

Item 25-0300: Request to approve 2024 - 2025 Budget carryover appropriations

Common Council

Wed, May 21, 2025 7:00PM

Mayor Jake Woodford 30:57

Any others? Right. Seeing none, we'll first take up the item from Finance Committee, 25-0300, and per the legislative history, what remains is the \$107,625, the facilities capital project amount. All right, we have a motion, and looking for a second. We have a motion and a second to approve. With that we'll open the floor—oh, Alder Fenton.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 31:37

Could we take this as a vote notwithstanding?

Mayor Jake Woodford 31:41

Yes, yes. A request has been made to take this as a vote notwithstanding. We'll go over that when we when we get to voting, but just as a reminder, notwithstanding vote means an aye vote would approve the item, a vote would deny the item for the sake of clarity. I'll remind you again before we vote, both with that, we'll open the floor for discussion. And Alder Fenton?

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 32:02

Thank you, Chair. It's no secret how I will vote on the item before us tonight. My interaction with the Appleton Common Council on climate action started in 2017 with resolution number 15-R-17, which would have committed the city to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Granicus reminds me that my first appearance before this council was on September 20 of that year, where I spoke in favor of that resolution. I was sorely disappointed to see it referred back to committee and then to Mayor Hanna's office never to be heard from again. I do, however, applaud Alder Croatt for his introduction of resolution number 21-R-17, which affirmed the city's commitment to sustainability—to sustainability, albeit without the specific goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 32:52

Resolution number 13-R-19 which established the Task Force on resiliency, climate mitigation, and adaptation, was the first resolution I signed on to just a month after being sworn in for my first term. I was grateful to be appointed as one of the alders who served on that task force, and I was proud to work with a team of community members who devoted their time and talents to researching, consulting with other experts, and delivering recommendations to the city about how we should deal with climate change. We had no budget and couldn't meet in person for a great deal of our term (2019, 2020). Lots of zoom meetings and a few writing sessions in parks.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 33:30

The permanent Appleton sustainability advisory panel was the result of a recommendation of the task force, as was the addition of resiliency to the already busy portfolio of project manager Steve Schrage. The sustainability advisory panel is also an all-volunteer group with no budget whose expertise crosses a range of different fields. They meet for an hour once a month. Even with those constraints, the panel has produced a green—produced a greenhouse gas inventory that is much improved over what the original task force could do with limited funds and limited access to data, and has also done work on clean energy, alternative transportation, and sustainable ecosystems. I would urge everybody to review the reports and all the projects on the Sustainable Appleton

section of the city's website, noting particularly the savings in both greenhouse gas emissions and taxpayer dollars. And by the way, I think the number on the methane gas in the at the water treatment plant is the savings of about \$102,000 a year.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 34:34

There's a limit to what can be done with a volunteer team and part of the time of one project manager however. In order to ensure that the city undertakes projects that make the best use of our resources and provide the greatest benefit to our citizens, the panel is asking that we consult with experts to develop a plan that would integrate initiatives over all departments and provide a project roadmap and a financial framework for evaluating projects and policy decisions.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 35:02

I would have preferred that we had had the justification and scope of work document at the same time the carryover request was first brought to the finance committee so that we would know exactly how the funds were intended to be spent. But the document we received this week clearly lays out the work that will be done and the expected outcomes and benefits to the city. It quite frankly infuriates me to see a colleague publicly trash it as a quote "travesty of buzz words and needless bullet points," unquote, and deem it ridiculous when they have no noted expertise or apparent desire to learn anything about the subject matter. Demeaning the work of city staff and dedicated volunteers seems like an over-the-top way to disagree on policy.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 35:46

To a lot of people, including some in this room, "consultant" is a dirty word, a synonym for wasteful spending. I might be biased, because over a 40-year career in IT, I've worked with consultants, hired them, managed them, and I've been one, and I've worked with amazing consultants, and some that honestly weren't the greatest. Companies employ consultants to provide expertise on a limited term basis when hiring a full-time staff member is not feasible or cost justified. Would it have the same negative connotation if we called them contractors or temps? Appleton has experienced and well qualified attorneys on staff, but this council has engaged other attorneys with specific expertise to consult with us on real estate matters. We have a skilled and dedicated finance team, but we bring on outside consultants to perform the annual audit.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 36:41

It's also important to remember that what we're voting on here is funding for the creation of a plan. We will have the opportunity to vote on the consulting contract and for any projects and policy changes that are brought forward from the plan.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 36:54

While the carry-over from a capital project to consulting might be unusual, it's not unprecedented. In 2024 we approved a carryover request of \$30,000 from facilities capital projects to fund an update to the comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Park plan. In 2022 we approved a carryover request of \$25,000 from HVAC projects for consulting for Lundgaard park for a quote "marketing plan and website for the city and friends of the fire department to collaborate—collaboratively seek donations for the new park." In 2021 we approved a \$45,000 carryover from the water utility capital project fund to fund consulting to develop a plan for lead and copper service line replacement and to complete the grant application.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 37:42

