



DEPARTMENT OF  
**UTILITIES**

**Department of Utilities**  
Water Treatment Facility  
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[www.appleton.org/government/utilities](http://www.appleton.org/government/utilities)

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** February 18, 2026  
**To:** Chairperson Brad Firkus  
**CC:** Ryan Rice, Deputy Director of Utilities  
John Pograd, Water Treatment Facility Operations Supervisor  
Jeri Ohman, Interim Finance Enterprise Accounting Fund Manager  
**From:** Chris Stempa, Director of Utilities  
**Subject:** **Approve Budget Amendment: 2026 Matthias Tower Coating Project  
-\$54,038 and Lindbergh Standpipe Recoating Project +\$54,038.**

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### BACKGROUND:

The Appleton 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 from the tank floor to approximately 8 feet up. 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.

Although 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. Addressing this condition in a timely manner is important to preserve asset integrity, maintain water quality, and avoid more costly repairs if deterioration were to progress.

This recommendation is also informed by the volume of active 2025 construction projects, which limits operational and staff capacity to effectively support recoating of the Matthias Water Tower as originally planned in the 2026 O&M budget. Resequencing these projects allows staff to better manage workload, coordinate operational impacts, and maintain safe and reliable system performance.

For these reasons, advancing the Lindbergh Standpipe recoating at this time represents a prudent allocation of resources aligned with asset management priorities and current operational constraints.

## **FUNDING SOURCE**

The Lindbergh Standpipe was not identified in the 2026 budget for recoating work. Funding for the Dixon Engineering contract would be supported by the transfer of available funding from the Matthias Tower Coating Project which totals \$580,000.

Separately, the Utilities Committee is being presented with an action item to approve award of the contract to Dixon Engineering for coating related engineering services.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve the following budget amendments to fund the engineering portion of the project:

2026 Matthias Coating Project: -\$54,038

Lindbergh Standpipe Recoating Project: +\$54,038

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

**Encl:** Finance Department Budget Amendment Request Form