VILLAGE OF MAPLE BLUFF

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

September 2020

SPECIAL EDITION
REFERENDUM INFORMATION

ABSENTEE VOTING BY MAIL BEGINS SEPTEMBER 17TH
REQUEST A BALLOT AT MYVOTE.WI.GOV

Time to Invest in Maple Bluff By: Tim O'Brien, Village President

The Village of Maple Bluff Board is asking residents to consider an incremental investment in our community on the November 3rd ballot that would raise the village's taxing authority. Historically, Maple Bluff has provided high quality public services while being fiscally responsible. Today, the village is faced with rising costs, restrictive levy limits, and depleted capital reserves. Without an increase in funding, Maple Bluff will be forced to make severe cuts to critical public services that you, as residents of our community, need to be aware of as you prepare to vote.

As background information, 70% of your property tax goes to fund the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD), Madison Area Technical College (MATC), and Dane County while only 30% goes directly to support the Village of Maple Bluff. Presently, the Village of Maple Bluff provides higher quality public services at tax rates that are below, or near, those of our surrounding communities, including Madison.

However, Wisconsin state tax levy limits have severely restricted our revenues which haven't kept up with the rising cost of providing these services. Maple Bluff can't increase our revenues through growth like many communities because our village doesn't have undeveloped land to improve, which could raise the tax base. The village must rely on tax levy increases for any revenue additions to help keep up with rising costs, but revenues have fallen below inflation since 2004. Over the last decade, the Village Board has used all the fiscal tools at our disposal to meet our obligations while maintaining service levels. This year, the village board realized we can no longer meet current service needs with expected revenues and had to make some tough decisions.

To meet next year's budget and future budgets, the Village Board identified three options: 1) increase our tax levy through a referendum and maintain service levels; 2) raise debt and kick the financial consequences down the road; or 3) severely cut services to match our current revenues. The Village Board chose to seek a levy increase instead of elevating debt levels or severely reducing services.

We're asking to increase Maple Bluff's taxing authority so the village can provide our staff with the tools they need to meet today's challenges. Benefits to the village include fully staffed protective services (police, fire, and EMS) especially during high activity times, filling operational funding shortfalls, along with remaining competitive on staff wages and benefits. We have an outstanding team and they deserve to be compensated at market rates. These changes will help Maple Bluff maintain quality public services while being fiscally responsible.

We didn't come to this levy increase request lightly. The village staff and board has laid out a detailed plan on the proposed use of funds. Important parts of this plan were approved separately and unanimously by the Police Committee, Fire and EMS Committee, and Finance Committee. Finally, the entire Village Board voted unanimously in favor of the entire referendum.

If approved, the village tax levy would increase revenues by $862,409. After factoring in the impact of lower village debt payments the increase would be $695,517 for the 2021 budget. As a reference, a home valued at $500,000 would see an annual tax increase of $740, beginning with the tax bill issued in December 2020.

Between now and the November ballot we will have numerous communications about the details behind the referendum including two village town hall meetings. Also, several informational documents including a detailed outline of the proposed uses of the new funds are available on the village website www.villageofmaplebluff.com. I encourage you to learn more about referendum and its importance to the future of our village.

2020 Referenda FAQs

Q. *How will the referendum appear on the November ballot?*

A. Under state law, the increase in the levy of the Village of Maple Bluff for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year, 2021, is limited to 1.542%, which results in a levy of $2,501,424. Shall the Village of Maple Bluff be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year, 2021, for the purpose of reinstatement of one police officer and one fire officer, adding one police officer, establishing competitive wage rates for administration, fire and public works personnel, recuperating loss of transportation aid and adequately funding health, education and retirement liabilities, by a total of 34.477%, which results in a levy of $3,363,833, and on an ongoing basis, include the increase of $862,409 for each fiscal year going forward?