I urge my colleagues to support this proposal. Appleton has been a leader in facing the climate crisis. We were a founding green tier legacy community in 2010. We've had a climate sustainability proposal since 2011, and we

have continually met the challenges thrown at us by a changing world. Let's vote for this and keep moving toward a stronger and more resilient community. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 38:09

Alder Firkus.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 38:12

Thank you, Mayor. I wish to offer an amendment. I would like to change the justification in a way that would change the intent of how this money would be spent. The justification would be, as stated: "the park pavilion roof replacement project was completed under budget, and we are looking to allocate the remaining funds for projects with emission reduction, climate mitigation, and/or sustainable—sustainability value and/or consultants to assist in such efforts."

Mayor Jake Woodford 38:38

All right, we have an amendment, and Alder Wolff has seconded the amendment. So, we'll clear the queue and start discussion on the amendment. All right, so if you'd like to speak on the amendment, please get back in, and Alder Firkus we'll stay with you.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 38:47

All right, thank you. I'm not against good environmental stewardship and preparedness against climate change. I think both are important. Even for folks who bristle at spending time and resources countering climate change, they tend to like the climate friendly policies when they end up lowering the city's bills or making the city better equipped to handle severe weather, among other complementary benefits that come from many of these efforts. My argument is that a master plan is unnecessary to do good on these fronts. If moving fast is important, and consider the timeline, the best-case scenario timeline, of going the Master Plan route. Even if this goes out to bid tomorrow, we're going to award a contract in June at best. The optimistic time frame for completing the master plan from the memo is nine months. That is March of 2026. At this point, any recommendations from this master plan will have to be part of the Capital Improvement Project Plan for the 2027 budget. So, after we approve that budget with any projects from Master Plan, the absolute earliest we can go out to bid for any of these is December 2026, but realistically, no projects will start until the spring or summer of 2027. At that point, we have lost two years, along with the opportunities this \$107,000 provides. If this is important and getting results sooner than later is important to you (and I believe it is important for the quality of life in this city), support this amendment, and let's put the money to work for community sooner than later. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 40:28

Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 40:30

Thank you, Chair. I'm hopeful that the offeror of this amendment can clarify the last portion of the statement in regards to "this could still be used for consultancy."

Mayor Jake Woodford 40:42

Okay. Take that as rhetorical, and if anybody like to address that, they can. Alder Firkus.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 40:51

I'll ask—answer rhetorical question. My intention is that it would be allowed for specific consultancy, not one lump sum master plan type of activity. So, if there are specific things where we need outside expertise or an

extra set of hands-on specific efforts, yes, this would be okay. But as far as saying, okay, cool, this is just a wording change; do what was already in the original intention, that is not my intention with this amendment. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 41:21

Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 41:23

Thank you, Chair. Just as a point of clarification in that regard, I'm not certain that the verbiage that was offered in the amendment clarifies that as the—as Alder Firkus has stated. I'm concerned about saying yes to it if it means we're back at square one.

Mayor Jake Woodford 41:43

What I'll say, just in terms of what's been offered, Council would ultimately have to approve any recommendations that would be brought forward. So, if at that time, the Council felt the recommendations coming forward were not consistent with the intent, it would be up to the council at that time to debate it. If if—what's before you right now is, is a carry for carry over request, carry forward request on \$7,000 and so you're not necessarily allocating to specific purposes other than, generally speaking, for the purpose of sustainability items. So, I think, to your point, Alder Hartzheim, there's certain ambiguity in the language, but we would take that under advisement. The administration would take that under advisement if the council proceeded with the amendment as stated.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 42:44

Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 42:46

Alder van Zeeland.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 42:49

Thank you, Chair. I'd like to hear from Director Gazza on staff's take on the amendment, if he thinks there's any concerns with limiting the carry over request.

Mayor Jake Woodford 43:01

Director Gazza. Go ahead.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 43:05

Thank you, Chair. Yeah, I do think we're comparing apples to oranges. There is some correlation there, but I think you know, basically what we're looking for is an overall plan, a road map, in order to make sure we don't go in and initiate a project where we could have known that there was a different project of a higher value or higher priority that could have been done first. I do like the idea of having money available to address projects right away (there is no doubt about that), but the idea of getting a plan, establishing exactly what are—not only our goals and objectives, but how are we going to accomplish those goals and objectives? How are we going to meet the metrics that you've given our department to accomplish? The resolution was very specific about reaching a specific goal, in, you know, 10 years and to get there, it'd be best to, I think, most wisely, lay out a plan that hits the most critical areas, and in order to know what those areas are, is to do the plan. Would the alternate make some impact? Sure. But I do think that the initial plan is important, and it'll allow the panel to work at their maximum potential to accomplish the most they can also. So.

