

Item 25-0300: Request to approve 2024 - 2025 Budget carryover appropriations (\$20,006 from Furniture Upgrades Project and Lighting Upgrades Project to assist with covering costs associated with new wayfinding signage for City Hall as a result of the new City Center/East/West development)

Finance Committee

Mon, Apr 21, 2025, 5:30PM

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 53:50

So that leaves us with the two other items that would go towards the city center east, west, updating building way finding. So, if somebody wants to make a motion.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 54:00

Move to deny.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 54:01

All right; we have a motion to deny those two items. Is there a second?

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 54:05

Second.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 54:05

All right. All right. So, we have a motion a second, and we'll go right ahead. Alder Fenton.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 54:12

Thank you, Chair. I'd like, just like to ask—we've gotten this—it's exactly \$20,006. How would that break—have we got any information on how that would break down? I mean, what signage, where, how many?

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 54:34

Sorry. Go ahead. Sorry.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 54:38

So, there's been a way finding study for the entire complex. So, City Center West, Fox Commons, and City Center East. Where did I put that? So, there's numerous tenants in this, these three, you know, buildings that are attached as one. You know, going back to even, you know, the fact that we're part of a condo agreement just in the city center West means that we have to—we end up sharing a lot of expenses outside of being an independent building. But just in these buildings, you got Trinity, City Hall, Building for Kids, Lawrence University, a future something or another. They had food hall at the time, Mosaic, Prevea, Gener8tor, Wild Goose, AASD, Soar, Valley New School, Hoffman, J Geiger, and ASCO. So when people are coming off of the, coming out of the yellow ramp, trying to navigate from that end of the building, the west end of the building, over to City Hall, or if you're coming down the sidewalk, there'd be some exterior signage, and you would be able to get into City Center West on the first floor, and then to try to figure out where to go from fifth and sixth floor.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 55:51

The idea is to update all the signage amongst all three facilities and do so that it's all universal, where it looks like the buildings all the same. Now the \$21,000, there have been numerous locations and signs identified. They

are working on what they would consider "a look". They like the look of what we have put into common space. And then they're going to go out for quotes. I don't know what the final number will end up being, what the final ask would be, but the anticipating the fact that this study happened after—the idea of this way finding study happened after budget, where I couldn't put money into the budget, knowing that this is coming, and there's—if we want to participate, we would need the funding. So, if we want to participate in the universal signage throughout the entire complex, how far does \$21,000 go? I would say the—for example, the signage on the common space in this on Fifth and Sixth floor was about \$25,000. Now we're not paying for a whole sign. We're just—if there's 10 people on a sign, then we're probably paying 1/10 of that sign. How many signs that will end up being? I'm not sure yet. More information to come, but this is anticipating that. Otherwise, I'm not sure what the predicament will be if they'll just put the signs up and leave us off, I don't know. But the idea would be to help people navigate get to the City Hall easier.

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 57:37

All right. I will get to you just one sec. I get that they need to be durable and we want them to look nice. I mean, obviously we want things to look nice and project a level of civic pride that we're not just kind of, you know, putting up cardboard with Sharpie on it. But, man, maybe I should get in the sign making business, if it's—but anyways. Alderman Hartzheim.

Alderman Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 57:59

Thank you, Chair. My question to Director Gazza is, are these signs made of gold? I know that's—tell me. I'll tell you. That's a rhetorical question.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 58:12

I—you know, I could tell you signage are very expensive.

Alderman Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 58:18

And I absolutely understand that. What concerns me more now than before I made the motion to deny is that you're stating that we don't really even have any clue if 20,000 is going to do it. And that makes me very nervous about even approval of this chunk of money, not knowing what will come to us as an actual "Here's what the ticket price is going to be." I understand you want to move that for some free dollars to be able to do this, but I—without knowing those specifics, I am extremely uncomfortable saying yes. And I understand that it's important to be like a part of the continuity of the building, etc., etc., but my tag as an alderman to get in from the yellow ramp, you know, as well as anyone else, didn't even work. So what good is this signage then to people who would just randomly be coming off the street to go, to go to look for City Hall? I mean, people know where City Hall is in general, and if they don't know, they can see a map and find out where that is. That's where the signage is really—this is very tricky to me. It feels like, as Alderman Firkus said, we should be in the business of making signs.

