

Item 25-0097: Approve Sole Source Purchase of Decorative Streetlight Poles for College Avenue Bridge

Common Council

Wed, Feb 19, 2025 7:00PM

Mayor Jake Woodford 33:59

All right, let's head back to the item for municipal services committee. This is item 25-0097, approve sole source purchase of decorative street light poles for College Avenue Bridge. Need a motion. We have a motion and a second to approve. Open the floor for discussion. Alder Fenton.

Mayor Jake Woodford 34:30

Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 34:30

I couldn't tell if you saw it or not. Thank you, your honor. Just a couple of notes on this one. First, I appreciate the work of staff to provide us with the answers to our questions. At committee we approved—we recommended this for approval pending information that Director Jungwirth and team has provided us, and just going out a couple of ways, I understand the some of my colleagues still the \$12,000 difference is an issue and perhaps a question on the life of those poles. But just—I randomly had occasion to go out College Avenue a couple of times this week and just wanted to remind everybody that the decorative—not only do we have the decorative poles in our streetscape policy, but those decorative poles extend all the way out to the traffic circle and, you know, a little ways into. So, the—if we use the standard aluminum poles just on the bridge, we're going to have downtown one way, then we're going to have the bridge, then we're going to have—when we go out east to that to the roundabout—we're just going to have a different look. I'm personally satisfied with the specifications that we have been given to understand that these new poles will use, and in keeping with the look of the bridge, the design, and our streetscape guide, I would be in favor of purchasing these poles, and I would urge my colleagues to vote that way as well.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 34:36

Thank you, Chair. I watched this meeting, but, forgive me, I have no idea what follow up came after that. Perhaps it was only given to the members of that committee because I was unaware of any difference in pricing that was offered. I did not see a follow up email in that regard to all members of the Council. So, if I could please have an update on what questions were answered. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 36:54

Director Jungwirth.

Director Laura Jungwirth (Public Works) 36:57

Thank you. And, yes, that was provided to the committee specifically, but to provide a generalized outline—and I'm going to brief the email here that I had sent out, and I can certainly forward for anybody else that would care to read it. So, we did go back and obtain some estimates as to what aluminum poles versus decorative polls would look like as in a cost perspective, and the difference was approximately \$5,500 for the decoratives, and non-decoratives \$4,800. So, the overall for the 16 polls was roughly \$12,000 differential in cost.

Director Laura Jungwirth (Public Works) 37:36

We did reach out to the manufacturer to obtain some information on what the coating would be on galvanized on the galvanized poles, the decoratives, and were provided that they should provide a 25-to-40-year useful life, and that is because of the improvement in processes as stated. And what they do is they coat the galvanizing under the paint, and then over the paint, they provide a durable, polyester, salt resistant coating. So, it's it treats the inside, the outside, under the paint, over the paint. So, because of that, the life has been extended on these types of galvanized decorative poles. That's the general gist.

Director Laura Jungwirth (Public Works) 38:27

Lastly, the timeliness is the quote that we do have for the decoratives does expire by the end of the week. We had it aligned with this meeting. So that is another piece for consideration.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 38:44

Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 38:44

Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 38:46

I'm concerned about the verbiage "should provide". Was there a specific warranty that was noted from this particular supplier?

Mayor Jake Woodford 38:54

Director Jungwirth.

Director Laura Jungwirth (Public Works) 38:57

I think with anything that's going to be passed a 10-year life, there's going to be no guarantee one way or the other. Unfortunately, I can't say that for aluminum or galvanized. It's how they age, the condition, the location that they're in, salt applications. There's a variety of factors that can weather them sooner than.

Mayor Jake Woodford 39:21

So, we expect a limited warranty, as you would, on any anything like this.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 39:27

Thank you, Chair. The—may I follow up?