Mayor Jake Woodford 44:41

Alder van Zeeland, anything else?

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 44:44

No, thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 44:45

All right. Alder Smith.

Aldersperson Martyn Smith (District 4) 44:49

Thank you, Your Honor. I'd like to speak against this amendment, and I think that it goes against the larger purpose of the proposal that we have with the carry over money. I think what it seems like we need from listening to Director Gazza and reading the sustainability master plan is we need a larger road map for where we're going as a city in terms of sustainability and climate resiliency. And as welcome as it might be (if I understand Alder Firkus is amendment here) to be able to address small things on a shorter time table, we voted for, just recently, this 10-year plan of cutting our emissions by 50% and in order to get that, we need some kind of a master plan or road map for moving there. And so, for that reason, I'd like to turn back or deny this amendment and continue with the idea of the sustainability master plan. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 45:53

Alder Hayden.

Aldersperson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 45:55

Thank you, Chair. I have a question and a comment. I kind of want to pursue Alder Hartzheim's line of thinking. So, if we vote for this amendment, the money will move from one department to the other, but then we have to vote again to authorize the spending of the money. I'm assuming, if we do that, then when we're voting on the spending of the money, it's a 50—it requires a majority vote, correct?

Mayor Jake Woodford 46:20

Yes. Alder Hayden, you mentioned moving across departments, and I—this this—and that was mentioned earlier during public participation. This is—the money is not moving across departments, contrary to what's been offered and what you just said. The money is staying within the same department. Please go ahead.

Aldersperson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 46:43

Thank you, Chair. I guess I like this amendment. I think it—as Alder Firkus pointed out, there are shovel ready projects that can kind of be taken on immediately. And I think as we come back to the budget of the at the end of this year, if we can find the money to hire a consultant then come up with a master plan. So, I think it—I think it kind of scratches two itches. So, I support this amendment, and thank Alder Firkus for offering it.

Mayor Jake Woodford 47:15

Alder Fenton.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 47:16

Thank you, Chair. I am not in support of this amendment because it's—(A) it's not what the panel and the resiliency manager asked for. They identified a need, a shortcoming in them fulfilling their duties to help us meet our goal of reducing emissions 50% over 10 years, laid out a plan of what we wanted, including looking across departments and establishing 25 different projects, developing a community engagement plan so that we could see what the community is more is focused on. I think with this amount of money, we can go a whole lot further

in creating a master plan that i—that identifies these projects, identifies funding sources, helps us do a cost benefit analysis on these rather than maybe a project or a couple of small projects that would still be within the Facilities department. And I think we've got an opportunity to look broader by taking a broad view. So, I'm not going to support the amendment, and I'm going to hope that my colleagues will vote to use this funding as we were asked to use it for. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 48:54
Alder Meltzer.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 48:56

Thank you. I encourage my colleagues to oppose this amendment. I appreciate the work that went into coming up with it, and I certainly understand where that amendment is coming from, but I think that to open a pot of money that allows proceeding with some things in a piecemeal way, really, to use Dean Gazza's language, it is apples to oranges. And while the amendment certainly would provide something valuable to the city, it completely undermines this need and request that the carry over proposal for the Master Plan is actually about. So, I encourage you all to defeat this amendment and bring it back to the original plan. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 49:45
Alder van Zeeland.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 49:48

Thank you, Chair. After reviewing the memo again about this project, I urge my colleagues to defeat the amendment. It seems quite clear what staff is asking for to carry out their responsibilities. And I'll just remind my colleagues that there is nothing stopping any one of us from putting in a resolution to, you know, put forth sustainability projects with any funds that have not been carried over. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 50:18
Alder Wolff.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 50:21

Thank you, Chair. I seconded this amendment because I appreciated Aldersperson Firkus coming to the table with something that was intended to come as a compromise and to work within our Common Council. I think that it's much better than potentially just saying they're adamantly against something and not bringing anything to try and work within that resolution. So, I appreciate your work on this amendment.

Mayor Jake Woodford 51:00
Alder Schultz.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 51:05
Thank you, Chair. Can you hear me?

Mayor Jake Woodford 51:08
Yes.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 51:12

Okay, thank you. Apologize for the delay, and I'm sure my audio is going to be challenging. So gonna keep my comments on this amendment and the full motion brief. I would urge us to vote against this. I think that the

intentions of the carryover funding request are very clear and our goals are clear. Please vote against this, and let's get to the matter at hand. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 51:39

Would like to offer just a point of clarification for the council. A suggestion was made during your discussion that the city's efforts to pursue sustainability related projects that reduce our impact on the environment and reduce our operating expenses would cease until the completion of a plan, and I would just like to be clear that that is not this administration's intention. So, I just want to offer that for clarification for you all. Are there any other members who'd like to speak on the amendment? Alder Croatt.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 52:16

Thank you, Mayor, and thank you for that important clarification. Could someone please restate the amendment before we vote on it. I'm a little bit confused as to what the amendment would allow and not allow.

