



DEPARTMENT OF  
**UTILITIES**

**Department of Utilities**  
Water Treatment Facility  
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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** June 4, 2026  
**To:** Chairperson Vered and Members of the Utilities Committee  
**CC:** Ryan Rice, Deputy Director of Utilities  
Jeri Ohman, Enterprise Accounting Manager  
**From:** Chris Stempa, Director of Utilities  
**RE:** **Action: Approve Contract Amendment #1 as part of the Lindbergh Standpipe Recoating Project to Dixon Engineering resulting in a decrease to the contract amount from \$51,465 to \$7,343**

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### BACKGROUND:

The Water Utility includes seven elevated storage structures (towers, standpipes, and reservoirs) within the City of Appleton distribution system. These structures are required by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to be cleaned and inspected at least every five years. The interior and exterior paint coatings must be repaired or wholesale repainted as necessary to maintain structural integrity. Typically, the lifespan of a coating system is 15 years without requiring some level of maintenance.

The interior and exterior of the 2.0 MG Lindbergh Standpipe was last coated in 2019. Areas of the interior topcoat have been subsequently observed to have partially delaminated along the lower elevations of the tank sidewalls. The cause was believed to be attributed to flash condensation on the primed steel despite the contractor heating the interior of the vessel during unseasonably cold weather which contributed to premature failure.

The Lindbergh Standpipe recoating project was not originally identified in the 2026 budget, AWTF management is recommending its prioritization based on documented evidence of premature interior coating failure. Utilities Department management prioritized this work to address the condition in a timely manner to preserve asset integrity, maintain water quality, and avoid more costly repairs if deterioration were to progress.

On February 24, 2026 Utilities Committee approved the Utilities Department staff's recommendation of coating services contract award to Dixon Engineering Inc. (Dixon) following a request for proposal process. This recommendation was then approved by Common Council on March 4, 2026.

## **CONTRACT AMENDMENT**

Dixon Engineering performed an interior inspection in April 2026 to verify the approach to the recoating work. That inspection confirmed partial delamination of the interior topcoat, primarily in the lower elevation (bottom 20 feet of sidewall). However, Dixon found that the adhesion of the underlying intermediate coating system was in good condition. Input was then solicited from an independent coating specifications expert regarding the existing coating condition including opinions on an approach to work. Those approaches included removing loose paint by high pressure washing, brush blast and overcoat, and complete coating removal and repaint:

Based on the alternatives provided and the associated pros vs cons, the decision was made to proceed with high pressure washing the tank sidewalls to remove loose paint. This option mitigated downstream concerns related to system debris while maximizing the capital already invested when the tank was last recoated in 2019.

The Contract Amendment #1 scope of work would involve removal of the loose peeling paint by using a high-pressure washer. Dixon would then perform field repairs as required where isolated areas of surficial corrosion appeared (primarily found along welds). With this option, Dixon recommended that the Utilities Department staff conduct biennial inspections of the tank interior to reassess coating condition and future recoating needs

## **FUNDING SOURCE IMPACT**

Amendment #1 would reflect a \$44,114 reduction cost to the current contract. The original funding for this contract required the transfer of funds from the 2026 Matthias Tower Coating Project because the Lindbergh Standpipe had not been previously identified in the 2026 budget. This contract amendment would restore that funding for its original intended purpose and also allow Utilities Department management to refocus on proceeding with engineering services this year as part of the Matthias Tower Coating Project. Separately, the Finance Committee was presented with a sole source contract award request for Dixon to perform that work. Support for the sole source contract was predicated on this contract amendment, and work Dixon had previously performed on the Matthias Tower including other recent water tower coating work.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

This amendment would result in the Lindbergh Standpipe Recoating Project contract with Dixon decreasing from \$51,456 to \$7,343.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact Chris Stempa at ph: 832-5945.