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Happy Holidays!

Village offices will be closed on Friday, December 22 and Monday, December 25 in honor of the Christmas Holiday. Village offices will reopen on December 26 for regular business hours. **There will be no garbage collection on December 25, and it will resume on December 26, with pick-ups delayed by one day throughout the week.**

Village offices will also be closed on Friday, December 29 and Monday, January 1 in honor of the New Year's Holiday. Village offices will reopen on January 2 for regular business hours. **There will be no garbage collection on January 1, and it will resume on January 2, with pick-ups delayed by one day throughout the week.**

RecPlex will be **closed** on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. ☐

NIXLE

The best way to be prepared is to sign up before an emergency occurs. In order to receive emergency text messages on your smart phone, text "53158" to 888777 or visit NIXLE.com.

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Photographed by Carolyn Gage, Carol Beach Lakefront

2018 General Government Budget

The General Government Budget helps determine how many dollars our community needs to collect in property taxes (the tax levy) to provide municipal services. Department heads work with the Village Administrator to revise budgets to meet public service expectations. The Village Board reviews and questions the proposed budgets and may request modifications. The Board holds the ultimate responsibility for approving, modifying or rejecting the budget.

Impact on Property Taxes

In November, the Pleasant Prairie Village Board considered and approved the 2018 General Government Budget. As a result of the approved budget, the municipal tax levy will increase 3.4% from \$11,484,813 in 2017 to \$11,883,254 in 2018, an increase of \$398,441. Due to a slight increased value of the Village (the total assessed value is now about \$3.16 billion), the mill rate will only increase 3.06% from \$4.46 to \$4.59. Pleasant Prairie receives approximately 21% of a resident's total

property tax payment. The median value of a home in the Village stayed the same at \$205,400 for this budget cycle. This will equate to the Village receiving \$943.85 from the median valued household to cover the expense of providing services during 2018, an increase of approximately \$28.03. The services covered generally include: assessing, building inspection, community development/planning, elections, engineering, finance, fire and paramedics, human resources, police, road improvements, and snow plowing.

Where Money will be Directed

The 2018 budget includes an addition of two police officers and one fire medic. Capital purchases includes \$1.5 million for road improvements, \$888,385 for a rescue pumper fire engine, \$307,103 to replace a 2008 ambulance, and \$280,000 for completion of the dark fiber communication ring.

One-Time Expenses

The Village has built cash reserves and with over 30% in reserves the Village can use these funds for one-time expenses. During 2018, \$187,800 will be used for

one-time projects. These projects are not limited to, but include:

Communication stability	\$45,000
Paint Roger Prange CTR	\$35,000
Parks and Open Space Plan	\$20,000
IT Infrastructure	\$12,000
E-Poll Books	\$10,000
Evidence Room Renovation	\$10,000
Prange Overhead Doors	\$10,000
Prange Flooring	\$10,000

