

Item 25-0300: Request to approve 2024 - 2025 Budget carryover appropriations (\$107,625 from Park Pavilion Roof Replacement Project to hire a consultant to analyze existing reports, update the reports, and create a masterplan document that will provide a clear pathway for the City to achieve its sustainability and climate goals)

Finance Committee

Mon, Apr 21, 2025, 5:30PM

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 04:40

All right. So with that, we will move on now to 25-0300, request to approve 2024-2025 budget carry over appropriations. This is the item that had been referred back. So with that, I'll entertain a motion.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 04:58

Point of order, please.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 04:59

Yeah. Okay, sure. Go ahead.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 05:01

Might we be able to separate the two items that are under special consideration that still remain to be approved?

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 05:08

I—if one wanted to make that motion, I would, I would entertain that motion.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 05:13

All right; I move to separate the two items under consideration under this item that remains.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 05:19

Attorney, one second. Let me get your microphone. Oops, I'll get the other one here. There it is.

Attorney Christopher Behrens 05:26

Director Ohman's pointing something out here. So we need to do some clarification first.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 05:30

Okay, we'll take them—we'll give you a moment here. Just let me know when you're ready.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 05:50

And just to be clear, from our up here on our standpoint, the intention is for the money based—being split based on where it's going, not where it's coming from. So that's why it would be the two items.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 06:00

Correct.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 06:00

Okay. And Director Ohman, okay.

Director Jeri Ohman (Finance) 06:04

Thank you, Chair. So two of the three items that were previously split out under this are already approved by Council. The only one that was held and referred back is the item for the amount separated out for FMD at the \$127,000 so even though it shows on the first page, the item has originally shown, if you go to page two, it shows the entire legislative history of it.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 06:29

Correct. I would like to separate the \$127,631 to two items, one being 100—I apologize, let me get the numbers specifically—\$107,625 and the other one—well, the other two items together combined, the \$7,316 and the \$12,690 as a separate consideration. Meaning what the things are to go to according to this form, not where they are coming from. And Alder Croatt, would you second that as well?

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 07:18

I was just going to ask, is a motion necessary for that? If it is, I will second it.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 07:22

We did do a motion the last time when we went through these original items to split them apart. So I think for consistency's sake, I want to do this through motions, just to get that there. But—unless there's any—okay. Unless there's any problem, the understanding of from me, from the mover, is that the first item in the facilities capital project, the \$107,625, that would be one item we will take up. And I would say, we take that item up first. And then the second item would be the combined two items coming from the furniture and lighting upgrades that are both tabbed for going towards the City Center east west way finding signage. So that would be the split between actions by the committee tonight.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 08:18

All right, are we good?

Attorney Christopher Behrens 08:19

You have a motion and second.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 08:20

Yes, yep.

Attorney Christopher Behrens 08:22

You're going to vote on whether or not to separate these.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 08:24

So that's—yep, so we're going to vote the split. And then with that—well, I'm thinking about this. How about—withdraw this, the motion will be to take up just the one item first, and then the other two after that. If that sounds better, if the second would remove.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 08:42

I withdraw my motion but amend it or change it.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 08:46

Yep. So, so, yep. Alder Croatt, are you gonna withdraw your second?

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 08:50

Withdraw my second.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 08:52

Okay, and then Alder Hartzheim.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 08:53

Withdraw the original motion. Make a motion to deny the item for \$107,625 from the capital projects, facilities, special considerations.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 09:10

Second.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 09:10

Okay, so now that we're clear, this is going to be a debate and act—and vote ultimately on just the funds for the sustainability that are proposed from the park pavilion roof replacement project that were tabbed for a sustainability consultant. So with that, I do—since I know there are folks here that want to come and speak on this, so I'm going to open that up first before we take anything into staff and into committee or Council's hands. So if anyone wishes to speak, just give your name and address, please of yourself or your organization you're representing and go from there.

Ron Jones (Appleton Sustainability Advisory Panel) 09:53

Yeah. Ron Jones, I live at [XXXXX] in Appleton, and I am on the Appleton sustainability advisory panel, and I'm here to speak to that issue. You know, in December in 2021 the Appleton Task Force on resiliency, climate mitigation, and adaptation finalized their 68 page report, the climate action proposal. That report contained a broad range of general recommendations and goals, one of which was to form the Appleton sustainability advisory panel, but also another one was recommended that the city complete a greenhouse gas inventory and keep it current.