Alderman Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 59:34

And thirdly, this just came to me, but—and I know this is more of like a quid pro quo thing, but did this whole building not—some of this building not come under TIF dollars to be funded? Can't the city get some kind of credit for having contributed to those sorts of things?

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 59:54

I don't know anything about the TIF but I mean, I know what you saying. But if I was a new person coming in from the yellow ramp, I'm facilities management, I don't know a building that doesn't have—

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:00:05

But you can't come in from the yellow ramp.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 1:00:06

—good way finding. Yellow ramp?

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:00:08

You couldn't come in from the yellow ramp. I can't even use my tag to get in from the yellow ramp.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 1:00:11

So, what they did is in the City Center construction on first floor, right now, there's two doors there. That is supposed to be built out, and then you would come through the hallway into the city hall. If I was coming from the yellow ramp, and I walk by ASCO, and then I take a right, and I go down the hallway, and then I take a left. It's a very confusing thing. I'd be like, "How the heck do I get across over to City Hall?" You know, anywhere I go, I'm looking at signage. I go into Fox Valley Tech. How do I get the admissions office? You see the sign up there saying, "admissions office, take a left, not a right." You see signage anywhere to get you anywhere.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:00:56

But this was not a part of the agreement of us already living in a Pfefferle building that we pay lease dollars for. The fact that this all got developed and has some hallways to get there isn't the fault of the city or the taxpayers. So, should they be penalized with a \$20,000 potential expense? That's just, again, my rhetorical question.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 1:01:16

And I'm—you know, again, it's an approval or denial. It's just observation that to have good wayfinding for people to get to City Hall. You know, they're updating it as a campus, as a whole. The rest of the campus is participating. We're a big part of that. Do we want to participate or not? If we don't, we don't, then we'll see if people have trouble finding it. Then I guess we'll go back and do our own signage. And I don't, I don't know. You know, I'm just saying this is an efficient way of doing it as a an entire group together and with that many organizations. You know, the 20 grand, if it comes back at five grand, I'm gonna spend five grand. I'm not gonna spend 20 grand. I'm gonna say, here have 15 grand for free. If you're going to spend the five grand, and that's what's going—

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:02:06

And I would prefer to wait to approve it until we know what that number is. Thank you.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:02:12

Alder Croatt.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:02:16

Thank you, Chair. I would, I would exactly prefer to approve it after we know—have a better handle on the figure. I'm all for having a consistent look and being part of the cost share, although you could debate that we don't need to be part of it if we're paying a condo agreement, but I think it's—I think it's good that we would be part of it and the signage would be consistent, versus the city having some unique signage. But for me, the struggle is the \$20,000 is a lot of money for signage. I would expect that the figure would be a lot less than that, especially if we're just contributing to part of the signage and not all of it. So, I would be much more in favor of bringing it forward when we know an exact figure.

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Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:03:00

All right. Both my colleagues are kind of getting close to where I'm feeling. I appreciate Director Gazza mentioned that this may not be 20,000 that the city has to pay. It could be, but it may not be. I'm generally in favor of doing sign updates. I think signs do provide value. And I'm not of the mind that we can just always look everything on our phones. We don't always have our hands free. We don't always have our phones on us. And for new visitors, there are a lot of buildings even in this area, like if you try to navigate the county building without—if that didn't have signs in it, I don't think your phone could help you there. It's just using that as an example.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:03:43

