

Thank you for allowing me to speak. I apologize for missing budget Saturday due to family issues. I did review the entire budget before writing the League's response. Appleton is a great place to live and the current budget reflects attempts to make sure that this continues.

Appleton is a great place to live in large part due to the hard work of the The LWV would like to commend the city of Appleton for their hard work in dealing with unfunded mandates during a time of levy limits. There are important areas for local government to deal with and they are made more difficult when they are not given the authority to govern. We understand that the increase in the need for bonds is at least in part due to these levy limits imposed by the state.

The LWV does all advocacy solely on researched based positions. Over the past five years, we have conducted local studies on Public Libraries, Public Transportation, Human Trafficking, Land Use Management & Downtown Development, Public Education, Youth Advocacy & Justice and this year our local study is on climate change preparedness as we see increasing extreme weather conditions that we will need to be dealt with at the local level since as you know, most real change happens locally. One week after our study group's first meeting, Appleton experienced an historic storm that resulted in the loss of trees & other vegetation and power outages. The LWV believes that the city needs to prepare for other results of climate change and our study will reflect research on how best to deal with this.

On reviewing the budget, we found many areas to support this year. In the area of climate, we applaud the city's efforts towards sustainability including the pilot compost project and landfill diversion, energy efficient streetlights and vehicles, attempts at alternate energy sources such as solar energy, the tree planting program and others just to name a few. At the same time, we also understand that without dramatic changes locally, statewide and nationally, we will continue to have extreme weather issues that will affect local budgets. There will be continued weather related insurance cost increases and increased precipitation will affect things from days available at Reed Golf Course to the need for increased plowing to increase in loss of vegetation just to name a few. Our most vulnerable resident's will be the most affected, families in poverty, those experiencing homelessness or mental illness, those with disabilities, and we will need to plan for how to protect them. The city has adopted a health in all policies ordinance – we may need to adopt a climate health in all policies ordinance.

The LWV was allowed to attend many of the meetings regarding the Comprehensive Plan and downtown development as part of our local study. We are pleased with the results in areas such as Jones Park as a wonderful example of expanding the downtown to more than just College Avenue. We continue to support the current downtown development program understanding the need for a balance of small business and larger anchor businesses. We also understand the need for parking for these businesses and at the same time the need to be very aware of increasing costs and cost-effective ways to pay for this. Fortunately, the city of Appleton is well below their legal debt limit. The LWV also supports a variety of housing options and are pleased to hear that the Post Crescent building will provide more options. The LWV has a strong position on the need for public transportation and is an avid supporter of a Regional Transit Authority. The LWV also applauds the efforts towards pedestrian safety including the increase in enhanced crosswalks. In addition, we support the increase in green space and trails.

The LWV continues to support the mixed use building that will include both the library and Mozaic medical center as a centrally located medical facility. We also support the idea of a social worker at the library and the efforts to reach out to our Hmong and Latinx communities. We would also encourage reaching out to our other refugee communities. The word is out that Appleton is a great place to relocate as a refugee and it is likely that our population will increase.

The message of the LWV is to Empower Voters and Defend Democracy. As you all know, we have four elections and a census in the next year. The LWV has always supported voter registration and making voting for any citizens easier not harder. We are available to assist in voter registration in any way needed. We support the efforts towards Electronic polls and would also support Extended early voting hours and an Increase in diversity at polls. We also have volunteers ready to assist in whatever needs the city has to ensure that we get a complete census count.

The city of Appleton has been striving to become a more diverse community. This includes over 20 years of employing a diversity coordinator. The LWV was especially happy to see the words "welcoming & inclusive" in so many areas of the

city's budget this year as evidence of the influence of this position. The LWV of Appleton has been honored with being allowed to host the Wisconsin LWV annual meeting in the centennial year of both LWV and the passage of the 19th amendment. When a meeting was held with LWV WI in Appleton to coordinate this, they commented "I had no idea that Appleton was becoming so diverse". This is in large part due to Mayor Hannah & the common council who have had the foresite to understand the importance of diversity & inclusion and the importance of having an employee focused strictly on that issue. The LWV strongly advocates for continuance of that job and the efforts to keep moving forward in our efforts to be diverse, inclusive and welcoming to everyone including our immigrant and refugee communities with dignity & respect.

And finally, the year 2020 is an important year for the LWV as well as all women. While true suffrage did not happen until the voting rights act of 1965 and current stripping of that act has led to increased voter suppression, the LWV still believes that it is important to celebrate the milestone of 100 years of voting rights for women in this county and invite all of you to join with us in our celebration of the diverse women who fought for us and who we honor by becoming active and informed voters.