



EAU CLAIRE COUNTY, WISCONSIN
5750 Old Town Hall Road ♦ Eau Claire WI 54701
(715)834-3257 ♦ Fax (715)834-3325 ♦ <https://townofwashington.wi.gov>

TOWN OF WASHINGTON NEWSLETTER

Vol. 45 No. 2 ~ December 2023

A Note from the Town Chair

So far this year the Town of Washington has lost 553 acres to annexation by the cities of Eau Claire and Altoona. The largest of the annexations was 438 acres by the city of Eau Claire, of what has been known as Orchard Hills. The first annexation of Orchard Hills began in 2022 and was successfully challenged by the Town. A second petition for annexation of Orchard Hill was submitted earlier this year by a different method (Annexation by Half Approval). The Town felt that this annexation had some flaws and again has submitted a legal challenge. As of this writing, that challenge is still pending and limits what the Town Board can share.

The takeaway from this brief history is that when we border two of the fastest growing cities in the state, the annexation activity will continue. And when we believe that the methods are questionable, we will submit a legal challenge. Unfortunately, state law often leaves us few options to protest. I believe managing the annexation activity will be one of the Town's biggest challenges going forward.

But despite losing property to the cities, the Town is in good financial condition. When I was first elected as a town supervisor in 2018, I was very impressed by just how effectively the town finances were managed. For this, we need to credit the excellent town staff and previous Town leadership. The Town has no debt. We also contribute to several funds in anticipation of future capital expenditures. For example, we have an Equipment Fund, so when it comes time to replace a plow truck or a skid steer, we have the cash on hand to pay for it without having to borrow.

Certainly, there will be future financial challenges as the costs rise, just as they have for most everyone. In spite of this, I'm confident that the Town will continue to be good stewards of your tax dollars.

Broadband Update

Contractors for Charter Spectrum have been laying underground cable in many parts of the Town right-of-way. The Spectrum broadband grant, funded by the Wisconsin PSC, the Town, and the County, has an expected completion date of December 2024. We would like to thank Marshfield Clinic for contributing \$10,000 to this project.

Charter will begin notifying customers when the underground work is complete. A fiber connection will be run to the home at the time the customer orders service.



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Tax Collection

The 2023 tax bills will be mailed out near December 8.

Options for Submitting Tax Payments:

Drop Box: A 24 hour secure drop box is located just outside our front entrance; include your payment stub.

US Postal Service: Mail your payment to our office; include the payment stub from your bill

Pay Online: By credit card/debit card; convenience fees are applied - go to townofwashington.wi.gov; click Pay Online at the top of the home page—ONLY available for Town of Washington parcels

In-Person Collection:

Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM beginning December 11

December 22 Closed at Noon

December 25 Closed

January 1 Closed

- 1st installment (or full payment) is due by January 31, 2024 to the Town of Washington.
- Receipts will only be mailed to you if a self-addressed stamped envelope is included with your payment. You can view or print a copy of your receipt by going to the Eau Claire County website at <http://eauclairecowi.wgxtreme.com> - then type in your last name and/or address.
- Checks are deposited on the date received. All returned checks will be charged a \$35 service fee.
- **Do not included payment of dog licenses on the same check as your tax bill**; a separate check is required.
- If you have delinquent taxes, they can only be paid to the Eau Claire County Treasurer's Office.

The Town of Washington collects all real estate taxes that are due and distributes them to the separate taxing jurisdictions. Your bill includes taxes that are payable to the school district you reside in, Eau Claire County, the Town of Washington, the Chippewa Valley Technical College, and a small portion of our residents pay into the Lake Altoona District if they live in that district.

Breakdown of your tax bill according to the school district you live in by percentage:

<u>EC Area School Dist</u>	<u>Alt Area School Dist</u>	<u>Alt Area School Dist & Lake Dist</u>	<u>FC Area School Dist</u>
School Dist - 54.13%	School Dist - 55.52%	School Dist. - 45.76%	School Dist. - 58.75%
1 school referendum until 2031	EC County - 29.97%	EC County - 24.71%	1 school referendum until 2038
1 school referendum until 2042	Town - 9.06%	Lake Dist - 17.57%	EC County - 27.79%
EC County - 30.91%	CVTC - 5.45%	Town - 7.47%	Town - 8.40 %
Town - 9.34%	1 CVTC referendum until 2040	CVTC - 4.49%	CVTC - 5.05%
CVTC - 5.62%		1 CVTC referendum until 2040	1 CVTC referendum until 2040
1 CVTC referendum until 2040			

There are also credits from the State that are applied on your tax bill. One is called the first dollar credit and, if you have lived in your home as of January 1st, you should also have a lottery credit.