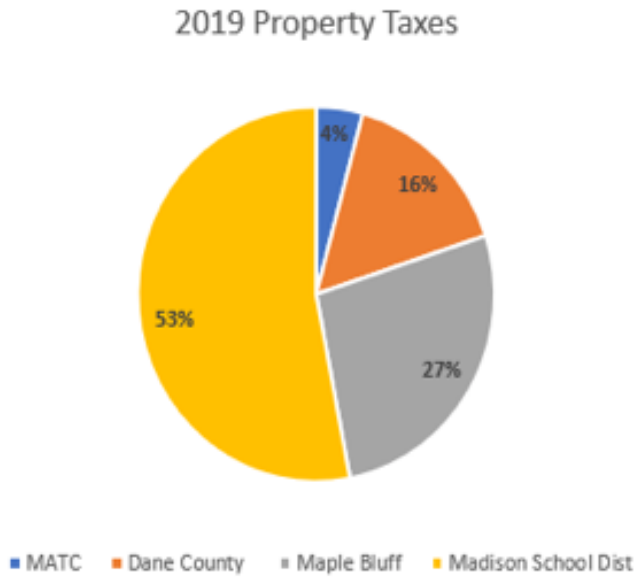
Q. *How will the increase be spent?*

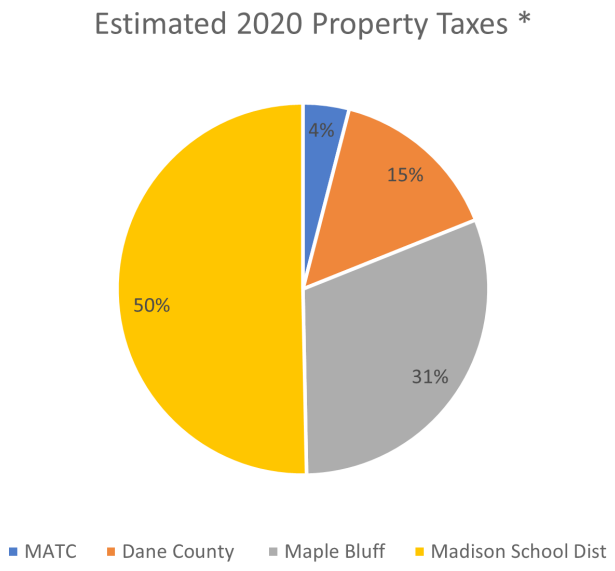
A. If the referendum passes, we'll budget those dollars as follows:

- **$267,347 in Police Department staffing** to fill an open position and add an additional full time officer to our force.
- **$176,794 in wage increases** to make staff wages competitive with local municipalities.
- **$101,764 in Fire Department staffing** to fill an open position that's been vacant since our joint Fire and EMS District dissolved in 2011.
- **$114,720 to replace discontinued state transportation aid** that funds infrastructure maintenance and repairs.
- **$53,469** to cover health insurance, retirement and education.
- **$52,607** for administrative and operational support.
- **$45,709** for equipment, supplies and maintenance.

Q. *How much of my property tax bill goes to the village – and how will that change if the referendum passes?*

A. Currently, 27% of your property tax goes to the village. If the referendum passes, it's estimated that the village portion of property taxes will increase to 31%. All proposed levy increases will go to the village.