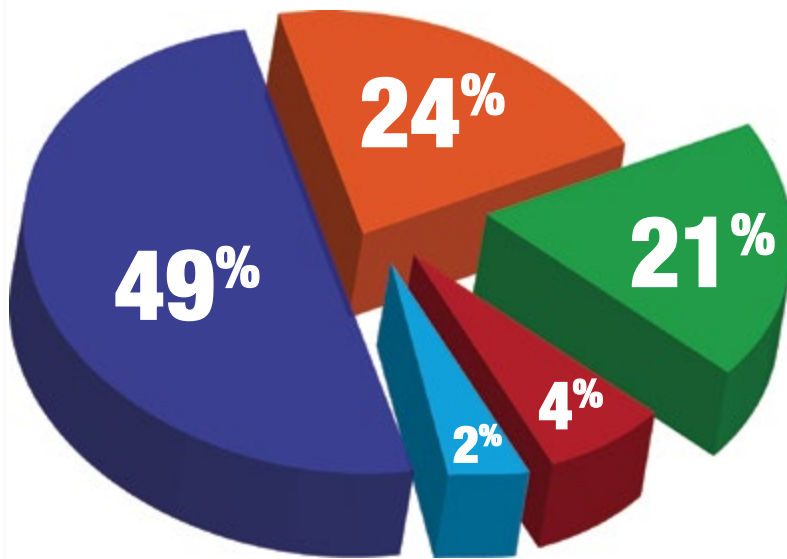
Property Tax and Levy Limits

When setting the property tax levy, the Village works within a limit set by the State. This levy limit allows communities to increase their property tax levy in order to account for borrowing for capital expenditures and for new growth that occurs in the community. Municipalities have a one-time opportunity to increase their property tax levy to fully accommodate the additional services that will be provided to a new development and serve the larger demand for municipal services. The Village experienced 2.5% growth in new construction to increase the levy for the 2018 budget.



A great place to live, work & play!

Where Does Your Property Tax Payment Go



- Kenosha Unified School District will receive 49% of your tax payment.**
- Kenosha County will receive 24% of your tax payment.**
- The Village will receive 21% of your tax payment.**
- Gateway Technical College will receive 4% of your tax payment.**
- The Library will receive 2% of your tax payment.**

What Happens to the 21%

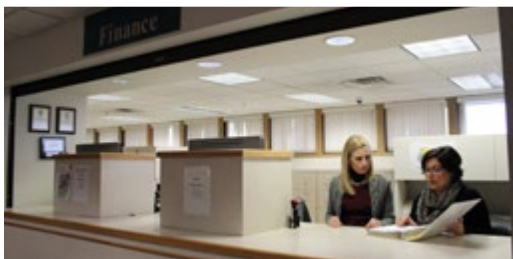
The majority of 2018 budget dollars (approximately 69%) will be used to provide public safety services, such as police, fire and rescue, and public works services, such as snow plowing, road maintenance, and similar work. The remaining amount (roughly 31%) will be used to: pay down existing debt, finance General Government's day-to-day operations, operate a Community Development Department, and maintain the Village parks. Percentages* for each area are shown below.



49% will be invested in public safety services, including police, fire and rescue



20% will be invested in public works services, such as snow plowing, road maintenance and similar work



8% will be used to pay down existing debt, and another 18% will be used for general government operations



5% will be used for the Community Development Department and the Village parks system

*Percentages are rounded.

2018 Capital Projects and Expenses

Department/Program	Cost	Project
Paving program	\$1,499,000	Paving projects on portions of: Foxmoor, Foxmoor/Rambling Trails/Countryside Est., Park Dr., 93 rd St., Old Green Bay Rd., Harrison/49 th , 50 th , 52 nd , 51 st Ave, Piche, and 48 th Ave
Fire & Rescue	\$1,303,544	Rescue pumper fire engine, an automobile, four door pick-up truck, Station 2 building maintenance, and an ambulance
Information technology	\$341,000	Information technology, enterprise software, and data center projects
Police	\$181,328	Vehicle fleet replacement and automatic license plate recognition
Roads	\$65,000	Transportation plan
Roger Prange	\$35,000	LED lighting upgrade
Parks	\$30,000	Replace trees infected with the emerald ash borer that are not responding to treatment
Street Lighting	\$20,000	Existing Roger Prange Center parking lot LED upgrade

Government Departments

General Government Departments receive income from property taxes, borrowing general obligation debt, grants, impact and other fees, the resale of capital equipment and donations. The funds received are used to cover operating expenses, capital purchases or projects, and to pay down general government debt.

These departments include:

Police	Municipal Court
Fire & Rescue	Public Safety Communications
Public Works	Parks
Engineering	Building Inspection
Assessing	Information Technology
Finance	Human Resources
Administration	Community Development

General Government Debt

Outstanding debt at the end of 2017 will be \$10.5 million after paying off \$1.5 million in 2017 and borrowing \$512,000 for road maintenance and refinancing. At the end of 2018, outstanding debt will be at \$10.4 million, after paying \$1,497,000 and borrowing \$1.45 million in 2018 for a rescue pumper fire engine, ambulance, and finishing the fiber ring. □

The FNA Group

Site and Operational Plans

On November 13, the Pleasant Prairie Plan Commission approved **site and operational plans** for the FNA Group to occupy 60,256 square feet of a building located at 9505 72nd Avenue. This will be used for an expansion of their manufacturing and assembling of high pressure cleaners in the site they currently occupy, just to the south of this new location.

