstained.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 45:14

Abstained? I'm sorry there was an abstention. So, it's 3-1-1. That will go as a recommendation to approve which will go to the full city council on November 6, I believe, is the next council meeting, because there's not one next week, correct? All right, okay. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for your input. Look forward to the dialog, discussions, negotiations.