Mayor Jake Woodford 52:26

Okay. I'll ask Alder Firkus to restate it, just for the sake of clarity, and make sure we capture the intent.

Aldersperson Brad Firkus (District 3) 52:32

Sure, the relevant part is "looking to allocate the remaining funds for projects with emission reduction, climate mitigation, and/or sustainability value and/or consultants to assist with such efforts."

Mayor Jake Woodford 52:50

Alder Croat.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 52:51

Thank you. So, a follow up to that, would—a question that I have would be, would the amendment allow full expenditure for a consultant, basically what the original item is?

Mayor Jake Woodford 53:05

My interpretation, which we would ultimately use to put forward recommendations, would be that, as currently worded, yes, because consulting is a allowable category within the amendment. On the other hand, we would—if we were to do that, we'd do so understanding the intent of the amendment, if it was supported by the council, and that it would be unlikely to succeed.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 53:34

Thank you. That's the way I understood the wording of the amendment.

Mayor Jake Woodford 53:39

Further discussion on the amendment? We have a motion and a second to amend. Please cast your votes. Thank you, Alder Schultz. The motion fails four to 10. We're back to the item as originally presented. Further discussion on the main motion. Alder Schultz.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 54:24

Thank you, Chair. Thank you to my colleagues on both sides of this request and their intentions to vote either way. There's a significant amount of discussion concerning the means to an ends, and I think it's important to think about the ends versus the means. I had a long list of comments to make, but unfortunately, that's a few thousand miles away on a laptop, so I'm going to just try and make a couple quick points before we get to the vote. One, I think we need to really bear in mind that the director of parks and facilities, who oversees a lot of

what we're talking about here, in being able to make significant strides forward, is asking us to give him the tools to do his job. And we have, over the course of six years, provided direction to that director and others, city staff, to make progress as it relates to resiliency and climate adaptation, but we've not given him the tools. And the comments, his initial comments, I think, are relevant, that we've got to give him the paddles to get across this vast ocean of challenges that—and do so in a way that is going to save us money and also capitalize on projects that will benefit this city both financially and environmentally.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 55:50

The second thing is, we have had a climate task force in two forms over the last four years, have also come to the table and given us the sort of the same direction. So, it comes down to a question about how we do this. And certainly in six months, we could have the same discussion, the same debate, and come to the same conclusion that we're far behind where we should be as a city, even though we've done some great work. And so we'll be having this discussion again, and very likely move forward with some type of funding to get us to a place where the city knows how to implement the best practices and plans to do the best work to keep our city moving forward in a time when Appleton will become an increasingly sought after place for climate refugees and other people looking for the best place to live as we face this challenging situation in our collective history—er collective future.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 56:48

Please vote for this. We're going to have the same discussion, if we voted down, in six months and find ourselves having to have the same vote, and I think we'll probably approve it at that point. I don't understand why the practicality of voting on it now makes that much difference when we know inevitably we have to make this change to the way we are doing things. I know it's not normal, but neither is climate change, and neither are the things that are that we're facing in the future. Please vote to allocate the funding at this point, and let's move forward more quickly than we have in the last six years. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 57:25

Alderson Hartzheim.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 57:29

Thank you, Chair. My—when this first came to us, it came to us in a giant spreadsheet, and it was very nondescript, and we were supposed to vote for this giant spreadsheet of carry overs without question. And now, when I say that we were supposed to do that, I know that we, some of us, look at it, and so this item was pulled out so that we could have further discussion on it. Was it not that important at that time? Why was this justification not available at that time? So, this is all process issues that I have, but that doesn't, that doesn't get to the real point of where I want to go with this.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 58:11

We know of three different cities near us, Green Bay, La Crosse, and Eau Claire. These were all mentioned by the form letter that was sent to us multiple times, all of us alders, multiple times through the communication efforts of the Democrat Party and the League of Women Voters. How many of us have asked them what their plan is? Have we done any FOIA requests to find out what that plan is? Ms. Blank mentioned, when she was speaking to us that there's a Wisconsin commission of some sort that has—they're ready to launch a website that has municipal plans ready for us to use, activate.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 59:00

Before we commit \$107,000 (perhaps plus, because this justification says it's going to be between 80 and \$150,000), we have not done what Mr. Blank said, due diligence in this regard, in my opinion. And through no

offense to Mr. Schrage, this justification of scope and justification and scope of work doesn't narrow down anything and tell me anything more clear about what we would be asking of these consultants. Many of the things that are pointed out here are already done exceptionally well in this city. So, I feel that we're sort of disjointed because we're looking at a request for a virtue signal, and that isn't what we should be doing as a city. What we should be doing is really doing these sustainability and resilience efforts. This is more paperwork to shuffle around.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 59:58