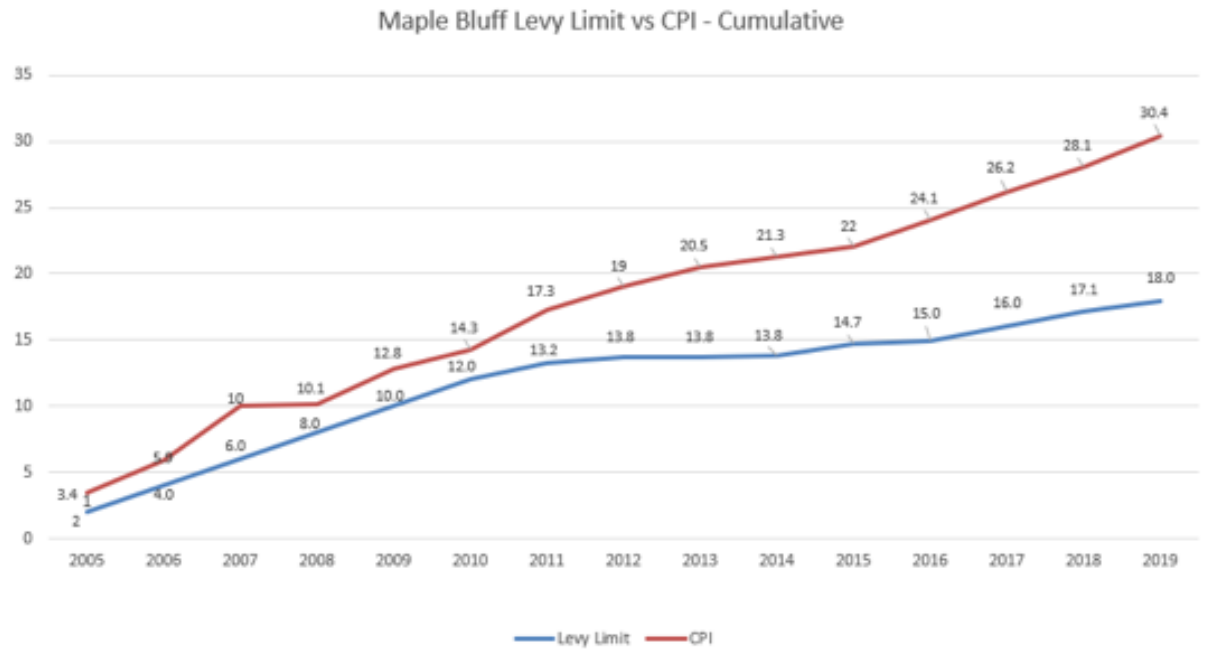




*Based on 5-year average increases and if the referendum passes.

Q. *Doesn't the village have a sufficient operating budget?*

A. Years of tightly restricted tax increases have led to a gap between the village budget and inflation. The village prides itself on fiscal responsibility, but over time these conditions have led to critical staffing deficits, challenged the ability to maintain financial and operational obligations, left staff wages uncompetitive and depleted reserve funds.



Q. *How will village staff, services and operations be impacted if referendum fails?*

A. If held to the existing budget, the village will experience the following impacts:

- **Administration:** 20% pay reduction for all personnel, furloughs, & staff retention concerns
- **Police:** Critical staffing shortfall - inability to staff 24/7, reduced time-off coverage, limited investigative & enforcement capacity, officer safety concerns, reduced officer wellbeing & retention
- **Fire:** Gaps in EMS coverage, non-competitive wages, deficit in time-off coverage, retention concerns and equipment replacement shortfall
- **Recreation:** Non-competitive wages, volunteer work reliance, & increase in program fees
- **Public Works:** Equipment maintenance shortfall & increase in replacement requirements
- **Liabilities:** Unprepared to pay out sick and vacation time balances to retirees, cover entitled health options for all staff, or fulfill police officer educational incentives, further reducing other operational budgets and non-essential services
- **Funding:** Loss of state transportation aid, obligated to cut $114,000 from operating budget, decreased funds for Public Works staff and services

Q. *If the referendum passes, how much will my property taxes increase?*

A. If the referendum passes the "Mil Rate" (tax rate per $1000 of assessed property value) will go up by $1.48 as illustrated in the chart below. Please note that even with the increase, your property taxes will still be below those of most neighboring municipalities.

Taxpayer Impact

Property Fair Market Value	Estimated Levy Increase	Maple Bluff - Including Increase	Madison	Monona	Cottage Grove	Sun Prairie	Shorewood Hills
$1,000,000	$1,480	$20,550	$21,290	$21,350	$21,340	$22,200	$18,630
$750,000	$1,109	$15,411	$15,968	$16,013	$16,005	$16,650	$13,973
$500,000	$740	$10,275	$10,645	$10,675	$10,670	$11,100	$9,315
$250,000	$370	$5,137	$5,323	$5,338	$5,335	$5,550	$4,658

Q. *When will the taxpayers' rate change?*

A. The impact will appear on tax bills issued in December 2020, due on January 31, 2021, and every subsequent year.

Q. *How long will the referendum impact the taxpayer's rates for?*

A. 2020 tax bills will include an increase and every subsequent year will maintain that increase.

Q. *How will any excess operating revenues be used?*

A. At the end of each year, if revenues exceed expenses, the excess funds will be placed in an Infrastructure Reserve account to be used towards future capital projects to reduce borrowing.