Ron Jones (Appleton Sustainability Advisory Panel) 10:41

And the—our panel has worked over the last year and a half to complete a greenhouse inventory of city operations, which I believe the council received that when the goals were set in March for reducing it to half by 2035. And the greenhouse gas inventory has shed a light on the greatest areas of the city operation that are emitting greenhouse gas, and it has allowed us to zero in on those areas that we can have the greatest impact. And as the panel, we've identified a number of projects in these areas to help reduce the greenhouse gas in those areas. However, we lack the depth and the expertise and the time to develop a detailed, feasible plan to move forward to meet those goals. And these projects that we're talking about will more than meet that 2035 goal of reducing it by half.

Ron Jones (Appleton Sustainability Advisory Panel) 11:52

You know, this is all about Appleton's doing its part for climate change mitigation. Climate change is real. You know, yes, there is a small percentage of climate scientists and that deny climate change is human caused. However, it is pretty well documented that the vast majority of actively publishing climate scientists, about 97% agree that humans are causing global warming and climate change. 10 of the warmest years on record have occurred in the last 15 years, with 2023 and 2024 being the warmest on record.

Ron Jones (Appleton Sustainability Advisory Panel) 12:33

You know, if this initiative is not funded now, if the you as a finance team and the council decide not to use the carryover funds, I'm sure it will be put in next year's budget, and I expect it will get Council support at that time. By approving the expenditures now, rather than waiting for a future budget, we will get a year's jump on this process. In my view, we do not have the time to wait, and I think it's in the city's best interest to move forward on the funding proposal now with these carryover funds. Thank you.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 13:10

Thank you. Is there anyone else that wishes to speak? Come on up.

Walter Blank (Appleton Concerned Taxpayers) 13:15

I have succumbed to glasses here. My name is Walter Blank, and I live at [XXXXX], and I am a member of the Appleton Concerned Taxpayers, and speaking on their behalf here, and I appreciate the opportunity to talk with you right now. We do have a concern, and that has to do with the proposal of allocating the \$107,000+ for sustainability study for the city.

Walter Blank (Appleton Concerned Taxpayers) 14:10

First of all, I want you to know that the last meeting was supposed to bring this up, and I was going to conclude my 72 hour fast right after I gave this speech, which I did, and I want to talk a little bit about the fact that I'm trying to sustain that now, put a little thought into this and effort, and I'm pretty successful on it. So I'm pretty happy with that. I didn't get a consultant on this case, but it brings me to the point of, do you guys really know what you want to do with this one this money? Do you have a list of goals? I just heard that we have a lot of projects that were proposed, but they lack the ability perhaps to flesh that out. Do you have a definition of what we're going to call sustainability? Do we know what it's going to look like when it's accomplished? Should we build wind turbines? Oh wait, we can't build wind turbines because we want to save whales and birds now. Are we consulting and coordinating with the surrounding municipalities, the county? Have we researched existing programs and learned lessons? Who knows? In short, have we done our homework and developed metrics that we're hoping to address and measures of success and failure?

Walter Blank (Appleton Concerned Taxpayers) 15:49

In 2019 we stood before the council and declared that the money that was being invested in the new library project and trying to convince US Venture to put a building on the bluff site, we stated "That's unsustainable." It had gone from 25 million up to around 70 million. And the Council heard that argument and pursued a more reasonable path—a very successful path, I might add.

Walter Blank (Appleton Concerned Taxpayers) 16:24

When we were talking with Mayor Woodford recently, he brought up looking into how the city collects and manages its profits from collecting methane gas and how that was an emphasis. I'm sure that has something to do with sustainability and our footprint. It's not hard to get on board with that type of effort. Appleton will inevitably take the direction from the successful results from another project. We'll incorporate that, or maybe we'll just go on another No Mow May adventure and find out that what we're doing is based on false input, creating some hard feelings and wasting a lot of time.