When I spoke with the mayor about this, when I spoke with you, Your Honor, about this, you talked about having some guard rails. Well, the request for justification doesn't have any guardrails. So, I'm very confused and concerned that we're jumping into this because it seems like it's such a great idea, but we haven't honed that idea well enough. So I would ask that we think about allowing this to move further down the line, to get better information, more information, from other cities that have done this, and wait until the actual budget period and then present to us something a lot more honed to what we specifically need, not an \$80,000 to \$150,000 range of what is needed, but something that we really know we can carry out and not use these borrowed funds to do it. Find out a way within departmental budgets to make it happen. If it is that important, and I won't disagree with any of you who support this that it is important, but how it is being approached, and this haphazard approach to it is really bothersome to me, and I want us to do a better job of honing that before we just toss money to the breeze.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:01:16

I spoke with—or I didn't speak with, but I received an email from Mr. Goff, who used to be an alderman, and he said, many times, we've wasted money on consultancies and come back with poor information. I don't want us to get into that position again, because we're so anxious to make this happen, because we've got these carry over funds available. Those are my concerns, not is there climate change, or can we, or should we be pursuing resilience and sustainability? Of course, we should be. But making it a clearer plan within the actual budget period is a far wiser way for us as the leaders of this city to operate. And I would appreciate if—I know it's coming from Hartzheim, but I appreciate if the rest of the council members my colleagues would please consider that in this vote. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:02:12

Alder van Zeeland.

Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:02:15

Thank you, Chair. To me this isn't an ideological argument. This is an argument about the bottom line. We're not approving a contractor consultant this evening. We're just being asked to carry over funding from one facilities project that was planned properly, carried out properly, and has funding left over for another facilities plan that will save taxpayer taxpayers money. For example, by cutting costs like tipping fees that we pay to other entities that can continue to raise their rates because of the type of waste we're disposing of. Per the detailed memo, the savings are expected to be much higher than the cost of creating the plan. So, I urge my colleagues to vote to carry over the funds so we can save our taxpayers money as soon as possible. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:03:05

Alder Firkus.

Alderson Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:03:08

I'm not going to support this. My opposition to this is sustained. I feel this is not taking action on climate change. This is a six figure, taxpayer funded pacifier for climate activists. I also find it very interesting that five days after

we voted on the goals setting a 50% goal reduction, that this item showed up before us. You cannot convince me that nobody knew this card was the next one to come off the deck. When I hear people like my colleagues say we're only voting on this and not that, we heard the same argument last time: "We're only voting on a goal, not spending money." Somebody had to know that this was right around the corner. I do not buy that these are just innocent coincidences. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:03:59
Alder Smith.

Aldersperson Martyn Smith (District 4) 1:04:02

Thank you, Your Honor. One, just want to start by saying this is—sustainability and climate resiliency has been a long-standing goal of this council. Some of this was sketched in more detail than I know, by Alder Fenton in her opening statement, but we can at least talk about the climate action resolution in 2019, choices that council has made on infrastructure since then, the 2022 starting the advisory panel on sustainability and climate resilience, and then just a month or so ago, the goal of reducing our emissions by 50% by 20—in 10 years.

Aldersperson Martyn Smith (District 4) 1:04:41

So, this emphasis on sustainability and positive climate action goes back well beyond the present Council, and I have to believe, because of that, all—that it represents the will of voters in Appleton that we have—year over year, we have these decisions coming out of a council that's elected by voters in Appleton, and I see myself as being a continuation of that move by voters. And that's why I'm going to vote on this as a continuation down this path.

Aldersperson Martyn Smith (District 4) 1:05:11

Climate change, without question, be changing our world, and we do need, as a city, a road map and an overall plan for sustainability and climate resiliency. Hitting on I do consider everybody's viewpoints and Alder Hartzheim's. I also was listening to and thinking about, and I think the points where I particularly, where I differ, is just the idea that as a municipality, we need specificity. You know this is going to be we hire consultants because we need a specific plan for our city and our place. And looking at the at the at the memo that we got, the sustainability master plan, some of the justification, it's clear in there that we are—they are asking questions, and will be charged with asking questions that are specific to our city, and I don't believe that we can transfer municipal plans in any way.

Aldersperson Martyn Smith (District 4) 1:06:06

And the other thing is that we don't know what we're going to find. We can't—I don't believe it's the right way to think about this, to charge people with more specific questions when we don't know the answer that they're looking for and we don't know what they're going to find. So, in some ways, we can't be more specific. What we need is people who can do the research and bring back to us some of the specifics that we don't know are out there. And so, I am in favor of establishing this master plan and setting the tone for moving out from here over the next decade or even longer.

