



# CITY OF APPLETON

Department of Parks & Recreation

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TO: Utilities Committee

FROM: Tom Flick

DATE: 5/12/2026

**RE: Action: Award the Professional Services Contract for the Wastewater Treatment Facility Master Plan to Donohue & Associates in the amount of \$374,515 plus a 5% contingency for a total not to exceed \$393,241.**

## **PROJECT**

The Department of Utilities, with support from the Facilities Management Department, has identified the need to undertake a Wastewater Treatment Facility Master Plan to establish a long-range vision and capital improvement roadmap for the facility. The last Wastewater Treatment Facility Master Plan was completed in November 1988. Although regulatory drivers may have changed, the foundational need for a comprehensive and current Master Plan nearly 40 years later remains equally compelling. The Master Plan will evaluate existing treatment processes, infrastructure, and supporting facilities, and will develop a phased implementation strategy over a twenty-year planning horizon.

The project will incorporate asset condition, regulatory requirements, operational needs, and industry trends to define the future condition of the facility and identify the projects, sequencing, and planning-level budgets required to achieve that vision.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for professional consulting services to complete a comprehensive Wastewater Treatment Facility Master Plan. The RFP was structured to align with Wisconsin DNR facility planning requirements and to support future regulatory compliance, capital planning, and potential funding opportunities.

The scope of work included:

- Evaluation of existing assets, including condition and remaining useful life
- Assessment of treatment processes, solids management systems, and support facilities
- Development and evaluation of multiple alternatives
- Preparation of a long-range capital improvement roadmap with project sequencing and planning-level cost estimates
- Development of conceptual site plans and supporting visualizations
- Alignment with Wisconsin DNR facility planning expectations

## **RFP PROCESS**

The Request for Proposals was distributed to qualified engineering firms with experience in wastewater facility planning and was also posted on the City's website. Proposals were received from the following firms:

- Donohue & Associates
- Strand Associates

Proposals were reviewed and scored by a team consisting of Facilities and AWWTP staff. The evaluation was based on criteria including understanding of the project, technical approach, project team, and overall approach to delivering the Master Plan.

The following table summarizes the proposal scoring and cost evaluation:

**Table 1: Engineering Firms and RFQ Results**

<b>Firm:</b>	<b>Total Points</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>Value (Point/\$)</b>
Donohue and Associates	735	\$374,515	510
Strand	465	\$263,413	566

The evaluation team completed a value analysis to compare proposal cost relative to total score. This metric is used as a reference tool only to help benchmark “value” but is not intended to be the sole determination of the award recommendation. Although Donohue’s proposal cost was higher, the analysis shows that Donohue provides a lower cost per point, indicating a higher overall value to the City.

Reference checks were completed for the top-ranked firm which confirmed Donohue’s strong performance on similar wastewater master planning efforts, including asset assessment, long-range capital planning, and effective coordination with regulatory agencies.

### **FUNDING**

Funding for this project is available through a combination of 2025 carryover funds and 2026 budgeted funds. A total of \$200,000 in Facilities Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding from 2025 has been carried over for this effort. In addition, \$275,000 has been allocated in the 2026 Utilities budget for the Wastewater Treatment Facility Master Plan, resulting in total available funding of \$475,000.

The project was carried over and additional funds were allocated in the 2026 budget following initial cost estimates received in 2025, which indicated that the originally budgeted \$200,000 would not be sufficient to complete a comprehensive master planning effort consistent with the City’s goals and regulatory requirements.

The Master Plan will serve as a strategic roadmap that will help shape decisions for years ahead. It serves as a foundation in several ways including but not limited to long-term infrastructure planning, capital improvements prioritization, risk management, and financial planning. The timing of the Master Plan aligns with the near future Wastewater Utility rate study which will allow the City to proactively plan for rate impacts, avoid significant rate volatility, and support long-term financial stability of the utility.

The recommended contract award, including contingency, is within the total available project funding.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Award the Professional Services Contract for the Wastewater Treatment Facility Master Plan to Donohue & Associates in the amount of \$374,515 plus a 5% contingency for a total not to exceed \$393,241.

The evaluation team determined that Donohue & Associates provides the best overall value to the City based on their technical approach, alignment with project objectives, and ability to deliver a comprehensive, forward-looking master plan.

Please feel free to contact me at (920) 832-3915 with any questions, or by email at [tom.flick@appletonwi.gov](mailto:tom.flick@appletonwi.gov).