Q. *What other referenda will appear on the November 3, 2020 ballot?*

A. The Madison Metropolitan School District will have two referendum questions on the November 3rd ballot. For additional information, please visit https://www.madison.k12.wi.us/2020-referenda-future-ready

Q. *What will the impact of the other referenda items be for taxpayers?*

A. The Madison Metropolitan School District Facilities Referendum will increase taxes on a home valued at $500,000 by $280/year for the next 22 years*.

The Madison Metropolitan School District Operating Referendum will increase taxes on a home valued at $500,000 by $160/year for the next 4 years*.

*This was calculated based on information found at https://www.madison.k12.wi.us/2020-referenda-future-ready

Q. *Where can I find more information about the village referendum?*

A. Several informational documents are available for your consideration in preparation for this important decision on the village website www.villageofmaplebluff.com. You can also request these materials in paper form by calling the Village Center at 608-244-3048 or emailing info@villageofmaplebluff.com.

Town hall informational sessions will be held via Zoom on: Tuesday, September 15th 6:00pm
Wednesday, October 7th 6:00pm

Q. *What are Levy Limits and CPI?*

A. Levy Limits are state-imposed limits that provide the maximum amount a town, village, city and county may implement as a property tax levy on parcels within their boundaries.

Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure that examines the weighted average of prices of a basket of consumer goods and services, such as transportation, food, and medical care. It is calculated by taking price changes for each item in the predetermined basket of goods and averaging them. Changes in the CPI are used to assess price changes associated with the cost of living. The CPI is one of the most frequently used statistics for identifying periods of inflation and deflation

Feel free to contact your Maple Bluff elected and appointed officials

Timothy O'Brien	608-444-7564	timothyrockobrien@gmail.com
Patrick Grant	608-256-1883	pjgrant@gmail.com
Carl Vieth	608-249-4647	carl.vieth@att.net
Kristine Jaeger	608-217-1919	kristine@sprinkmanrealestate.com
Kevin O'Driscoll	608-212-3307	kkodriscoll@yahoo.com
Jim Schuler	608-241-1691	J.Schuler@att.net
Eric McLeod	608-246-1371	emm.maplebluff@yahoo.com
Jim Yeager	608-244-5107	yeags10@gmail.com

November 3rd General Election Information and Deadlines

The General Election is on Tuesday, November 3rd. Polls will be open from 7am-8pm and the Village Center, 18 Oxford Place, serves as the polling location for Maple Bluff voters.

Protocols will be in place to help keep poll workers and voters safe. We will be using plexiglass barriers, sanitizing all surfaces regularly, marking six-foot distances between voters, and utilizing masks according to state and CDC guidelines. If you have recently moved to the village, or within the village, and need to register, you can do so by mail, online, or in-person.

Register to vote - by mail or online at www.myvote.wi.gov before 11:59pm on Wednesday, October 14th. After that date, you will need to register in-person at the Village Center. The deadline to register in person is 5:00pm on Friday, October 30th. You may register at the polls on election day as well.

In-person absentee voting – will begin Tuesday, October 20th. The hours will be 8:00am-4:00pm Tuesday, October 20th thru Friday, October 23rd, 8:00am-4:00pm Monday, October 26th thru Thursday, October 29th, and 8:00am-5:00pm Friday, October 30th.

Request an absentee ballot by mail - please do so as early as you can, as your voted ballot must be in our hands by 8pm on Tuesday, November 3rd. If you have access to the internet, please go to www.myvote.wi.gov to request your absentee ballot. The deadline to request your absentee ballot is Thursday, October 29th at 5:00pm.

We will begin to mail out absentee ballots on Thursday, September 17th for requests we have on file.

Once you have voted your absentee ballot, you may mail it back using the envelope provided or place it in the payment box between the front entry doors at the Village Center.

Before returning your ballot make sure:
-You signed the certification envelope
-A witness signed the certification envelope
-The witness provided their address

Your ballot will not be counted if these three things are not provided.

Please contact the Village Center at 608-244-3048 with any questions or if you would like to make an in person appointment.

VILLAGE OF
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