

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the special working session of the City Council of Appleton was held on Tuesday, November 18th, 2025 in the Council Chambers at the Appleton Civic Center.

Council Members Present in Chambers: Justin Koepp, Al Oyen & Vanessa Lhotka-Meyer,

Council Members Absent: Stacey Raddatz & Jim Masee.

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

Public Present in Chambers: John Pfaff & Mitch Fett

Mayor Koepp called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

- I. **2026 Budget Expenditures:** Administrator Olinger explained some of the additional items that had to be added to the budget since the last working session and approval of the preliminary budget and levy. He also went over some inquiries he had from residents regarding their proposed taxes. He noted on one of them the homestead market exclusion calculation was changed and the tax rate was increased so they saw a larger increase in their taxes compared to the previous year. Olinger went over some of the increases to specific departments, which was included in the council packet provided. The council requested to have another working session to go through the budget more closely. A full budget will be emailed to the council so they can come to the working session with notes. A working session will be held Thursday, December 4th at 5:00 pm.
- II. **Eat JUST Expansion Request:** Administrator Olinger explained the current plant capacity and the request of more flow for Eat JUST. Discussions on the “cost” to the city’s residents to allow JUST to use more of the capacity at the plant. Olinger presented some calculations on the value/cost for the city to allow the increase in capacity. The council would like to have a meeting with the corporate office of JUST to discuss how they city can work with them to help them grow their business in Appleton.
- III. **Utility Rates:** Administrator Olinger presented a proposed system that uses the rate structure of the Metropolitan Urban Services Area. This system bases the structure on a single-family residence and the other categories as a multiple of a single family. Units are called Residential Equivalent Units or REU’s. Olinger presented the council with a listing of all the accounts that are not single family homes and what their REU count would be. This system equitably splits the debt service out by how much demand an REU puts on the system. Olinger still has a few more account holders to visit to determine their REU. By using this system, it would increase the number of units to split the debt service by, possibly helping to lower the residential service charges. This system is still being reviewed by commission and staff before presenting a finalized proposal.
- IV. **Past Due Utility Bills:** Councilmember Lhotka-Meyer asked if they could discuss the topic as it was brought up at the last meeting. A report provided by city staff showed that of the total amount assessed in 2024, only forty-eight percent of utility assessments were received through property tax payments. The council would like to revisit the policy of not shutting off water due to delinquent bills. There was a short discussion on options that could be explored and doing some research on what other towns do for past due bills.
- V. **Liquor Store:** The council reviewed the staff report included in the packet. Discussion was had on THC drinks and what the future of the store as part of the city looks like. The council asked for this item to be added to the December council meeting.
- VI. The city council then entered into a closed session at 6:32 p.m.
- VII. **Adjournment:** The city council reopened the work session. With no further business the work session was adjourned.