

**APPLETON CITY COUNCIL
JOINT WORKING SESSION MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2023**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a joint working session of the City Council of Appleton was held on Monday, April 24, 2023, at the Appleton Civic Center Council Chambers.

Council Members Present in Chambers: Dan Enke, Mayor Justin Koepp, Vanessa Lohtka-Meyer, Stacey Raddatz,

City Staff Present in Chambers: John Olinger – Interim City Administrator, Josh Larson - Interim Public Works Foreman, Jessica Green – Bond Consultant Northland, Bob Schlieman – Engineer Apex Engineering Group, Michael Weber – Engineer Apex Engineering Group.

Public Present in Chambers: Mitchell Fett, Gary

Justin Koepp called the working session to order at 5:30 p.m.

Interim City Administrator Olinger explained the purpose of the work session and introductions were made of the participants. The council was encouraged to ask questions and discuss among themselves the project.

Engineer Schlieman reviewed a power point of the 2023 Street Project. Schlieman defined the project area and provided background of the project. He then went on to explain the existing conditions. Following this the engineer explained the elements of the project, sewer replacement, water main replacement, storm sewer replacement and street and sidewalk replacement. He explained why the trees needed to be removed. The council asked questions to clarify if there were ways to preserve trees. Schlieman stated if the Council wished, he could save trees. However, he stated, he could not guarantee the trees would survive. He explained the canopy/drip line many times mirrors the underground root systems and many of the trees canopy/drip line extends over the roadway. If the root systems are cut, he cannot guarantee the trees will survive. If they do not survive, the city will be back removing trees in the future. Schlieman recommended the city develop a tree planting program to replace the trees in the boulevard with boulevard appropriate replacements. The engineer also addressed sewer pipe lining mentioning that in many circumstances this method is appropriate but due to the nature of the issues in the project, the technology cannot be used. There was much discussion about the width of the road. The engineer explained that the width was set by the standard in the city. If the City Council wished, they could change the standard width, but recognizing this will set a new standard within the city. Administrator Olinger added that this is a policy decision. The council can choose a different width, and to retain the trees. Each of these decisions he explained have cost implications, can be accomplished, and will establish new policies going forward.

A question was asked concerning if there is a need for sidewalks on both sides, or sidewalks at all. It was noted that the cost for the sidewalk was \$724,041. The engineer responded that they could be eliminated, or just constructed on one side. There was a question if then one side of the road would be as-

essed or both sides. Much discussion occurred about residents walking on the roadway, walking in winter, walking around parked cars, kids walking to school, kids playing in the streets. Olinger noted that again, the decision concerning sidewalks is a policy issue. There are neighborhoods in Appleton, Larson noted, that do not have sidewalks. However, he stated, these neighborhoods have sidewalks. Council members noted the poor condition of the existing sidewalk, the narrowness, and the inability for handicapped accessibility because of the poor alignment, missing sections, and conditions.

The engineer moved onto funding. He explained how the PFA program works and how the city is in a good position, because of the level of debt and cost to operate the utility systems. He reviewed the estimate of over \$4,000,000 potential dollars but stated he felt it would be under \$2,000,000 in grants from PFA. He went on to explain the assessments and the assessment policy. Green noted though that the assessment levels seemed high compared to the home values. She noted the assessment level of 33%. She stated the city, in order to bond must levy 20% and recommended the city review its assessment policy to better match the assessment to the increased value to homes. Green reviewed the city's bonding and explained the different bonding and which bonds went against the city's bond level. She stated though, that all the money, whether levied, assessed or collected in higher user fees all comes from the same residents. She recommended the city contract for an overall financial management plan to review all capital projects, replacement equipment and operations to get a better idea of the city's financial status and capacity for more spending.

It was noted that this will only be the beginning of the projects. The engineer stated this project began in 2019 with a capital improvement plan that identified projects. The top two being the water treatment plant and streets east of Munsterman. Remaining projects are all other streets and utilities in the city.

A question was fielded from the audience concerning non payment of debt by the city. Green answered that if the city does not pay, the county will assess payment to the city. Olinger stated that no decision can be made tonight. The item will be placed on the next agenda and the Council can decide to call a public meeting, decide to go ahead with the project, request changes to the plan or cancel the project. Olinger stated he will request another work session in May. The legislative session closes May 22 Olinger mentioned, so after that date we should know if the Governor funded the PFA program.

Adjournment: A motion to close the council working session was made by Councilor Enke and seconded by councilor Raddatz. Upon call for discussion and hearing none, Mayor Koepp called for a vote. All voted in favor. Session was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Emma R. Haugen, Clerk/Treasurer
(5-24-1c)