There are two separate special charges that are placed on your tax bill from Eau Claire County. If you have any questions regarding these special charges, contact Eau Claire County. For the SC Sewage charge call 715-839-4718 and for the SC Recycling charge call 715-839-2756.

Dog Licenses & Animal Regulations

A courtesy postcard will soon be mailed to those who licensed their dog(s) with the Town of Washington last year. Dog owners that are new to the Town of Washington should license their dog by January 1. Applications are on our website (under How Do I tab) or at the Town Office; you must provide written proof of vaccination against rabies from your vet. **If you no longer have a dog in the Town, let us know so we can remove them from our list.**

The Town does not require cats to be licensed however, you can be issued a citation if your cat is at-large. To report obsessive barking, animals at large, biting, an animal being mistreated, or a vicious animal; call the Eau Claire Communication Center at 715-839-4972. A humane officer will not be dispatched to pick up a dog or cat at-large unless the animal has first been contained.

2024 Dog License
Spayed/Neutered - \$15
Unaltered - \$25

(If sent with tax payment,
a separate check is required)



Winter Regulations and Reminders

School bus routes and hills are always given first priority. The larger the snowfall, the more time it takes to plow; we encourage you to be patient. When possible, our drivers begin their routes in the middle of the night before commuters and school buses are on the road; however, depending on the timing of the snowfall this is not always possible. The Town Road Department plows over 200 lane miles of roads after a snow fall. Our drivers will periodically push back snow farther off the road into the right-of-way to make room for additional snow.

If you live on a County road within the Town of Washington, your road is plowed by the County. Any questions or concerns should be directed to the Eau Claire County Highway Department at 715-839-2952. County Roads within the Town include: E & W Beaver Creek Road, Chickadee Road, Deerfield Road, E & W Lowes Creek Road, Mathwig Road, part of Mayer Road, Nine Mile Creek Road, Otter Creek Road, and State Street.

GARBAGE & RECYCLING

- Garbage and recycling receptacles and bins are only allowed at the edge of your yard or driveway on your collection day and should be at least 5 feet off the road, in your driveway, or yard. They are **never** allowed on the shoulder of the road, across the road from your residence or in a cul-de-sac.
- For safety reasons, if your receptacles or bins are an obstacle during plowing operations, our drivers will not exit their truck to move them.

PARKING

- No vehicles are allowed to park on roads during and 24 hours after a snowfall.
- We do not have Odd/Even Parking.
- In the event of a snow emergency **NO PARKING** on the road for 48 hours.
- Violators will be ticketed by the Eau Claire County Sheriff's Department.
- Vehicles that present an obstruction and are not removed will be towed.

PLOWING & SIDEWALKS

- Snow you remove must remain on your property. Depositing snow back onto the roadway or across the road when plowing your driveway or parking lot is not only unsafe - it is illegal.
- Snow and/or ice must be cleared from sidewalks on your property within 24 hrs. from the time snow ceases to accumulate.



Tentative 2024 Road Projects

Roads to be Paved:

Schumacher Road (Hobbs to S Elco +1825) Maplewood Court
Hobbs Road

Road Seal Projects:

Chip Seal — Elm Road

All projects are subject to bids and approval by the Town Board



2023 Road Projects Recap



Repaved Kern Drive



Repaved S. Hubbard Drive

Reconditioned and Pave Roads

S. Hubbard Drive Kern Drive S. Hastings Way *(joint project with City of Eau Claire)*
N. Hubbard Drive Davis Drive

Chip Seal Roads:

Schumacher Road, Markgraff Road, Wenzel Drive, Howard Drive, and Beulah Lane

Elections

We encourage residents to obtain information regarding voting and elections only from our office or the Wisconsin Election Commission (including the MyVote website); content from other sources are not always accurate. We welcome questions from any of our residents regarding elections or the process.