FNA Group is a world class manufacturer of high pressure cleaners, hoses and accessories for consumer and professional markets. They produce products under the following brands; Simpson, Delco and OEM manufacture for MTD, Fastenal, and Dewalt.

The expansion area will staff FNA engineering research and development (R&D) and application engineering teams. Twenty percent of the building will be dedicated to R&D and prototyping. Currently the FNA group employs 125 employees at the Pleasant Prairie location and this expansion will allow for the hiring of **40 new full-time employees** working on first shift. There will be 85 parking spaces, four of which will be handicapped accessible. The average number of truck trips to the site will be eight per day with a maximum of twelve trips. Delivery hours will be limited to 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. □

Prairie Produce Farm LLC Master Conceptual Plan



As part of a public hearing on Monday, November 27, the Pleasant Prairie Plan Commission considered and recommended for approval both the amendment of the Village Comprehensive Plan (Greenhill Farm Neighborhood Plan) and a Master Conceptual Plan for the **Prairie Produce Farm LLC** at the request of Jim Hershenbach. Prairie Produce

Farm intends to purchase property for a 35-acre Dutch-style hydroponic greenhouse, which will be located west of 122nd Street and east of 88th Avenue, with access to the site from the south at 128th Street. The produce will be sold to local grocers, distribution centers and institutional suppliers. The facility will employ **30-40 full-time employees** working two shifts, seven days a week. Delivery hours will be from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm with an average of one truck trip daily, and the facility will not be open to the public.

This will be the **first state of the art hydroponic greenhouse in Wisconsin**, and will be based on technology and business processes from sister companies DeFresco Produce and Sunrite Greenhouses in Ontario, Canada. The facility will require water and minimal nutrients for the **closed loop hydroponic grow systems**. There will be no run off and the primary by-products are oxygen and composted plant trimmings. Natural gas is used for night time heating with exhaust being fed to plants. Electricity will be used for auxiliary grow lights. The facility will use one-third the energy, one-quarter of the nutrients and one-tenth the water used by comparable field grown produce. The development will be completed in two phases. Phase one will include a 15.3 acre greenhouse and attached 30,000 square foot support building, quality assurance lab offices, and a caretaker's apartment. There will be no retail sales or outlet facilities operated from the farm site. Phase two is projected to begin in 2020 or when market conditions allow, and will include an additional 20 acres of greenhouse. The Village Board approved the Master Conceptual Plan documents at the December 4 meeting. □

The Gateway at LakeView Master Conceptual Plan

As part of a public hearing on Monday, November 27, the Pleasant Prairie Plan Commission approved an amendment to the Village Comprehensive Plan requested by Mark Eberle, P.E. with Nielsen, Madsen & Barber on behalf of Wispark LLC, for property located north of STH 165 along 120th Avenue (East Frontage Road). This amendment will change the land use designation, so the two vacant properties totaling 34.11 acres can be used for commercial-freeway oriented businesses. This change will allow for a future Development known as **The Gateway at LakeView Corporate Park, which will include restaurants, a gas station, convenience store, hotel, multi-tenant retail buildings and a corporate campus**. At this time, no specific businesses have been identified, but detailed Site and Operational Plans will be required as sites are proposed to be developed. These plans will include site plans, drainage and grading plans and documents for each individual site. A Certified Survey Map will be required to show any additional dedicated right-of-way, proposed land division of the property and all easements, dedications and restrictive covenants.

In order to accommodate the driveway separation spacing for the sites, a reduction of the speed limit from 40 mph to 30 mph is being discussed with the Wisconsin Department of



Transportation (WI DOT). Each business will be required to have a Digital Security Imaging System (DSIS) Agreement and Access Easement for public safety. A new sanitary sewer lift station will be constructed in 2019 to accommodate this development, and vacant land west of the Des Plaines River, between CTH C and the State Line including lands west of I-94 in Pleasant Prairie and Bristol.

