

CITY OF WASHBURN QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

SUMMER 2023



Greetings!

Not long after I was first elected in 2020, I was asked to serve on the Board of Directors for the League of Wisconsin Municipalities (LWM). They were looking for someone in the northern part of the state from a smaller city, so I fit the bill. It was going to be a steep learning curve as a new mayor during the pandemic, but I decided to give it a go.

The LWM advocates for Wisconsin's cities and villages, and provides legal services, training and networking opportunities to members. It was established in 1898 and is a voluntary nonprofit and nonpartisan association.

As a new Board member, I learned that 63% of Wisconsin's 600 cities and villages have populations under 2500. Often times smaller municipalities have a part-time Mayor (like we do in Washburn) which means that most of the time, input is given and decisions are made by larger municipalities and "the smalls" don't get much of a voice on statewide issues.

As I learned about the challenges facing our own city, I also learned a lot about politics and the role that I could play in helping our state legislators understand the challenges facing all of our small communities. From emergency services to housing and transportation, the state's actions directly affect our local decision-making ability. The most important issue rose to the surface of our discussions – shared revenues. The formula for the state to share revenues with local governments to help fund basic services like street maintenance and snow plowing, police and fire protection, garbage collection, libraries, parks, recreation, zoning and planning, and public transportation, was broken. Our portion of shared revenues had not only stagnated, it had actually decreased over the last 20 years. In the meanwhile, we've had to cut staff and services to the point where we are barely able to maintain status quo for core services and actually had to cut our recreation program all together. We were not alone in this situation. All local governments were suffering to the point where it could no longer be ignored. The time was ripe for bipartisan legislation and cooperation between the legislative leaders and the Governor to do something good for all citizens of Wisconsin – together.



I'm glad that I was able to play a small role in having our voice heard and to work with legislative staff at the League to get this historical legislation over the finish line. I was proud to represent the City of Washburn as the Governor signed the bill into law. Three years have gone by quickly and my term on the LWM Board is coming to a close in late October. With an extra \$125,000 in the budget for next year, we'll be able to do a few things that are necessary. Now that shared revenues are tied to the state's sales tax revenues, that amount should grow as our economy grows. Those three years were time well spent.

Enjoy summer!

-Mayor Mary Motiff

CITY HALL: 715-373-6160

WWW.CITYOFWASHBURN.ORG

WASHBURNMAYOR@GMAIL.COM

Revaluation of Property Assessment

This year, the City of Washburn is required by the Department of Revenue to complete a revaluation of property assessments. Assessor Kitt Koski of Bowmar Appraisal, Inc. will be in the City of Washburn performing sales reviews from the middle of June thru July. He will also be doing a drive by review of all other improved properties July/August. Kitt will wear a name badge and also carry an identification letter.

Since the last full revaluation in 2006 many factors including inflation, remodeling, and market changes have altered values of most properties in the City. The purpose of the revaluation is to equalize the assessed values to insure a fair and equitable distribution of the tax burden. The assessments will represent an estimate of market value that is based on an analysis of recent sales. The assessor does not create a value; people set the value by their transactions in the marketplace. The assessor has the legal responsibility to study those transactions and appraise property based on such transactions. Valuation is based on many factors such as location, size, quality, condition, age and so on.

A new tax rate for the City of Washburn has not yet been established. While the assessments are bound to rise, that does not necessarily mean that property taxes will increase. The City will not get additional revenue because of the revaluation. Property taxes for the City are only allowed to increase by the rate of the new construction each year which historically has been less than one percent.



Some property taxpayers may see a decrease, while others may see an increase because of the revaluation. The revaluation provides an updated comparison as to how your property is valued to other properties.

Assessment notices will be mailed out around the middle of September. If you have any questions for the assessor, please call 715-577- 1875.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation during this required process. The City and the Assessor will work to answer your questions as this process moves forward.

Washburn Waterworks Consumer Confidence Report

The 2022 Consumer Confidence Report for the City of Washburn water supply is available to read at City Hall or the Library.

You can also find it online:
www.cityofwashburn.org/public-works--utilities



Visible Address ??

Is your home address visible from the street, either on the house or driveway? Every minute counts when you dial 911 and emergency services need to find you day or late at night.



Save your drain from FOG!

Fats, Oils, and Grease can block your pipes at home and cause issues in the Sewer.



Washburn City Hall, 119 Washington Ave.
(715) 373-6160 - cityofwashburn.org