Aldersperson Martyn Smith (District 4) 1:06:08

The carry over funds, I—you know, it's, is—it's staying within the same department as we've as we've heard. And if we're going to vote for that in the fall with the budget process, then I don't see any reason why we wouldn't vote for it now and get a jump on this, and get moving on what is a what is a large task. So, for those reasons, I am in favor of moving forward with this master plan with the carry—applying the carry over funds to it. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:07:12

Alder Heffernan.

Aldersperson Patti Heffernan (District 8) 1:07:15

Thank you, Chair. So, before I got here, I counted 67 emails in the inbox, and I am not been an aldersperson for that long, about a year and a quarter so, and I cannot recall a single topic that we got this much public support for, and public vigor for, for lack of a better term, right now. Only seven of what I read were opposed to this. And so, for me and my principles, regardless of what I personally think should be done, our city which has elected us to carry out what they see as their city where they want to live, we need to do what our majority of constituents are asking us to do, and the majority are in support of this carry over funds.

Aldersperson Patti Heffernan (District 8) 1:08:15

I very, very much appreciate Alder Firkus's need for specific events and specific efforts. And as—I am not a climate expert. I am not a subject matter expert on that, and I will not pretend to be, but I am a consultant in my day job, because, believe it or not, working for the city, I'm not getting enough from US Venture. I have to work another job. So, I do work as a consultant, you know, and substance use and recovery-oriented systems of care and the systems that go along with that. And I have definitely seen consultants in the field who use a lot of buzz words. And some of my work now actually is peer reviewing some other consultants. So, I definitely understand and want to validate that when it comes to consulting, that's definitely a concern. But I feel pretty confident in our directors and the staff what they're asking, that they know what they're doing and they know what they need, and that's what they've asked for. And we will continue to ask those hard questions, and I hope all of my colleagues here today continue to come and ask those hard questions, because they're important too. Process is important too. Transparency is important too. Making sure that we're following all of our public processes, those are important things. That's why we're here. We're doing exactly that right now.

Aldersperson Patti Heffernan (District 8) 1:09:45

And yes, there are other cities that have done other things. But, you know, having been a consultant, both in Green Bay's area and here in Appleton, just in my work, those are—they have completely different challenges. They have completely different needs. Appleton is going to have a different need and a different challenge than other cities and other parts of the state. We are a valley, okay? That's going to have different challenges. Then La Crosse and Eau Claire, that has much more hills and cliffs and different rivers and so on and so forth. Where we need somebody who is an expert who can answer the questions that we are raising.

Aldersperson Patti Heffernan (District 8) 1:10:25

We are asking these questions as council members, because as individuals, none of us are climate experts on this. So, we need to bring in consultants, and those wer—that work has value, and we still live in a capitalistic society. So, if we want somebody's value, we have to assign a dollar amount to it. These are the funds that we have left over because we've done a very good job, and our staff has done a very good job at carrying out our current projects under budget that we can now get caught up to the commitments that previous council members and administrations have made to reduce our emissions.

Aldersperson Patti Heffernan (District 8) 1:11:05

So, I will be in favor of this carry over. I will say there were some very convincing arguments, and for a minute I wasn't sure where I stand, but after hearing all of this and hearing just again, our citizens say that they are in favor of this, I will be voting in favor of this. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:11:26

Alder Wolff.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 1:11:28

Thank you, Chair. I'm not going to repeat some of the things that I've heard from my colleagues. Rather just focus on some things that I haven't. I'm voting in favor of this, and I would ask my colleagues to do so as well. One thing that I don't think has been mentioned, but should be, is that Dean Gazza has been with the city for a long time, and in that time and in the time that I've been an alderperson, every time Dean has brought something to our attention and asked it has led to good things. We look around the city, some of the best parts of the city are the parks and some of the best features have been led by Dean Gazza. I trust Dean to make the right decision for this city in how to proceed and move forward. And if he thinks that this is the best course of action, then I support that and I support staff. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:12:28

Alder Hayden.

Aldersperson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 1:12:29

Thank you Chair. Alder Heffernan stole a little bit of my thunder. I appreciate all the information that we're getting from the public in the form of people showing up, and the vast number of emails that we received on this. There are a couple items of confusion that I have question around. If I could ask Director Ohman, there were some there was some talk about this adding to the city's debt. By approving this, I wanted to confirm that we are not adding debt to the city. Would she be able to answer that?

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:13:01

Director Ohman.

Director Jeri Ohman (Finance) 1:13:05

Thank you, Chair. The debt for the original project has already been taken out. We would not issue additional debt for this project for the carry over.

Aldersperson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 1:13:15

Thank you, Chair. I also—there's some talk about consultants, and I work with consultants in my line of work, in IT pretty regularly, and we have a lot of redundancy around them, and the reason that we have redundancy is because it's getting a different perspective. A consultant might find something that someone who's been so ingrained in what they're working on might miss because they're coming at it from a different perspective. So, I appreciate the idea of bringing in someone with a different viewpoint that might be able to provide something that we're missing or something additional that we might not have thought of.