Mayor Jake Woodford 39:29

Please.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 39:31

My concern. Thank you. Those answered a lot of the questions that came out of that meeting, and that's a great follow up. My concern, though, is that this is still considered a sole sourcing. So are there other alternatives, or is this just such a rarity? Decorative polls are just not—there's no other option for us to actually get competitive bidding for something of this of this nature?

Mayor Jake Woodford 39:55

Director Jungwirth.

Director Laura Jungwirth (Public Works) 39:57

There are very limited options, and especially in trying to keep the essence of what we have there currently, it is very specialized.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 40:05

Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 40:08

Alder Firkus.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 40:12

Thank you. If the Council wanted to go in the direction of aluminum poles, what would that process look like starting with tonight?

Mayor Jake Woodford 40:23

Director Jungwirth.

Director Laura Jungwirth (Public Works) 40:26

Because the aluminum poles are more standard, we would we would go out through the appropriate bidding process to obtain those.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 40:39

So, with that in mind then, if the Council wanted to would this be something we would amend this item, or would it be a deny and ask for staff to go out and get quotes for aluminum—bids for aluminum poles? To just clarify, please?

Mayor Jake Woodford 40:56

Director Jungwirth, any process—?

Director Laura Jungwirth (Public Works) 40:58

I think some direction in the motion would be beneficial, just so staff has an avenue to work towards.

Mayor Jake Woodford 41:04

I would suggest a denial of this item, and then we would take that, we would take that denial as direction to reinstate a process. That would be, I think, the cleanest way to handle it, rather than amending the item, because it's specific to these particular poles.

Mayor Jake Woodford 41:07

All right, thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 41:27

Alder Schultz.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 41:29

Thank you, Mayor. Can I direct a question to Director Jungwirth?

Mayor Jake Woodford 41:32

Just go ahead and ask.

Mayor Jake Woodford 41:33

We'll sort it out.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 41:33

Okay.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 41:37

The tenor of this situation sounds like it was a bit of a surprise that they were deteriorating as fast as they did. Is that correct?

Mayor Jake Woodford 41:46

It is.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 41:47

Okay. I guess knowing that, and knowing how many street poles we have within the city, are we—and I'm straying a little bit from this particular item, but I think it's germane to the conversation. Have we—do we have any sense or conduct an audit to see what other poles of the similar nature we have installed in the city that we might find ourselves in a similar situation, and maybe that would also drive a decision to look at a larger scale replacement, if we might find them in other areas of the city.

Mayor Jake Woodford 42:18

I would say that's not germane to the item that's before you, but I but I will say just for the record, that DPW makes regular inspections of equipment and infrastructure in the field, and if it's determined that that items are either at the end of their useful life or becoming a safety concern, that they bring that to the attention of the administration and the council.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 42:42

So just a quick follow up. These poles in and of themselves were very specific to the project where we're going to be replacing them.

Mayor Jake Woodford 42:48

Correct. Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 42:53

Thank you, Chair. If I could just request what was the budget for this project? Because we were aware that this was going to happen, and what portion of that budget—because I understand the project's going to include not just procurement of the poles. There's going to be replacement of the poles, and then the addition of adding the street lights back to them. Where—what is—where does \$88,000 come in as far as a portion of that budget of the project?

Mayor Jake Woodford 43:22

Director Jungwirth.

Director Laura Jungwirth (Public Works) 43:24

I do not have a definitive amount as to what was budgeted, but we are under budget, as far as I understand, and then any retro fitting that we would need to do to install them would be still within budget.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 43:37

Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 43:40

Alder Wolff.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 43:41

Thank you, Chair. So, my question—I have a few question if that's all right. So, my first question is, I realized the warranty on the older poles ran out. What is the proposed warranty on these that we're proposing? Number two, what is the best material suited for the environment of the bridge? Are we sure that that is the best material, or are we simply doing it because it's decorative?

Mayor Jake Woodford 44:10

Director Jungwirth.

Director Laura Jungwirth (Public Works) 44:13

First question again?

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 44:15

Warranty time or life.