I would be, I'd actually be willing to approve this item and say, you know what, before we actually approve putting the money towards that, because we are gonna have to vote again before we actually allocate these funds. So, we would be able to say, all right, here's the \$21,000 that—I mean, we don't have anywhere else to put it right now. If we use it towards that, or if we don't like the actual dollar amount that comes back, then at that time, we take the action and say, all right, now we know exactly what this is going to cost, and it's going to cost all of this, or most of this, or some amount that we are not comfortable with as a body, and vote against it then, but at this point, I would be willing to support. I'm just also trying to do a little bit of math here. Right now, there are four of us, and we need something that need something that's going to pass so and we can't pass anything on a two, two vote. So if, my colleagues—if a number of you do feel like, hey, you know what, we would be willing to approve this request as is, and then make that final determination once we have that solid number, I would probably vote in support of this, but I think if we're going to be in a two-two tie situation, I'm probably going to vote against this, but be willing to maybe take this back up on the council floor. So, with that I saw Alder Croatt first and then Alder Hartzheim and Fenton. So, Alder Croatt, go ahead.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:05:01

Yeah, thank you, chair, and I'd be willing to do that, but I would need confirmation that we are indeed going to see the next, the next set of votes, or if it's under a certain amount would that not come back to committee?

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:05:14

Director Gazza, if you want to answer that question.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 1:05:16

Based on whatever direction you would give me, generally speaking, if I go under cut—this is a little bit different, because I'm not—this is not a contract. Usually a contract under \$25,000, you don't have to bring back, but if you said you wanted to see the number, then it would definitely come back to you.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:05:34

Alder Croatt.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:05:35

Chair, yeah, so Chair, if I may, I'd be with you on this to get it out of committee with a positive vote, but I would definitely want to have that in there that we would see it come back before the committee for that, for that secondary vote.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:05:51

Okay. I would, I would restore that. But we'll let the continue—conversation continue on here, before we go too far down that track. So, Alder Hartzheim, and then Alder Fenton.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:06:00

Thank you, Chair. I'm not necessarily amenable to that without the failsafe clause, without the clause of what happens then to the rest. If, say, it comes back and it is \$5,000 now, what happens to the extra \$15,000? I want to have a clear path defined as to what will happen, and I can't tell you that it would or wouldn't be voted for, because I don't know the number. It just makes me feel very uncomfortable with that. We're planning to just say there's a \$20,000 little cushion out there, but we don't know what's going to happen with it. I can't go back to my constituents and say I approved up to \$20,000 and we might hear about it, and we don't know what that's going to be, and we don't know what's going to happen if it's less than that. So, without any very well defined—without a very well-defined amendment to this, I would not be amenable to it.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:06:57

Alderson Fenton.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 1:06:57

So, two questions. What entity is driving this? Like, who's going to go out for bids would be my first question.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 1:07:07

We are working with the developer, the Building For Kids, the clinic. I think the developer would end up going out for bids.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 1:07:19

And my second question, if I may, is do you have a time frame on this? Like—

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 1:07:26

I don't have a specific date, but I'm expecting that it would be within the next three months.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 1:07:31

Okay.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 1:07:32

Because they've been working progressively towards this, and I know they were talking about the design so they could get everybody to agree on what the sign may look like. And they kind of, you know, like the look of the signage here. And everybody said, yeah, that looks pretty, you know, decent. It would be good for us. It creates more consistency for us. But yeah, I would just say, I think, from a finance standpoint, the money that doesn't get used in the capital plan goes back. I can't go spend it on anything else. I mean, it goes 100% back. Yeah, I just wanted to answer that. It—

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 1:08:13

I'm not allowed to unless it's approved in a—through a budget process or through a memo. So, it has to go back, otherwise I'd be fired.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:08:13

Right.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:08:24

Correct. It would be the same as if we just straight up said, no, we don't want to do this at all. There would still be \$21,000 that are just saying they're unallocated. So, whether it's 21,000 or 15,000 unallocated or some other amount.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 1:08:36

Yeah.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:08:36

So that's—

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 1:08:37

It was more of a clarification just to assure you that, there is no scenario, whether we're talking about this project or another project, that that is allowed to happen.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:08:47

Alder Fenton, did you have any more follow ups?