The Plan Commission also sent a favorable recommendation to the Village Board to approve the Comprehensive Plan amendment and the Master Conceptual Plan for The Gateway at LakeView Corporate Park development at an upcoming Board meeting. □

Dark Store Loophole Could Cause Tax Increase of 17%



The Issue

The Dark Store strategy is a tax loophole being used by big box retailers and other national chains to lower the amount they pay in property taxes. They argue that the market value of their thriving store should be based on the sales of similar size, comparable properties that are vacant and abandoned like the vacant property pictured above. This means a fully operational store is paying the same property taxes as a “dark” abandoned, closed store. Property tax attorneys have been convincing retailers to seek assessed values for their properties that are sometimes half the cost that was paid to acquire the land or construct their buildings. Every time a big box retailer gets a dark store tax break, homeowners, small businesses and other property owners have to pick up a greater share of the property tax levy. The Village is working with the League of Wisconsin Municipalities to bring attention to this issue.

Senate Bill 291 closes a gap in Wisconsin’s property assessment laws that allow single tenant commercial properties, like Walgreens and CVS, to argue that the value of their property is not what it appears to be. As a result of a 2008 Supreme Court ruling, chain drug stores have been paying taxes on their properties in Wisconsin at half their actual fair market selling price; a discount unavailable to residential and locally owned commercial properties.

Senate Bill 292 nullifies a related but different tax avoidance tactic. National big box retail chains and other commercial property owners are challenging their assessed values using the “Dark Store Strategy” to argue that their thriving business locations must be assessed for tax purposes as though they were a vacant, abandoned property. The Indiana legislature and Michigan courts have recently invalidated the dark store theory in those states. SB 292 makes it clear that the Dark Store loophole is closed in Wisconsin.

You Should Know

Local officials want the Wisconsin State Legislature to pass the **Dark Store (SB 292)** and **Walgreens reversal (SB 291)** bills.

“There is overwhelming legislative and public support to pass both of these proposals. I urge leaders of the State Senate and Assembly to schedule a floor vote in their respective bodies” said Village President Steinbrink. *“There is such broad bipartisan support everyone is confident these proposals will garner near unanimous approval if they’re allowed to be voted upon.”*

Public hearings have been held in both houses. A senate committee has unanimously recommended passage of both bills. The Senate needs to **schedule a vote in January**. There is concern that another January 1, assessment date, is approaching without a dark store correction in place.

If our legislature does not pass the two proposals addressing these property tax loopholes, there is a potential for large property tax increases for owners of homes and business property. Certain types of commercial property have had success throughout Wisconsin using these strategies in court to reduce their assessment by about one half. Because of strong economic development, Pleasant Prairie has an abundance of these types of good quality investment grade properties. If they succeed in attaining reduced values of up to 50%, their portion of the property tax is then shifted to everyone else and amounts to a 17% increase for homeowners, local business owners, and manufacturers.

What Can Be Done

Most importantly you can take action by contacting your legislators and **encourage them to bring the Dark Store bills to a vote during this legislative session**. It is important that you are informed and are an advocate, so this issue is not ignored and the bills don’t just go away.

This article was generated with content from the League of Wisconsin Municipalities (LWM). Visit the LWM website to learn more and be informed about this issue that affects all businesses and residents in the Village and throughout the State of Wisconsin: <https://www.lwm-info.org>. □

Holiday Tree Drop-Off Sites



Sites will be open for Village residents from December 26 - January 31. Drop your holiday tree inside the fenced area. Only trees are accepted.

Remove all wreaths, garland, lights, ornaments, tree bags, stands, nails and other metal objects. Following these guidelines will prevent damage to the chipping machine and help keep costs lower for all residents. Sites are located at: **Village Hall** (9915 39th Avenue); **Pleasant Prairie Park** (Bain Station Road and 104th Avenue); **Carol Beach Park** (111th Street and 10th Avenue); **Ingram Park** (93rd Street and 57th Avenue); and at the **Residential Recycling Center** (Saturdays only from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at 8000 128th Street). ☐

2018 Village Calendar

The 2018 Village Calendar and Resource Directory should have arrived in your mailbox. If you did not receive a calendar in the mail, extra copies are available at Village Hall (9915 39th Avenue) or the Roger Prange Center (8600 Green Bay Road) while supplies last.

