

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Town of Washington

Door County

Notice is hereby given that the Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin will hold a Public Hearing on the Town's proposed 2024 budget on Monday, November 29, 2023, at 6:00 PM, at the Washington Island Community Center, 910 Main Road, Washington Island, WI. Immediately following the Public Hearing, a Special Town Elector Meeting will be held to approve the 2023 total town tax levy to be collected in 2024. The proposed budget in detail is available for inspection on the Town's website at www.washingtonisland-wi.gov and at the Town Office.

MINUTES

PUBLIC HEARING ON TOWN'S PROPOSED 2024 BUDGET

1. The public hearing on the town's proposed 2024 budget was called to order by Town Chairman Hans Lux at 6:00 PM.
2. Chairman Lux led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Chairman Lux opened the meeting stating that he spoke from the head and the heart last meeting, and that's why his opening comments were long. He assured the residents that their concerns were heard; that the increase was too much, and that there was a lack of support for hiring a third police officer. The board adjusted the budget and removed the funding for the third officer, removed \$50,000 in capital outlay from the fire department, and \$50,000 from capital outlay for the roads. Those adjustments now decreased the increase by about half. The amount the mill rate would increase by is \$0.69. Chairman Lux then opened the floor to comments.
4. Richard Tobey explained that the state only allows municipalities to increase their tax base by very small increments, so that it was reasonable for the town to ask for a levy limit increase. He pointed out that the capital accounts have shown the most growth over the past 5 years. The town is now accruing a healthy balance of unassigned and assigned funds, which is an improvement from 5 years ago. Tobey also noted that the increases in the proposed 2024 budget were mostly in wages, fringes, public safety, and capital accrual. However, he questioned how much more of an escalation was needed to fund those capital projects.
5. Doug Hansen asked what the major increases in the fire and EMR budgets was for. Chairman Lux explained that this was the first time that all the needs of operating a fire and EMR department were accounted for in a detailed budget. He explained that in the past, Fire Inc had been paying for many operational expenses, but that they were no longer able to fund those day-to-day purchases, and that was part of the increase. He assured Doug that the board spent a lot of time scrutinizing the proposed budget and worked with the fire department to determine those costs for the future. Chairman Lux relayed that the board's goal was to limit borrowing, and to not practice deficit spending.

6. Fire Chief Peter Nehlsen gave several examples of new standards the federal government has placed on local fire departments, and how those new requirements end up costing a large amount of money. He used the example that because of increasing cancer rates among fire fighters, all equipment exposed to smoke must be cleaned and certified. He also cited the reduction of donations from Fire Inc as reason for the increase in the expenditure line items. Chief Nehlsen also pointed out that the Coast Guard has limited personnel and is not able to respond to as many water rescues, so that responsibility has fallen to the fire department. He described the responsibility that he must relay to the state that he is “substantially” in compliance with state and federal standards.
7. Keith Mann made a statement that he felt sad that his community was in dysfunction, and that he did not believe decaying infrastructure or high rates of crime were reflective of his island. He thanked the town office and Supervisor Margaret Foss for helping him understand the budget, but that he felt the budget was not based on truth or honesty.
8. Tobey again took the microphone and went through the budget to explain where the increases were in more detail.
9. Will Herschberger stated that himself and his father had been in the fire department for many years, and asked when the need for more and more was going to stop, and that the board needed to draw a line.
10. Adam Steffen stated that it took an entire year to begin drafting a budget that would put the fire department back on track to be compliant with state and federal standards. He cited the need for tire replacement, and a health and safety officer, as new mandates that increase the cost of running a department. He warned that if there wasn’t change, that eventually the department could be shut down. He asked for the support of his fellow residents in voting yes to think of the benefit of maintaining the department for the children and future of the island.
11. Deb Wisnewski shared her story of experiencing a fire last year, and how kind and capable the fire fighters were in responding to her emergency. She said she almost lost her home, but that it was saved thanks to the quick action of the fire department. She stated that the department wasn’t asking for too much, and that she trusted them in their decisions for what they needed to be safe and effective.
12. Lisa Pickens asked the board if there was an opportunity to increase fees in ways other than a tax levy increase. The board responded that they were looking at increased user, license, and permit fees.
13. Jeffrey Andersen asked if the budget did not pass, where the cuts would be taken from. Chairman Lux said that the budget may not be balanced, and that perhaps a deficit could occur. He stated that they board would do the best they could with what they had but that they truly cared about the community and believed that this was the best course of action to care for the future of the island. He thanked all the residents for attending.
14. After all residents who wanted to make statements were able, Chairman Lux closed public comment.
15. Chairman Lux adjourned the public hearing at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alexandria McDonald, Clerk/Treasurer

