

**City Financing (Appleton)
1968-69**

APPLETON LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS POSITION PAPER

CITY FINANCING

Adoption: In April, 1968, we continued our study of local financing of Appleton city government by adoption of "Continued analysis of Appleton city government, its financing and budgeting practices." This was an outgrowth of the emphasis on school budgeting practices the previous year.

Study: October units introduced the study of financing of all city operations. As background, This Is Appleton (financing section) and a glossary of budget terms prepared by the committee served as resource material. Members attended budget hearings and finance committee meetings to further acquaint themselves with the budget process.

Resource material used for March unit meetings, "Analysis of Budgeting and Financing Practices of Appleton City Government," was prepared by the committee. Areas covered in the resource material included definition of a budget, Wisconsin statutory requirements, local ordinances, executive budget, timing, long range capital improvements program, bonding and public referendum on bond issues.

Consensus: Consensus was reached at units held March 24, 25, and 26, 1969.

1. What form of budget do you favor?
 - a. The units favored the executive budget (in principle). The concept of program budgeting was favored as a means of tying expenditures to a meaningful program.
 - b. An executive budget should have a budget message which would clearly define the goals of the administration, and should set priorities based on tax impact and create public understanding of future plans.
 - c. The members favored more consultation with department heads in review of the budget. Cuts should be explained to department heads so that they can have an opportunity to discuss the manner in which programs of their departments will be affected by cuts.
 - d. There should be an adequate hearing before the Finance Committee open to citizens and department heads.
 - e. A complete and accurate budget summary must be published in an understandable fashion, so that citizens as well as aldermen can clearly understand its implications. Expenditures and revenues must be complete and tax levy accurately shown so that citizens can understand the tax impact of all of the services.
2. What steps can be taken to improve the timing of city budget preparation to allow for careful council consideration and citizen participation in the budget process?
 - a. A budget timetable (calendar) should be adopted and adhered to which would result in sufficient time for careful consideration of all stages of budget process.
 - b. The state statutes require that a detailed budget must be available at the time of the publication of the budget summary (ten days in advance of the public hearing). It was felt that this should be the minimum requirement. Members felt that ten days was hardly adequate.
 - c. Copies of a detailed budget must be available to all aldermen and interested citizens (not just one copy available in the city clerk's office).
 - d. Public hearing: School budget and city budget hearings should be held on separate nights. Budget should not be adopted until hearings are completed on both phases. Budget should not be adopted on the same night as public hearings. It was felt that one week should elapse between time of hearings and adoption of budget to allow city council to weigh carefully arguments presented at public hearings.

3. What means would you favor for establishing priorities in local spending?
 - a. Long range plans and goals should be established and tied to a long range capital improvement plan, which should be updated each year and used as a tool in the budget process.
 - b. responsibility for setting goals and priorities should be the combined effort of the elected officials, citizen representatives and professional staff.
4. Should the present bonding policy be changed to establish criteria?

It was felt that state statutes provide broad latitude in bonding. In attempting to establish criteria regarding what could be bonded, it was felt that:

 - a. the life of an improvement should be at least equal to the length of the repayment of the bond;
 - b. ordinary repairs and maintenance and operating costs should not be bonded;
 - c. bonding should be used only for large major projects;
 - d. judicious use of bonding to protect the borrowing power of the city was favored.
5. Do you favor giving the voters a chance to accept or reject bond issues through a public referendum?

No. It was felt that elected officials were given the power to make the necessary decisions on bonding. It was felt that since citizens had the power to initiate referendum by petition, this was an adequate safeguard over excessive bonding.

Action: Copies of our March 10, 1969, resource material were sent to members of the city council and to our contributors after consensus meeting.

In the fall of 1969, League published a brochure, "Happiness Is Understanding the Budget," for public distribution (through the library and supermarkets).

We presented a statement expressing our concerns on budget procedures and financing practices at the public hearing on city budget held before City Council December 1969, November 1970, and December 1971.

In December 1971, a letter was sent to the Mayor protesting the absence of a budget at that late date. The letter was sent in conjunction with ASUW and the Appleton Chamber of Commerce.

In 1969 and 1972 League representatives appeared before the Appleton Finance Committee opposing automatic referendum on bond issues.

APPLETON LOCAL PROGRAM 1968-69

BUDGETING AND FINANCING PRACTICES OF APPLETON

Committee - Minna Weiner - Chairman
Carol Samba Whitman
Jean Koffend
Eileen Haase
Carol Tess
Terri Loveall
Barbara Hoffman
Ginny Rosenberg
Pat Danford

Program - Unit Meetings, October 21,22,23 - March 10,11,12 - March 24,25,26

Resource - "This is Appleton"
Official Directory - City of Appleton
Budget Glossary
Background material published by committee
1969 Budget of Appleton