New Year, New You!
RecPlex Membership SPECIAL
Jan. 2 - Jan. 8
SAVE OVER \$300!

No Facility Fee
Free Tanning
10 Guest Passes

1 Personal Training Starter Session & FREE Gift!

9900 Terwall Terrace
Pleasant Prairie, WI 53158

recplexonline.com
262-947-0437

E-Newsletter: If you are interested in receiving the email version of the Village Newsletter, visit PleasantPrairieOnline.com and enter your email address in the box near the bottom of the page. You can choose to opt off the paper mailing list by emailing newsletter@plprairie.com. Include your name and postal mailing address along with the words "email only." ☐

Pleasant Prairie Convention and Visitors Bureau



The Pleasant Prairie Village Board approved an ordinance amendment which set into motion the process to create the **Pleasant Prairie Convention and Visitors Bureau (PPCVB)**. The formation of the PPCVB is in its early stages, with work still to be done.

Wisconsin Statutes, establishes a hotel/motel room tax at the rate of 8% of the gross receipts for lodging facilities. Currently 90% of all hotel/motel room tax revenues collected must be paid to a sanctioned convention and visitor's nonprofit entity. The average amount paid out has been \$550,000 per year. With the action taken by the Village Board, a Village Travel and Tourism Fund, to be financed by the allocation and distribution of Village hotel/motel tax revenues has been created.

With the Village Board approval, the hotel/motel room tax revenues will be used to establish and perpetuate a Pleasant Prairie Convention and Visitors Bureau, which shall use these revenues to promote tourism and to attract conventions and related activities to the Village. The Village Board understands it has the fiduciary responsibility to support tax paying businesses in the Village, to further promote those entities and foster Village related tourism. The statutes require the establishment of a separate board of directors to oversee the operation of this nonprofit entity.

As a community with continued growth, the Village believes it's time to forge ahead with its own CVB to market, promote and showcase the Village and its amenities including, programs and special events at RecPlex which is the largest municipal recreation center in the U.S., Premium Outlets shopping center, businesses in the Prairie Ridge development along Highway 50, as well as the many businesses in Pleasant Prairie, both large and small. □

Historical Society Color Wheels and Aluminum Trees

Originally produced by Modern Coatings, Inc. of Chicago and displayed in a Chicago Ben Franklin store, engineers at the Aluminum Specialty Company in Manitowoc, WI developed the Evergleam, the first massed-produced **aluminum tree** on the market. Aluminum Specialties became the largest manufacturer of these trees with sales peaking in 1964-1965. During the height of its era, Specialties sold over one million Evergleams. Advertising the trees as a simple and easy-to-use decoration, the aluminum trees also provided a modern, Space Age look that appealed to consumers at the time.



Aluminum trees were produced in a variety of sizes and colors, with pink being the rarest and silver the most common. **Color wheels**, like the one pictured to the left that was recently donated by a local family to the Pleasant Prairie Historical Society, were often used to illuminate and change the color of aluminum Christmas Trees.

A multi-colored wheel was mounted in front of a spotlight and would rotate around changing the color of the tree every few seconds. Color wheels typically had three or four colored lenses, included blue, green, gold and red. Color wheels came in several varieties, with plastic cases, metal cases, glass wheels, plastic wheels or a combination of these. Most color wheels were intended to be mounted on the floor, however some could be mounted on the wall. The main companies that sold color wheels and tree turners were Spartus, Penetray (as pictured above) and Holly Time.

By the 1970s the production and sales of aluminum trees and subsequently color wheels decreased with Aluminum Specialty stopping their tree production in 1972. The downfall of aluminum trees is often attributed to criticism during the mid-1960s. The silver trees were seen as representations of the over commercialization of Christmas as evidenced in the Charlie Brown Christmas (1965) when Lucy tells Charlie Brown that she wanted the biggest aluminum tree he could find, maybe even pink. However, Charlie Brown opts for the less desired sapling representing what Christmas means to him.

To donate a historical object to the Pleasant Prairie Historical Society, please contact Jean Werbie-Harris at (262) 947-3600 or email historicalsociety@plprairie.org. □