Walter Blank (Appleton Concerned Taxpayers) 17:12

Appleton is a consultant's dream city. Since 2017 Appleton has spent \$635,000 just addressing strategic planning and the city's comprehensive plan. It's an area that, when we call La Crosse up, they claim that we spent about \$110,000 on this same stuff since 2017 with most work being done in house. Have you looked at Neenah's

affordability housing consult results? They were detailed, clear, and cost one tenth of the amount allocated by the Appleton Common Council. Much could be learned from a long look at their methods and results.

Walter Blank (Appleton Concerned Taxpayers) 18:09

I'll end this to ask you to seriously consider denying the movement of this money from a borrowed situation. You borrowed that money. You saved some money on the project, and now you got borrowed money that you want to put someplace else. That's not probably how it was voted individually.

Walter Blank (Appleton Concerned Taxpayers) 18:32

Sustainability is actually something that the city is already doing. To do a study I really believe this brings nothing new to the table right now, nothing that we couldn't get for free from some other place. I think it's time that Appleton divorces itself from its love of consults, its fees, and—because what we're doing is just unsustainable, and what we're doing in this case is just unjustifiable. That's I have to say on that. Thank you for your time.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 19:11

Thank you. Anyone else? Go ahead.

Mike Thomas (Concerned Appleton Taxpayers) 19:14

Have to adjust this. You can hear me. Hello Chris, how you doing in Arizona? Yeah, I'd like to talk a little bit more on specifics since I was on the county board for 26 years and have some knowledge of consultants, or, I say, county lack of consultants. I was amazed when I heard \$635,000 in consultants, not including this \$100,000. When in the county—and Chris can attune to this—is the fact that we utilized a lot of in in house planning. I was president—I mean chairman of the space needs committee, a yearlong project that determined the space needs—who was going to be where in the new complex, including the sheriff. We didn't have a consultant come in to do that. We had a consultant—we didn't have a consultant was on the committee for Parks and Rec, when they wanted to build a new park, another Plamann Park, and we said, "No, we're going to do a trail around the Fox." We didn't use a consultant for that either.

Mike Thomas (Concerned Appleton Taxpayers) 19:14

So what I'm saying is that I think you have enough resources. In fact, Kara Homan, that came from the county, had done a lot of work with the county, with different projects, without a consultant. I think the only consultant project I can remember recently was a wage and salary and benefits survey to determine what the wages would be for the county.

Mike Thomas (Concerned Appleton Taxpayers) 20:37

So I think you have to really consider the fact, especially when I found out this is borrowed money—that money should be returned to the taxpayers. I'm also President of Appleton Concerned Taxpayers, so I would encourage you to really take a second look. The gentleman talked about projects with his volunteer group. Maybe there are people who have expertise in the county. We use department heads in the county—I mean, the city. We used department heads that had a lot of experience. We had Northeast Regional Planning Commission that supplied some resources for planning for this situation, and that didn't cost \$100,000. So seriously, I think you should consider denying this request, especially since it's borrowed money. Appreciate your consideration on this matter, and the fact that we're testifying on this matter. We will continue to do that, and if it doesn't fail—it fails here and comes in the budget, we'll be back at the budget session, also against it. Thank you very much.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 21:34

All right, thank you. Is there anyone else who wishes to speak? All right, we'll move it up to council and staff now. So I did see your hand come up, Alder Meltzer. So I'll let you go. I know staff, you were jotting down some

notes. So I would—if you have anything they want to add in after, Alder Meltzer, I'll turn to you next before we come up here. With that then, go ahead, Alder Meltzer.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 22:00

All right. Thank you, Chair. So one of my constituents was not able to be here today. John Adams is also a member of the Appleton sustainability advisory panel, and I have an email that I'm reading on his behalf, and then I'll have some comments of my own as well.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 22:18

So the Appleton sustainability advisory panel originally enacted in 2019 by resolution and its present form since 2023, my background of merit for the panel is in material sciences, analytical chemistry, and environmental science. I hold an advanced degree in polymer science and an undergraduate degree in chemistry. I volunteer with the Appleton sustainable advisory panel as a service to the community and to support the Common Council of Appleton. I'm writing today to provide a brief background on my contributions to the panel and to express my hopes for continued support from the Council at this particularly important time.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 22:54