Aldersperson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 1:13:50

I also appreciate the vagueness of this. I often think of when you give too many guardrails to a consultant, it's like fencing in a pig when you're looking for a truffle, not giving them the bandwidth to go out and look for what you're hoping to find. I think it kind of prevents them from being as effective as they are. So, I appreciate the vagueness in this.

Aldersperson Patrick Hayden (District 7) 1:14:12

And the other question that I kind of had was just the city's already using digester, geothermal, and methane, which I'm assuming are the low hanging fruits when we're looking at alternative energy sources. So, I'm wondering, would a consultant help us achieve getting to the next level when we're looking at not only alternative forms of energy but additional forms of cost savings, when we're looking at things like maintenance, fuel usage, and electric bills?

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:14:46

We'll treat that as rhetorical. Alder Fenton.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 1:14:50

Thank you, Your Honor. With apologies to my colleague next to me, I wanted to address a couple of the folks who said that this was vague and not specific, and I'd like to—and I'm assuming that this statement is of—I'm going to get the name right—the consultant, justification and scope of work. I'm assuming, if we, as I would want us to do, if we approve this these carry over funds that this would go into a request for proposal for to hire said consultants. So I don't think in under this section on strategic goals and action planning statements like "identify a minimum of 25 priority projects or policy changes to reduce municipal greenhouse gas emissions," "propose specific targets and actions across buildings, fleet, land use, waste and procurement," "Provide life cycle cost analysis for each action, including payback periods and potential funding sources," "Recommend updates or adoption of policies, ordinances, and operational changes to embed sustainability into daily practice," and "Incorporate sustainability considerations into long term capital improvement planning." I don't think those are vague statements. I think that they establish very specific parameters and specify what we need and the guardrails for any consultant that we hire. Again, I've stated my wish that we approve this item, and I still hope we do. Thank you.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 1:14:56

Alder van Zeeland.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:16:37

Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to address Alder Firkus's last comment. You know, first in in saying that I shared his concerns initially about the timing of the carry over in relation to the other resolution, but in looking into it, I found that the process with Finance to provide them these carry over requests actually occurred before the resolution for emissions was introduced. So, I just want to encourage folks, if you are ever concerned about something, something doesn't feel right, question staff. They were very open with me to provide me the information, and that allowed me to look at this project more clearly. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:17:29

Alder Meltzer.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:17:31

Thank you. I encourage my colleagues to vote in support of the care—the budget carry over. And I think that one of the things that bothers me about the discussion that we've had tonight is our staff have worked very hard over the years. It seems strange to be lauding them on the one hand for all of that beautiful work displayed on the city website while then on the other hand, saying that this hasn't been given its due diligence. I think that if we're going to pull up our city website and talk about the work of our city staff, due diligence describes exactly what Dean Gazza and his department does.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:18:09

I think that it's important for us not to lose time. I'm going to try not to repeat my colleagues' statements in that effort as well. But I think that this work is important. It's timely. There is no procedural issue between departments, and also as far as other cities, even the state plans, climate solutions are not one size fits all. It's great that the state is going to be coming out with laundry lists for communities, but that would still leave us exactly where we are with lists of recommendations. You know, now there's a Wisconsin one; there's already been others. What we need right now, as was specifically stated—sorry—in the memo—just a moment I lost my

place. "To maximize the impact the city requires financial and expert consultant support to channel these efforts effectively and develop implementable actions." So basically, we are at a certain level of doing great things at a city, and if we are ever going to rise above that level, we need to take action, and we need to take it now and quickly. We can rest on our laurels for now and tomorrow or a few months later, a year later, we're going to be way behind all kinds of other communities. We're going to have lost a lot of the leadership that we've cherished in being one of the green tier charter communities and things like that. So, in the big picture, I think it's very important for my colleagues to support the budget carry over. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:19:54

Alder Croatt.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:19:57

Thank you, Mayor. I'm going to vote against this, because I'm going to be consistent with my vote. I voted against it finance. I don't think I'm going to change anybody's mind with my comments, because I think most people's minds are made up on this. I do mostly agree with all of Alder Hartzheim's thoughts and concerns on this.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:20:17

Before I go further, I would like to just make a few comments about the emails since Alder Heffernan brought it up. We did receive a large amount of emails. I started to read them, and there was a mix of opinions. Then there, of course, was a lot in support of this, and that's mainly because there was a coordinated effort to reach out to Council. A few people encouraged Council—encouraged citizens to write a certain message and send it and directed them where to send it. I always appreciate input. We want input from everyone. But in this case, it was a few people trying to get a whole bunch of people to send us emails, and a lot of them were the same exact thing.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:21:04