Director Laura Jungwirth (Public Works) 44:17

So typically, you're going to see just a short-term warranty on them, should anything failure from a manufacturing perspective. So, you don't see the long-term warranties with these sorts of items. So, it'd be a short-term warranty that would be potentially associated with this. At the time, from what I understand when WisDOT spec-ed out these poles that we have now, they just, they were not spec-ed out with any sort of a coating. Galvanized material is a steel. Steel is more susceptible to salt, right? So, on a bridge, we're going to salt bridges more frequently than we do other roads. So, the—it's the corrosion resistance that degraded it quicker. The—the walls, the railing—terms—the railing also degraded earlier than anticipated, because the water—that that salty water that really comes off of the roads—got into the insides, and they're rusting from the inside out is, is more or less what is occurring. So, the current process is really try to lock in and prevent any of that from infiltrating into the material itself. But galvanized in and of itself, straight up steel, is more resistant to corrosion than an aluminum would be.

Mayor Jake Woodford 45:40

Go ahead.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 45:41

So, the material we're looking at right now is the best option for that roadway? Okay. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 45:51

Alder Siebers.

Aldersperson William Siebers (District 1) 45:53

Thank you, your honor. No, it's not the best option. I did some online research. Aluminum is the best option. Quote, "Aluminum corrosion resistant makes them ideal for areas with harsh weather conditions. 30 to 50 year with minimal maintenance." That's a heck of a lot better than even the galvanized steel poles that I believe is

now 30 to 40 years guaranteed or expected. So aluminum is the best bet. It's not the best decorative but it's the best bet. Thank you, Your Honor.

Mayor Jake Woodford 46:41
Alder Doran.

Alderman Chad Doran (District 15) 46:44
Thank you. I think my question just actually got answered. So, thank you. I'm good.

Mayor Jake Woodford 46:52
Director Jungwirth.

Director Laura Jungwirth (Public Works) 46:53
Thank you. Just to outline another piece to this, to consider if we do get, if we can get the anticipated life span, the 25 to 40 years, that likely would align with a resurfacing that is going, that the bridge is potentially going to need. So, the hope would be that this would get us to the point of having to do a more all-encompassing repair work. But to be determined. Obviously, nothing is guaranteed. We have to see how it ages, but the hope is that those would align as well.

Mayor Jake Woodford 47:34
Alder van Zeeland.

Alderman Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 47:36
Thank you, Chair. It's my—I have more questions now than I did when I came in here. But it was my understanding that we're on a timeline. Is there an ability to send this back to committee? Is there any leeway within that time frame, if we could hear from Director Jungwirth?

Mayor Jake Woodford 47:56
Director Jungwirth.

Director Laura Jungwirth (Public Works) 47:59
The prices that we were provided were actually 2024 pricing. So, once that lapses, then we would be subject to potential 2025 pricing, and we are uncertain as to what that could look like.

Mayor Jake Woodford 48:18
Alder Hartzheim.

Alderman Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 48:20
Thank you, Chair. I would like to follow up on Alder van Zeeland's question about referring this back. We're unsure of what could happen. And I remember hearing in the meeting that, you know, what could happen is something to the effect of what is occurring nationally on the tariffs front. There—therefore my question is, are these US made? Because if they're us made, then we don't have a tariff problem.

Mayor Jake Woodford 48:49
I don't know that we have that information in terms of where they're manufactured, or if they're subject to increases in price, or what, what would be causing the increase in price if there is one on the poles. Further discussion. Alder Wolff.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 49:14

Thank you, Chair. I don't know this is relevant, but since they were brought up, there is also no tariff currently on Canada for the next 30 days based on those being taken off temporarily. I throw that out there.

Mayor Jake Woodford 49:28

Any further discussion on the light poles? All right, hearing none. We have a motion and a second to approve. Please cast your votes.

Mayor Jake Woodford 49:42

Thank you. Alder Alfheim.

Mayor Jake Woodford 49:49

Motion passes 12 to three. The item has been approved.