My contributions to the panel primarily focus on sustainable operations connected to the county landfill and recycling center, RNG production facility, and the Appleton wastewater treatment facility. Presently, the wastewater treatment facility is in the midst of equipment and process upgrades. As part of this process, they must also evaluate potential future investments and capabilities that can save time and save money and reduce regulatory liabilities and provide more sustainable, less carbon polluting technologies for environmental protection.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 23:22

I'm truly proud of the work our panel has accomplished in the past year through collaboration with the Parks and Recreation and Facilities departments. We've been able to explore and examine many valuable opportunities for our city and region. Despite our many hours of volunteer work and the limited availability of city staff, we now find ourselves at a crossroads in terms of funding. As a professional group of individuals contributing our expertise voluntarily, we recognize the need for additional external resources such as engineering, consulting, and the ability to travel and consult with similar operations to provide the best and most well tested advice to our city's decision makers.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 23:56

Appleton, along with many other Wisconsin municipalities and counties, faces crucial decisions that will impact the livelihood, quality of life, and environmental health of our communities now and in the future. As a citizen, I want to continue giving back and supporting these efforts as so many others in our community do. Support from the council is essential at this time. Please reach out to me or others on the panel if you would like more information about our work or how it can benefit the city of Appleton and its future.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 24:21

So again, that is from John Adams, who serves on the panel. I think that just a couple of comments I want to make of my own that I think are important to consider, is that a big component of sustainability is financial sustainability, is monetary sustainability. So when we look at how to do things in a more sustainable way, that means how to make sure that we can pay for them, how to make sure that we're not dumping a bunch of money into one thing only to find out that we're going to have to use more money to undo it or do something different later. This is the sort of expertise that a consultant can provide.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 25:04

We created a position by the recommendation of the climate action panel or the climate action plan for a climate resiliency specialist, but that was not a new creation that was a new position that was created. That was not a new employee that was hired. That was a title given to an existing staff member who about 20% of his existing position is working on the sustainability stuff. So out of out of his tasks he has, 80% of his workload is not working on these sustainability things. So certainly, from my perspective the need for this consultant is very visible.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 25:45

I think that also, when we look at what it costs for consultants for different types of projects, we can't really compare apples to oranges. And I think that, you know, citing examples of other consultants that have been less expensive, unless they were consultants in the same field, consulting on the same topics, I don't think that those comparisons are pertinent for the committee to consider.

Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 26:11

So another thing that I want to bring up is, is that, you know, we will be talking about this again at budget time if this is not approved right now. I just don't understand the reason to kick the can down the road if this, you know—if we're just delaying a conversation, why not just have it today so that we can get that extra lead time to start working on these issues? And as far as borrowed money and sustainability in that regard, I believe our mayor Jake Woodford has an incredibly sustainable debt plan, debt reduction plan that, you know, I don't see anything unsustainable about using this money in in this way that it's been requested. Thank you.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 26:57

Thank you. Next, Alder Hartzheim, and then, Alder Fenton, did you again? Okay. Go ahead, Alder Hartzheim.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 27:06

Thank you, Chair. I will start by saying I handed out and also gave electronically a copy of a letter from, not a constituent of mine, but a constituent of the city of Appleton, whose name is Diane Best. I will not read the entire thing because it's very long, but I will pull some pieces that are very disconcerting to me, that reflect what my thoughts are in this regard.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 27:32

And at the very end, in the conclusion portion of her writing, she writes that there are issues with the proposal of the \$100,000—\$100,000 plus on a climate consultant. First of all, it is a duplicative waste of tax dollars. I don't know that I would use that verbiage directly, but she does. Her concern is that we've already gone so far as to have some sort of Climate Action Plan, but it used to be available and is no longer available online. So her concern is what was already planned and what might be duplicated? What efforts might be duplicated in this sort of move forward?

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 28:18

But even more disconcerting to her is that it creates—it could create perverse incentives in the budgeting process. "If the Finance Committee is allowed to move money around without going through the proper budget process—" now that's her verbiage, not mine, which I know that we do go through the proper process in order to make this happen. But her, her points still remains— "a department could be incentivized to overestimate how much it needs for a specific project. If the project comes in under budget now there is a quote slush fund that could be used for other projects that may not have been made it through the proper budget channels."

