

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the special working session of the City Council of Appleton was held on Thursday, December 4th, 2025 in the Council Chambers at the Appleton Civic Center.

Council Members Present in Chambers: Justin Koepp, Vanessa Lhotka-Meyer, Stacey Raddatz & Jim Masee.

Council Members Absent: Al Oyen

City Staff Present in Chambers: John Olinger – City Administrator & Emma Haugen – Clerk/Treasurer

Public Present in Chambers: John Pfaff, Mitch Fett & Herb Rotunda

Mayor Koepp called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

- I. Administrator Olinger explained to the council that a few residents had dropped off their tax statements for him to look at. After looking at them and talking with the county assessor, he wanted to educate the council on the factors affecting residential properties. In one case, the house value went up and the taxable value also increased. The residents are not seeing a large increase in the homestead credit in 2026 like they did in 2025 which is not reducing taxes like the previous year. Olinger also went over a little bit of the ideology behind the vacant property valuations. The council looked at a chart in the packet on how the preliminary 2026 tax rate and the proposed adjusted 2026 tax rate affects different valuations of homes in town.
- II. The council reviewed the budget going through each department and reviewing some reductions and increases recommendation from city staff.
 1. General Government
 - a. Remove the City Administrator Search line item of \$5,000
 2. Civic Center
 - a. Contracted Services – Reduce \$8,000 for cleaning as city staff is now cleaning the civic center
 3. Police Department
 - a. Look at ways to reduce salaries – i.e. call time, working hours
 - b. Increased the vehicle budget \$10,000 for vehicle outfitting
 4. Fire Department
 - a. Drop building maintenance and repair to \$3,000
 - b. Drop bay door replacement down to \$5,000
 - c. Leave turnout gear in the budget at \$5,000
 - d. Discussion on grants that can be applied for to replace turnout gear and the emergency sirens
 5. Street Department
 - a. Salaries and health insurance was revised from the preliminary budget based on union negotiations and calculations. Olinger explained to the council all the public works employees will not be split out between different departments based on the percentage of work that they are performing.
 - b. Street Signs – Reduce to \$1,000

- c. Professional Fees – Reduce by \$9,000
- d. Mosquito Spraying – Reduce by \$15,000
- 6. Pool – No changes
- 7. General Recreation
 - a. Summer Rec – Reduce to \$5,000
- 8. Old High School
 - a. Discussed ways to reduce the budget, including doing nothing with the non-library portion of the building, isolating the utilities to the library, etc.
 - b. Utilities – Reduced to \$6,000
 - c. Contracted Services – Reduce \$5,000
 - d. Professional fees – Reduce \$2,500
 - e. Building Maintenance – Reduce by \$10,000
- 9. Campground – No changes
- 10. Parks
 - a. Removed the ½ mower and bench/trash can purchase
 - b. Equipment maintenance and repair – Reduce by \$3,500
 - c. Trails Maintenance – Reduce by \$1,000
 - d. Talked about creating a sponsor a bench program to purchase more benches. The council asked to have the parks commission work on this
- 11. Library
 - a. Administration Olinger explained that is a learning time for having a standalone building
 - b. The program supply line was pointed out as being high but Olinger explained that the library has to apply for grants to match most of the amount
 - c. Contracted Services – A question was raised on if the city has any control over hours to try to reduce the amount that is paid to Pioneerland. Mr. Rotunda, who sits on the Pioneerland board, said that the city can set how much they want to contribute, which in turn would affect the hours
 - d. Contracted Services – A question as to the large amount for cleaning was brought up. After rounds of discussions, it was recommended to reduce the amount to \$12,000 for the year for cleaning services
 - e. School & Travel – Council asked if the budget needed to be that high and what it was for. Clerk/Treasurer Haugen explained that when the staff goes to a conference, they usually receive a grant to cover expenses which is then paid to the city to reimburse the expenses. Olinger will add \$4,000 in the revenue section to offset the expense item.
- 12. Cemetery
 - a. Remove the ½ mower purchase
- 13. Airport – Proposed changes okay
- 14. Non -Departmental – Change the ECPN amount to \$89,500

III. **Adjournment:** The city council adjourned the meeting at 6:38 p.m.