Hans Lux, Chairman

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Town of Washington

Door County

Notice is hereby given that a special town meeting of the electors of the Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin will be held at the Community Center located at 910 Main Road, Washington Island, Wisconsin, on the 29 day of November, 2023, immediately following the completion of the Public Hearing on the proposed 2024 town budget, which begins at 6 PM, for the following purposes:

1. To consider the adoption of a resolution by the electors at the town meeting endorsing a town board resolution which proposes that the town levy exceed the state allowable levy limit under Wis. Stat. § 66.0602, specifically a proposed tax levy which would exceed the allowable town tax levy for 2023, by 12.570 %, for a dollar increase of \$208,077.
2. To approve the 2023 total town tax levy (to be collected in 2024), pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 60.10(1)(a).

A Special Town Board Meeting will be held immediately following the completion of the Special Town Meeting of Electors.

MINUTES

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING OF ELECTORS

1. Chairman Lux called the Special Town Meeting of Electors to order.
2. Voting to approve Resolution 2023-06 and Resolution 2023-07 began at 7:00 and ended at 7:15 PM.
3. Clerk/Treasurer Alexandria McDonald and Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Janet Jorgenson collected the ballots and tallied the votes.
4. Resolution 2023-09 passed by 53 ayes to 36 nays, with 1 abstaining.
5. Resolution 2023-10 passed by 56 ayes to 34 nays.
6. Chairman Lux adjourned the meeting at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alexandria McDonald, Clerk/Treasurer

Hans Lux, Chairman

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Town of Washington

Door County

The Town Board of the Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin, hereby provides its written notice and agenda of the public meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Washington for November 29, 2023, immediately following the Special Town Meeting of the Electors per Department of Justice guidelines. This meeting will be held in the Washington Island Community Center. The town chairperson, or a designee has provided communication of this public meeting to the requisite news media, if any.

MINUTES

SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING

1. Chairman Lux called the Special Town Board Meeting to order at 7:40 PM.
2. Roll Call/Quorum and Approval of Agenda of the Special Town Board Meeting
 - a. In addition to Chairman Lux, Supervisors present included Martin Andersen, Margaret Foss, Larry Kahlscheuer, and Loren Roznai.
 - b. Motion by Kahlscheuer seconded by Roznai to approve the agenda.
3. Specific matters for discussion and possible action by town board in open session:
 - a. Discussion of 2024 Budget
 - b. Adoption of 2024 Budget
 - i. Motion by Andersen seconded by Kahlscheuer to adopt the 2024 budget.
Motion carried.
4. Specific matters intended for discussion and possible action by town board for closed session under one or more of the below-noted closed session exemptions and reasons that allow for closed session:
 - a. Closed session as authorized under section 19.85(1)(f) Considering preliminary consideration of specific personnel problems which, if discussed in public, would be likely to have a substantial adverse effect upon the reputation of any person in such problems.
 - b. Motion by Andersen seconded by Foss to move to closed. Motion carried upon roll call vote; all ayes. Moved to closed session at 7:50 PM.
5. Specific matters intended for discussion and possible action by town board for reconvened open session.
 - a. Motion by Andersen seconded by Foss to move to open session. Motion carried upon roll call vote; all ayes. Moved to open session at 8:22 PM.
 - i. No action.
6. Future meeting(s) agenda(s) discussion(s) and/or possible action(s) on future town board meeting(s), including specific items for inclusion on or exclusion from future agenda(s)
 - a. Regular Town Board Meeting – Wednesday, December 20, 2023, at 6 PM
7. Motion by Andersen seconded by Foss to adjourn. Motion carried. Adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alexandria McDonald, Clerk/Treasurer

Hans Lux, Chairman