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 28:56

Those are not my words. Those are hers. But I do have this concern. If we've got a project that came in so far under budget, I'm not blaming or saying that that did occur, you know, purposefully, but that does create this crazy perverse incentive.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 29:12

And the other piece is a department might be discouraged from looking at—looking for the lowest responsive bid, if any saving—if any savings that it achieves are taken from it and used by another department. So again, there's these potential quirks that could be caused by something like this.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 29:34

Mr. Jones came forward and said that the panel was created, the inventory was done, and that we could get a one year's jump on the goal to get to 2050 and make whatever the latest 50% cut, or whatever it was, that was approved by this council, with a nay vote from me. A one-year jump using borrowed funds does not make sense to me. Alder Meltzer said, this is a—we'd be kicking the can down the road. I'm not sure that that's true. We're not kicking the can if we would have that discussion within a full departmental budget discussion, rather than using carry over special community—special considerations funds that were borrowed funds for an actual physical structure or physical correction that was being made on the park pavilion.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 30:29

Alder Meltzer also said, a piece of sustainability that the intimation was we would get from this climate action plan with this consultant is monetary sustainability and then came back around to saying that the mayor already has monetary stability in this plan that we have to pay down debt. So that was sort of some circular logic that I wanted to point out.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 30:57

I'm very concerned about this, not because I'm a climate denier, climate change denier, but I'm concerned about spending over \$100,000 on something that we, as Burt [Walter Blank who spoke earlier goes by "Burt"] mentioned, we don't even have anything laid out for what we would be asking for and what would be duplication of efforts that we've already, you know, have already been done by the people who have put so much time and effort in on this Climate Action Task Force. These are very disconcerting, and I think that we would be putting the cart before the horse rather than kicking the can, if we said no at this time, and I would encourage the committee to consider those things. Thank you.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 31:44

Thank you. Alder Fenton.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 31:45

Thank you, Chair. Can I ask a couple of questions to staff? Give me a little latitude here.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 31:53

Yep. Go ahead.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 31:54

Either director Gazza or Mr. Shrage, either one, can you confirm that the 20% in terms of allocation of Mr. Schrage's time to sustainability efforts?

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 32:08

Okay, Director two. Thank you. So we don't have an actual percentage figure, but because of the extensive amount of project management time he had—Steve oversaw the construction of the Valley Transit expansion, is working on a future expansion. He's been helping the team with the Transit Center, and then he's also on numerous other projects. 20% might be even high right now. I mean, he's doing as much as he can. You know Steve; he's going to try to get as much done. He's probably thinking about this stuff at home and so forth.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 32:45

I think the mis—there's a little bit of misconception with the time, though. So Steve is part of the Parks and Recreation Department, which also is facilities and construction. We propose projects for our department, so we do air handlers, upgrades, we do insulation, we do things that are pertinent to sustainability for our department. A plan takes it so much further. It's sustainability for the City of Appleton. It gets everybody involved, every department involved. It gets waste, transportation, air quality, energy conservation, which is us, water, brownfield development, green space, tree canopies, health, and that's what the plan looks at. It's comprehensive.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 33:34

We don't look at—our things help health, but we're not digging into a specific health initiative that we would work with the department head on. We're not—we talk about brownfield development. We know that's good for the city, but we would like to see Community Development and get more of a plan to help the department and the city as a whole to become sustainable. Also resiliency, with the flooding, with the heat islands, with the tree and green space.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 34:06

So I just—I—there's so much more to it. I think sometimes the conversation I'm hearing is "It's just sustainability. It's just a small thing. It's about putting some new light bulbs in, planting a few trees, and things like that." If we're serious about the goal—now I'm going to just say that I've gotten four—our, this department's got four resolutions to be for sustainability from multiple councils to achieve a goal in sustainability. And and—but I feel what was happening is I'm given a row boat and told to get across the lake without the row—without the oars. I need the tools to get the job done, or we're just going to keep going around in circle as I take my arm and try to get across that lake. And the panel can take us to level one. We need greater expertise to take us to level 2, 3, 4, and five. If we never want to get off of level one, we can let the panel continue the work on introductory things.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 35:18

