DEPARTMENT OF
UTILITIES

Department of Utilities
Wastewater Treatment Plant
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MEMORANDUM

Date: July 16, 2026

To: Chairperson Denise Fenton and Members of the Finance Committee

CC: Ryan Rice, Deputy Director of Utilities
Jeri Ohman, Enterprise Accounting Manager

From: Chris Stempa, Director of Utilities

RE: **Finance Committee Action: Award Appleton Department of Utilities Network Improvements Project Base Bid and Allowance to Van Ert Electric, in the amount of $649,489 with 7.5% contingency of $48,712 for a project total not to exceed $698,201**

BACKGROUND:

The City of Appleton's Wastewater Treatment Plant (19 buildings, ~280,000 sq. ft. on a 38-acre parcel adjacent to the Lower Fox River) and Water Treatment Facility (a single 173,232 sq. ft. building on 26 acres in Menasha, built in 2001) are each served by two independent networks: the City's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) network and the Utilities Department's Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) network. Both networks are outdated, complex to maintain, and increasingly unreliable, prompting the City's decision to modernize. The SCADA network is air-gapped from the ERP network at both sites and must remain so; the ERP network connects to the Internet and the City's Mitel telephone system via the Appleton Area Metropolitan Fiber Optic Network (AAMFON) at the treatment plant and a site-to-site IPSec VPN at the water facility. Voice communication and remote gate access at both facilities rely on aging Spectralink wireless-IP phones and on the cellular network, operating over Motorola wireless access points (approximately 180 at the treatment plant and 31 at the water facility). The guest Wi-Fi network is configured for Wi-Fi calling to compensate for degraded cellular coverage in below-grade tunnel areas.

The project scope includes removal of the existing ERP and SCADA network infrastructure at both facilities and installation of a new fiber optic and Ethernet network, wireless access points, and associated equipment. A public address system will also be installed at the Water Treatment Facility. Public bid plans and specifications were developed by Donohue (contracted engineer) over the past year to advance a construction project later in 2026.

BIDS

On July 1, 2026, the City opened and reviewed the bids from two contractors, which are summarized in Table 1. Each bid met the submittal requirements, with Van Ert Electric being the lowest responsible bidder.

Table 1: Network Improvements Project Bid Tab Summary

Company	Van Ert Electric	Faith Technologies, Inc.
Wastewater Treatment Bid	$509,566	$557,278
Water Treatment Bid	$89,923	$128,052
Allowance	$50,000	$50,000
Total	**$649,489**	**$735,330**

FUNDING:

The available construction budget to fund this project is $1,926,212 less the equipment to be procured directly by the City through an existing authorized vendor (totals $528,000), leaving $1,398,212 available for construction. Under that contract the City receives state pricing for the network equipment (e.g. access points) which is advantageous because of the cost savings realized. Moreover, that equipment is standardized throughout the city departments and involves network security considerations which IT will be involved with as part of the project.

RECOMMENDATION:

I am recommending the contract bid award for the Network Improvements Project to Van Ert Electric, in the amount of $649,489 with 7.5% contingency of $48,712 for a project total not to exceed $698,201.

If you have any questions or require additional information regarding this project, please contact Chris Stempa at 920-832-5945.