

To: Finance Committee
CC: Mayor McFarland
From: Mason Becker, Strategic Initiatives and Development Coordinator
Date: June 20, 2023
Re: Local Government Academy

Finance Committee members,

Recently, Mayor McFarland contacted the University of Wisconsin Extension to receive information on a possible Local Government Academy for the City of Watertown. UW Extension offers this program to educate members of the public about the operations of local government, as part of their mission of connecting people throughout the state to the UW system. This program has been conducted in other municipalities and is being offered to communities throughout the state on an ongoing basis.

Following that request, Mayor McFarland and I met with Outreach Specialists from UW Extension, where they laid out the planning and process of the Academy. We requested that they provide a follow-up summary and quote, which is attached to this memo.

We feel this program would be beneficial to the City of Watertown, as it would allow up to 20 local residents to participate in this Academy, with the goal of allowing them to learn about local government operations and departments, become more informed about public participation opportunities, and increasing their personal investment in the City through informed advocacy and civic involvement.

The following document outlines the general format of the Local Government Academy, which would be held in seven separate sessions during the 1st quarter of 2024. I am recommending that the Finance Committee approve funding for this program in the 2024 budget, which will allow us to move forward with planning and coordination with UW Extension. We do also plan to seek other funding sources, which will hopefully help offset the City's portion of the total costs involved. We have already approached the Watertown Area Chamber of Commerce about this, and their Executive Director, Bonnie Hertel, plans to discuss this item with their executive committee in the near future.

Sincerely,



Mason T. Becker
Strategic Initiatives and Development Coordinator