Like I said, there was a plan—there was no plan ever that she says that was posted. There were recommendations. Many of them recommendations were "make all the streetlights LED", for example. It was already done. If you looked at the plan, I applaud their time and effort, but they didn't talk to one department head, and they took ideas that are just general ideas, and put it into a document that looked nice. That was not a plan. There were recommendations that were already half of them were outdated.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 35:49

So going back around to Steve's time, Steve cannot, and myself cannot, oversee this—look at the sustainability and resiliency. If we had—if—had they taken the recommendation to hire staff, yeah, we could have hired a full time staff, maybe two full time staff; that would far away the cost of a consultant. City might use consultants, but the reason we're using consultants because we're so efficient and streamlined with our staffing, it's incredible. I look at the FTE that we have for our city compared to some other cities, and it's amazing what gets done. And we rely, we rely on some outside expertise at times rather than having full-time staff year after year after year, paying them and their benefits.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 36:38

So I could go on about that, but definitely Steve's time 20% cannot accomplish this and a panel that's meeting once a month. If we want to get to the next step, we need to get tools. If we don't get it, we'll just go around in circles. It's just as easy as that.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 36:55

Thank you. Can I, can I go on? All right, awesome.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 36:59

I'll give you a shorter answer next time.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 37:00

That's okay. That's okay. So what—and thank you for all the extra information, Director Gazza, and what I was trying to get at is one of the recommendations—and I'll bristle a little bit about the original task force, because I served on that task force for the two years of its existence, and agree with that what we produced was not a Climate Action Plan. We produced recommendations. Again, it was a completely volunteer group of—well, I won't say completely volunteer, because two of the members were alderspersons who are theoretically employees of the city. The rest of the group was volunteer, so there was no tax dollars other than the two alder time involved in that.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 37:01

So just looking at—but if we look at sustainability, climate mitigation, and resiliency and the panel now, some of the things that really concerned me—we talked about financial sustainability, but resilience really concerns me here. We had over Fourth of July and the week after two major, major flooding events that devastated my colleague and District 14 citizens, and a lot of mine too. And these two events, some people—some classified those as 500-year flood events. We're spending right now money doing the Northland Bellair floods—the study, and I expect, and I've written this before to my constituents, that we're going to come out of that study with some really, really expensive recommendations for flood mitigation. And to get ahead, Midwest is getting wetter, flood events are getting closer together. Again, we're seeing 500-year flood events on sometimes a yearly basis. All of this is resulting in insurance costs increasing, and then I'm thinking for our parks and recreation, as the climate warms, pests are moving north, and I had mentioned to this, when I moved to Appleton from the south we were shocked when we bought our house, and in the million papers we signed, a termite policy wasn't included, because you don't have to worry about them yet in this part of the country.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 39:45

But expert consultants who are hired for a finite duration with a finite task to develop what we need to look at and are—just as Director Gazza said, we could hire two full time people with—then you take x amount of their salary for benefits, or we could take this money and hire them for a one time project, bring us back things that we can work on to address these. What do we need to do to address the potential of flooding from increased heavy rain events? What do we need to do to address the potential of having pests we've never seen before in our parks department, in our homes? And I don't think—I agree with Alder Meltzer, and I agree with Mr. Jones. I don't think we have a year to think about this. If we kick this to the budget in this November, then we're talking 2026 and another summer of whatever flooding, and then we're just looking further in the future. So I would urge my colleagues to vote to use this funding and to try to address these problems before we get into million-dollar issues down the road. Thank you.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 41:20

Alder Hartzheim.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 41:22

Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to go back to something that Director Gazza said. He said that Mr. Schrage works on things that are sustainability for their department, his department, Steve's and Director Gazza's department. I have a—I cannot possibly believe that Director Jungwirth doesn't have someone who, even though his title doesn't say "sustainability", isn't already working on sustainability efforts in in her department. Every single one of the departments in this city must already be doing that. So this, again, goes back to that duplication of efforts. I understand what you're saying. I understand and appreciate what you're saying, but I do not feel that this is a worthy place in which to spend these funds.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 42:13