So, I think I know the outcome of this, but I do want to remind everyone that the finance recommendation was to deny this request, and one of the members was myself. One was the Finance Chair. And just because we *have* done this before doesn't mean that we *should*. Just because we *can* do this doesn't mean that we *should*. For me, it's not about climate change. It's not about what we might do in the future. It's about the process. And I personally feel, and I think I agree with Alder Hartzheim that this is something that should come forward during the budget process. And I encourage us to, if this gets defeated, bring it forward as part of the departmental budget, and let's have a deep discussion about it. I will—might be convinced to support it. I have some reservations, but I think the due diligence part that was mentioned earlier would be to deliberate this during the budget and adopt it then. Instead of using borrowed funds, use departmental budget funds that were carefully evaluated as part of the budget for next year. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:22:13

Alder Hartzheim.

Alderman Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:22:15

Thank you, Chair. Alder Croatt stole a little bit of my thunder there, because I was going to state that I want us to all remember that the majority of emails that we receive, or Facebook posts, Facebook comments that we received do not equal the majority of the city. That's just who you've reached. I am very concerned that we're going to use borrowed funds to shake the magic consultancy bottle and see what spills out, and that, to me, does not feel like a good way to govern. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:22:44

Alder Wolff with two speakers in the queue.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 1:22:49

Thank you, Chair. Not calling to question. Just to point out something about comments on Facebook and messages we received in emails. On both sides of the aisle, people push their elected representatives to vote the way that they want them to. It doesn't mean that they're not people living in our city, but through all of those emails, sure, a lot of them may have been the same message, which is a little inauthentic, but their message is still authentic to them, and they still live in the City of Appleton, because they posted their address in the email. So, they're still voters.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 1:23:30

Another thing is that there was a coordinated group an effort to oppose this as well from another group in attendance tonight. So, it is not as if there wasn't a very clear opposition group against it. So, it's a little silly to point out the messages for this resolution and say that that's somehow a bad thing when you were part of bringing people in against it. Just to point that out. It's a little silly and unauthentic as well. So, thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:24:08

All right. Just going to ask the council to continue to debate the item that's before you. I feel discussion is veering into the meta. No pun intended when we're talking about Facebook. But if we could keep our comments focused on the item that's before you and try and try and wrap up debate. If you have novel things to offer, please do so. Otherwise, we'll move along.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:24:40

Any further comments or discussion? All right, hearing none, we have a motion and a second to approve, because we're going to take this as a not with vote notwithstanding. So again, what that means is an aye vote would approve this item, a nay vote would deny it. Everybody clear? Any questions? Okay. With that, please cast your votes. Motion passes 11 to three. The item has been approved.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:25:22

Now that you're through with that item, I'd just like to take a moment and address the council, because there was some feedback shared in the course of your debate that I'd like to acknowledge, which is that from a process perspective, you did not have all of the information on this item up front, and that that is not a common pattern for this administration. It's not something that we want to do. That our effort is to be transparent to get it—get you the information that you need to make informed decisions. And I think the length of the legislative history of this item suggests that you didn't have all the information that you needed, and I want to acknowledge that, and I appreciate the feedback, and I recognize that we can do better when it comes to items like this.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:26:19

This could have been done better, and we acknowledge that. We're learning—we learned from this. And Director Gazza and I earlier today had a conversation about making sure that when items like this come before you, we're providing more detail at the time it comes forward, something that we certainly acknowledge.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:26:39

I also would like to address the suggestion that that there was some sort of conspiracy around this item. I think, that stands in a bit of tension between, on the one hand, the criticism that this was haphazard and incomplete, that you didn't have the information that you needed, and on the other hand, that there was some conspiracy

to bring this before you in a way that was some somehow a bait and switch. And I take umbrage to that suggestion, because I try to do this work with integrity, and my staff tries to do their work with integrity. And so, I specifically want to mention that, because it's important also for our community to know that we work with integrity. At a time when trust in local governments, local institutions, and all of our civic institutions have been heavily eroded, it is very important that we are clear about our values and the way we approach our work. There was no conspiracy around bringing an item forward. That is not how we operate in the city of Appleton. That's not how this administration operates. And I want to make that very, very clear.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:28:02

Now that we have this item approved, the staff will begin working on a draft of a request for proposals, and we fully intend to have a very engaged process with the council, with this—with the panel and with members of the community, even as we create that request for proposals, to make sure that we're clear about the scope of work and that we're aligned on what exactly we're asking for. From there, we'll issue a request for proposals. Those proposals will be scored, and then a recommendation will be brought forward to the Council for your consideration, as with all other projects of this nature.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:28:39

So, this will not be the last time we discuss this, and it will not be the last time members of the public will have the opportunity to address this item, to share either their support or the concern in whatever form that comes, because we appreciate all of the input that we receive from our community. So, with that, we'll wrap up on this item and move along.