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 1:08:49

My only follow up is that I agree with what the chair and Alder Croatt have said. I could support this. 20,000 for signage when I first saw it, also seemed like a whole lot of money, and I could support it with the caveat that we see some specific numbers, and we know what—regardless of whether it hits that threshold that would be under, I would like to see those numbers. I could support, I could support doing the carry over with the caveat that we want to see the numbers.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:09:23

All right. I'm going to give Alder—thank you. We'll give Alder Hartzheim the last word, and then I want to focus on how we're going to get this out of committee. It's already 20 to seven. So.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:09:30

The concern is that as director—and I did not mean to mean that there—to intimate that there would be any nefariousness with any overage.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:09:39

Right.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:09:40

Or with any funds left over. But the concern is we would be approving this carryover, which means it could be used in your department. That's where I—that that's where the carryover policy, the approval of this would be, then where does the left over go if we approve, say, 5000 for signage, whatever it comes back at? I want it very clearly stated that it doesn't just sit where we've already approved it. Does that make sense?

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:10:14

It does unless you want—but I'll take a stab at it, and fill in if I'm misleading, or have if you have anything else to have—but we would still have to approve on any other money. Like, I don't want staff to come up and say, like, "Well, if it's \$15,000 that's left over, this is what we're going to propose, and if it's 5000—" like, I think that would just be really, really difficult to put a coherent proposal out at this point to say this is how much—this is where it's going to go, based on how much, if there is any left over. But anything that the staff wanted to use with it, it doesn't just go into, you know, a savings account. It still has to come back before us, even at the smaller amounts, because it's unallocated. It's not just general fund money where it's like, okay, we could kind of, you know, move \$1,000 to help out over here, over here. This is capital borrowing, so this still has to come

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back to us. But until the money is spent, until we have a contract, or we say, "No, we're not going to do this at all," it's really hard to ask staff to say, okay, exactly how much and where is it going to go next?

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 1:11:19

It's similar to every other capital plan. We'll put \$500,000 in, say, for a project, and until it bids, we don't know. And it ends up being \$459,000 there's \$41,000 left over. Goes back.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:11:33

But would that in a second step—so this would be the first step of the go back. Would that in a second step happen if we ask for approval on whatever—

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:11:43

It would, it would have, it would have to, yeah.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:11:45

All right, I would like to then amend this to say—oh, shoot—

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:11:49

Yeah. We have a, we have a motion. So, yeah, so if I can just kind of take it back here, so we have a recommended—we have a motion here for denial. So, and the mover, I believe, was Alder Hartzheim, and the second was Alder Croatt. So, there's two ways we can handle this. We can just straight up vote on this thing, and if it fails, it fails, and we make another motion, or Alder Croatt and Hartzheim, if you wish to withdraw, we can get a new motion on the floor.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:12:14

I'll withdraw my motion if Alder Croatt will withdraw the second.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:12:18

I will. I will withdraw my second.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:12:21

All right, so with that, and based on the conversation, I want to propose the motion that we approve this allocation— how do I want to word this? I want to approve that this allocation would go forward, but we would receive another action item in the future once a firm dollar amount is known by staff. Does that work from staff?

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 1:12:54

Absolutely.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:12:55

Okay, so that's the motion. Council, any questions on what, I—on the motion? Okay, we have a second. All right. Any further comments or questions on this motion then? All right, I'm not seeing any, so we will go ahead and vote. Are you all set, Attorney Behrens? Director Ohman, everything's written down? Okay. So that we'll go ahead and vote. All those in favor? Aye. Opposed? Abstentions? That passes four to zero.