Alderman Fenton said, this is a one-time project; this would be a one-time consultant, a one-time thing. Well, I can remember hearing a long, long time ago about it'll be a one-time thing while we're just going to do a parking study, and it's going to tell us what we have to do. And it's a one-time thing. Guess what we're doing again this year? Another parking study. So I cannot believe that this would be just a one-time shot. Also, what Alderman Fenton brought up was we have to be afraid. We have to be very afraid of what could happen this summer. I urge us not to act on something that is just fear based. Thank you.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 42:56

All right. I don't see—oh Alder—or sorry Alderman, not alder.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 43:03

Holy cow.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 43:04

Director Gazza. Sorry for the demotion.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 43:09

And I guess what I was trying to explain before is everything that this council has ever given me since I been here—we're the executive branch. You guys are the legislative branch, and you guys, you know budget policy, and you say, "Do this." I felt through the resolutions and through the information and establish these panel these panels and so forth, you're saying, "Do this." When I get the direction to do something, I want to do it. I want to do it. I want to complete it, and I want to do it right.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 43:40

What I'm struggling at right now is we can get the level one. Are you okay with not getting the level 2, 3, 4, and five? And that's the question. I don't want to be somebody to come back to say why—we've been dealing with this sustainability and resiliency for years. You get you—we've tasked you with that since a resolution. We give you four resolutions we tasked you with. Where are you at? Why are you any further? Well, because I've been handcuffed to a degree, be up to a particular level. We can look at individual projects, but we can't—it's hard to look at the city comprehensively and so forth.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 44:17

So I just feel the leading cities, the leading municipalities, organizations, public and private, are moving towards getting the best, the best and the most efficient plans in order to best use. And Alderson Meltzer said, you know with financial fiscal responsibility, having the plan and knowing that you're spending the money in the

shortest distance between heat now and to getting to our goal is our goal. The shortest distance. We don't want to be going left, right, left, right, left, right, left, right, and spend three times as much to get to get to our destination, when, if we would have had a plan, it would have been a straight shot, and we would have, we would have been done it efficiently. So I just, I just want to know what our direction is. You know, whether you guys vote for it or not is totally up to you guys, but I just want to know what our direction is from this point forward.

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 44:17

Thank you. Alder Croatt, I see you.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 45:27

Yes, thank you, Chair. Sorry if it's a little noisy here. I'm at a truck stop, so I just wanted to say that I'm not going to be able to vote for this today for a lot of the same reasons that Alder Hartzheim stated. There's a couple that that kind of bother me, and it's using the borrowed funds to do this. I'd much rather see this come forward as part of the department's budget and have a robust discussion about it. I will say, though, that I appreciate the comments of Director Gazza in that, you know, he's given—he's been given some direction from the council. I'm one that probably didn't support a lot of that direction at one point in time in the past, but I understand what you're saying is, you've been given the direction, but you haven't been given all the tools to do it. So I would say, if you want to take the handcuffs off, let's, you know, put it in your budget for next year, and let's take it up and see where that conversation goes. Thank you.

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 46:22

All right, I'm not seeing anyone jumping in. I haven't really said a whole lot on this myself. My biggest hang up, why I was opposed to this coming out is that I just have a hard time seeing how having a grand plan is going to help us that quickly. I—my inclination is, are there ways we can use this fund to have more immediate payback, or can we focus on more specific areas of focus? I understand from the staffing, from the—sorry, from the department leadership side, when you're trying to figure out where to go with what and how to make all the pieces fit, yes, this extra money to bring in consultants to help offload that work so that everything can keep spinning. I totally get that.

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 47:11

What I worry about is you take something of this scale and you come back with that report six months, 12 months, after the consultant has dug in and worked with the city coming up with this plan. We're still not that much closer, in my opinion, to implementing those things. We still have questions like, "Okay, but now we gotta get the resources for those specific things." We may get that next level, but then we're probably going to need somebody—okay, we're going to focus on transportation, and we've kind of got an idea on transportation coming out of this if we were to do this. Now, we need to go one level deeper and say, "Okay, how are we going to electrify the buses," or "How are we going to exactly electrify the garbage trucks," or some of the different land usage things?