A public test of our voting equipment is done before every election. The date and time for testing is posted on our website under Notices a couple weeks before an election. Anyone interested in the process is encouraged to attend.

Only request an absentee ballot to be mailed to you if you intend to vote that ballot; absentee voting is our largest expense for an election and we want to be fiscally responsible with the Town tax dollars.

Upcoming Elections

February 20 - Spring Primary (if needed)
April 2 - Spring Election & Presidential Preference

All elections are held at the Town Hall from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Can't Afford a Mammogram or Pap Test?

Early detection is the best protection from breast cancer. Cost shouldn't keep you from mammograms and other screenings that could save your life. The Wisconsin Well Woman program offers breast and cervical cancer-related services to people who are: 40-64 years of age; meet income requirements (at or below 250% of the federal poverty level); and don't have health insurance or have health insurance that doesn't include routine check-ups and screenings. Call us at 715-839-4718 to see if you are eligible or visit wellwoman.ehealthdepartment.org to learn more.



Township Fire Department, Inc. - Station 2

With winter coming, road conditions can change rapidly to poor driving conditions. The Fire Department sees an increase in calls for vehicle crashes throughout the winter. Make sure to slow down and provide enough stopping distance to keep you and everyone else safe.

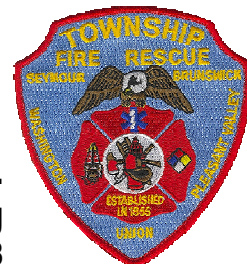
As the temperatures decrease, we also see more structure fires. The most common structure fire we see are chimney fires, which then turn into house fires. The best practice a homeowner can do, is to have their wood burning fireplace inspected and the chimney cleaned by a professional on a yearly basis. This should be considered regular maintenance yet it can easily get overlooked. If you have a chimney fire, you can use a fire extinguisher to try and put it out. Never use water to suppress a fire in a fireplace or chimney. The expanding hot vapor from the water will crack chimney walls and will allow fire to escape into walls and the attic of the building. Even if you think the fire is out, call 911 and the fire department will check to make sure the fire did not spread.

It is also good practice to change your batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors once a year. Test and check the expiration date on your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors as well. Most carbon monoxide detectors only last 3 to 5 years, and will not be reliable if they have expired. Most smoke detectors only last 5 to 10 years and will not be reliable if they have expired. If you are unsure on the age of the detector, it is best practice to replace it.

Currently at Station 2 we have nine fire fighters; normal staffing levels are around 20 fire fighters. This is making it very challenging for our department; as the need is great for more paid per call firefighters. Anyone over the age of 18 can join the fire department as a fire fighter and anyone aged 16 to 18 can join the fire department as a student fire fighter. **If you know someone who is curious about joining the Fire Department but may have questions, they can reach out to me, Battalion Chief, Jared Rico at chief20@townshipfire.org.** You do not have to live in the Town of Washington to join our station, most of our fire fighters live on the south side of the City of Eau Claire. What matters is that someone wants to make a difference and help serve the community.

The Town of Washington station is the busiest of all five stations of the Township Fire Department because of our central location as well as Interstate 94 and Highway 53. If the fire side of emergency services does not interest you, we also need first responders. Our membership on the entire department is at some of its lowest numbers that we have ever seen. Training is provided through the Department and in most cases are evening classes at Chippewa Valley Technical College. We encourage anyone who may be interested to check out our webpage at www.townshipfire.org to obtain more information. Please strongly consider giving back to your community and join us!

Township Fire Department, Inc.
townshipfire.org
715-834-6868





5750 Old Town Hall Road
Eau Claire WI 54701

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Eau Claire, WI
Permit 203

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
From the Town Board and Staff

TOWN STAFF & BOARD MEMBERS

Administrator/ Clerk/Treasurer:	Janelle L. Henning	715-834-3257
Deputy Clerk:	Jackie Vold	715-834-3257
Deputy Treasurer:	Aleta Kauffman	715-834-3257
Chairperson:	Robert Solberg	715-829-3138
Supervisors:	Jane Mueller	715-878-4058
	James Rolbiecki	715-379-0087
	Karen Tomesh	715-835-4742
	Jeff White	715-379-0699

Town Board Meetings

3rd Thursday each month at 5:00 PM

Office Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00 AM – 4:00 PM