



"...meeting community needs...enhancing quality of life."

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Dear Appletonians, Colleagues, and Neighbors,

When the City of Appleton and the Appleton Public Library set out on the redesign and renovation of the library building, we identified seven principles to guide our work. Among these were to “steward existing community investments” and to “deliver a cost-effective plan, maximizing taxpayer value while meeting community needs.” We have held to these principles at every step of the process.

Yesterday’s bid opening for the construction of a redesigned library revealed that costs have escalated beyond even our most conservative estimations. In total, the bids received place the project at approximately \$14 million over the budget of \$40.4 million. This comes after significant efforts over the last few months to reduce project cost through the value engineering process without major scope or programmatic adjustments.

This morning, we convened a meeting of the project team to discuss the bids and next steps. First, we were clear that we will not ask our local taxpayers to absorb the higher cost of the project. Additionally, we cannot expect the fundraising campaign to increase its target to fill the gap. Finally, we agreed that we are not willing to compromise on the quality or longevity of the building – simply put, we are committed to doing this project the right way. With those understandings in place, we were left with the decision of how to move forward.

While we recognize that inflation is affecting construction pricing, there are inexplicably high costs in a number of bids, which are unacceptable to the City. Therefore, we intend to recommend to the Common Council that all bids be rejected, allowing the project team to rework the design and scope and re-bid. To best align with industry timelines and maximize our competitive position in the marketplace, we anticipate going back out to bid in early 2023.

In the meantime, the project team will be working to reevaluate every detail of the project to identify opportunities to further reduce costs. Some of this work may include adjustments to the square footage of the building and aesthetic details. We are unwavering in our commitment to minimizing the impact of these changes on the quality, beauty, and functionality of the Appleton Public Library building. The Appleton Public Library will continue to operate at its temporary location. Overall project timelines will be adjusted accordingly as we go about this work. As we have at every step of the process, we will continue to provide timely and transparent communication to the Common Council and community as we proceed.

The City of Appleton is deeply appreciative of the work of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and the Boldt Company as we navigate truly uncharted waters together. We are grateful to the many volunteers, donors, public officials, and community members who have contributed to making this vision a reality. We have assembled an extraordinary team to deliver this project and are confident we will be proud of the final result.

We are also grateful to our community for the trust you have placed in us to do this work. While we are disappointed by yesterday's results, we are undeterred.

Yours,

Jake Woodford – Mayor

Dean Gazza – Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Management Director

Colleen Rortvedt – Appleton Public Library Director