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 47:59

My feeling is that there are things that we can do where we don't necessarily need outside consultant expertise to say, "Okay, these are things we could do that would be lower emissions or encourage a more sustainable lifestyle within the city of Appleton." I'm a little more interested in the things that we can do in a more immediate let's get something out there results. Not that this is the topic, and I'm not going to make this as an amendment, but I kind of tongue in cheek, had said to someone, "You know, this is the roof replacement project money. If there is only something we could put on these roofs, maybe that would, you know, reduce emissions, like a panel that generates electricity, you know, with this money that—" you know, it's just things like that

where you can—where there are things that are tangible that we can maybe do. I understand from a—that also then still requires staff time and planning. There's probably some amount of consulting that goes into, okay, well, how do you actually make this happen?

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 48:57

But that's kind of where I'm at with this is, I'm not entirely sold on the big picture thing, which I realize is really frustrating when a month ago, we just set this aggressive, you know, 50% emissions reduction plan. So I totally get what Director Gazza's saying as far as being given this, "This is the direction we want you to go in, but now we're going to, not going to give you the oar." I understand that I, and I'm coming—unfortunately, this committee was is mostly made up of people who were against that that resolution for various reasons that we don't need to relitigate, but I just—my—where I would like to see us go with something a little bit more focused, a little more iterative, versus, okay, we've got this huge plan, but it's probably going to take 50 years to do this, and 35 years into it, we're going to have to probably redo it, because some technology change or some reality change as far as fiscal policy, or there's a lot of things that can go and change that kind of time span. So that's why I'm hesitant to say, let's go grand plan and just whittle down from there. I mean, I get from a planning standpoint that that makes that—it makes a lot easier if you can just tunnel it down. But my gut says maybe a more iterative approach would be, from my viewpoint, a better fit, right? I saw Alder Hartzheim first, and then I see Alder Fenton. So please go ahead.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 50:27

Thank you, Chair. Just playing on exactly what you stated, or reiterating exactly what you stated, this would be a big picture grand plan sort of thing. In my mind, the big picture grand plan already is out there. The resolutions are already out there. Now have we given you the tools? Maybe not you directly, Director Gazza, or maybe not Mr. Schrage, but we have given a directive to all of the departments within the city, and there are a lot of really smart people that work for this city, and we can do those incremental things that Alder Firkus was stating, more concrete incremental work towards that path, rather than spending this money on this grand plan that really is just going to be a reiteration of what we've already said: we want to cut emissions.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 51:16

Obviously, I'm smart enough to know they'll give much more concrete details if that were to be the request from them. But I want us to really start to think about internally we already have the skills and abilities to do this. You yourself, Director Gazza, don't need to have the oar. You—every single person within this city who is, who's employee of this city, is tasked with helping to get in that boat and figure out ways to get that boat across the sea. And that's the way I think of this, rather than just spending \$100,000 to say, "Well, now we gave director Gazza something to do." So that's I concur with where Alder Firkus was going in that regard. Thank you.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 52:03

Alder Fenton.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 52:04

Thank you, chair. I absolutely—I appreciate where you're going with that. I don't necessarily concur, because we're in the middle of doing a comprehensive plan update for the city of Appleton. We're required to do that plan, and it's for 30 years, and we update it every 10. I think that the effects of climate change are right up there with where we want to see our city going, and I think it's really at that same level of importance to have a comprehensive plan for how we are going to mitigate this issue and sustain our city going forward with what's happening to the climate. Thank you.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 52:59

All right. I think we've pretty much tilled through this one as much as we can. Doesn't look like anyone's got anything left in the tank at this point. So with that, we will vote. The vote is a recommendation of denial on the park pavilion Roof Replacement funds of \$107,625 to be put towards a sustainability and climate action Master Plan, which would involve hiring consultants to analyze existing reports and update and so on. So with that we will go ahead and vote. Remember, an aye vote is for it—for the denial. A nay vote is against the denial. All those in favor of the of the denial? Aye. Opposed?

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 53:45

Nay.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 53:46

Abstentions. That denial passes three to one.