

## Small Tax Increase, Time to Stand up and Vote

Brian K Verheyden

Rule 42, in the TV show NCIS, the character Gibbs has a set of rules. #42

**"Don't ever accept an apology from someone that just sucker-punched you."**

Somehow this seems to fit.

In and including Brown County there are 42 entities that place a burden on your property tax bill. Having recently arrived in the mail, every property owner now has to pay their share. From 2017 to 2018 the total increased 2.7%, seems reasonable? Few dollars here, a few hundred there, yep it starts to add up. To the unreal amount of \$436.5 Million in 2018.

## Property Tax Burden 436.5 Million Dollars

Well, how do we get to this number? We start with the Brown County's \$90.6 Million, Green Bay \$61.8 Million, the remainder of the Towns, Villages and De Pere total \$75 Million. Green Bay Schools \$61 Million, remaining school districts \$131 Million, tech schools \$16.7 Million. Yes, it really adds up.

In case you're yelling **"there are a lot more than just those."** Yes, but they don't put the burden on your property tax bill.

For those living in Green Bay, you also have a 26% increase to your vehicle registration collecting \$2.8 million. Over \$7 Million has been transferred to your water bill for street sweeping and stormwater management. Green Bay Metropolitan Sewage District

(now NEW Water) put in a major upgrade for the sake of green energy. That \$169 Million project has increased your rates by over 50% the past 5 years, more increases are planned.

Once you work your way through all of that, don't forget the \$147 Million for a six year County Sales Tax.

What can you do? Get involved. Spring primary elections are just a month away, Tuesday, February 19th, with the main election Tuesday, April 2nd. Out of Town? Vote Early or Absentee. These elections matter, **make sure you vote!** Do you have like-minded friends, **make sure they vote!**

btw Wisconsin has over 3,000 taxing entities.

*Brian*

Eaton	2,546,308	Wrightstown	3,454,127
Glenmore	2,123,307	Allouez	21,689,767
Green Bay	3,554,976	Ashwaubenon	48,206,941
Holland	2,764,429	Bellevue	23,347,385
Humboldt	1,698,543	Denmark	3,061,987
Lawrence	10,830,208	Hobart	15,321,778
Ledgeview	16,442,042	Howard	30,914,657
Morrison	2,520,770	Pulaski	4,418,075
New Denmark	2,688,302	Suamico	23,331,969
Pittsfield	4,374,792	Wrightstown	4,319,863
Rockland	3,588,307	De Pere	44,288,324
Scott	6,450,087	Green Bay	154,524,824

Total \$ 436,461,769

**Total 2018  
Property Tax Burden**

## November Meeting Notes

### Mayoral Candidate Buckley Speaks to BCTA

Pat Buckley, Brown County supervisor and presently a candidate for mayor of the City of Green Bay presented his perspective on issues facing the city. Pat is serving his fifth term as a Brown County supervisor. He is chairman of the Brown County Board's Public Safety Committee. As chairman of the Public Safety Committee, he is also a member of the Brown County Board's Executive Committee. He has also served as an alderman for the City of Green Bay.

He has 18 years of experience as a police officer, with 15 years of that experience being in the City of Green Bay. He also owns a successful business with locations in Green Bay and Milwaukee.

One of the key issues facing the City of Green Bay is the crime. He would work closely with the chief of police in Green Bay to ensure that the Police Department has the resources it needs to maintain the low crime rate

in Green Bay. At present, he has concerns about low staffing levels on the night shift.

Roads are another key issue for the City of Green Bay. Repairing and upgrading Green Bay city streets is critical to the growth and development of businesses and residential areas in the city. He is concerned that the recently enacted \$20 wheel tax does not specify that the proceeds of the tax are not firmly dedicated to Street Road improvements. The wheel tax revenues have only \$700,000 allocated to replacing assessments Green Bay citizens for street improvements in front of their properties. The remaining \$1.4 million is unallocated. This seems unfair as automobiles and motorcycles caused much less damage to city streets than trucks and buses do.

The Green Bay School District is another critical area that needs support from the City Administration. School safety is an important component of presenting a healthy learning environment.

Dave Nelson - Secretary

## December Meeting Notes

### Mayoral Candidate Genrich Speaks to BCTA

State Representative Eric Genrich, presently a candidate for mayor of the City of Green Bay presented his perspective on issues facing the city. Eric is completing his third term in the Wisconsin State Assembly representing the 90<sup>th</sup> District, which is essentially the central part of the city of Green Bay. Prior to serving in the state legislature, he was employed as an IT librarian at the Brown County Public Library. Eric is a native of Green Bay. His wife is a special education teacher for the Green Bay Area School District.

Responding to a question about his reasons for leaving the State legislature, he explained that being a member of the minority party limited his accomplishments. He stated that he voted against the Foxconn bill and the Kimberly-Clark bill.

Eric is concerned about the condition of the roads in the city of Green Bay. He believes that the city needs a capital improvements plan to allocate its resources in the most efficient manner to maintain and improve the city's infrastructure. The \$20 wheel tax was enacted without a

plan for allocating all of the revenues from the tax to streets and roads. He believes the city needs an inventory of buildings and other facilities in order to develop a capital improvements plan. He noted that infrastructure is more than streets and roads.

The Green Bay economy is growing, especially in the downtown area, but he feels that more attention needs to be directed to the outlying areas of the city.

A survey he conducted found that the three dozen contractors responding to his survey reported that they did not want to do business within the city of Green Bay. They had issues with City ordinances and regulations and the way they were enforced. He feels that a complete review of City ordinances and regulations should be made with an eye to making them friendlier to citizens and businesses.

Eric stated that he believes that a line item veto would be a useful tool for the mayor. He also advocated some zero-based budgeting for departments on a rotating plan. Starting the city's budgeting process a few weeks earlier would allow more time for review and for feedback from citizens.

Dave Nelson - Secretary

## BCTA Brief filed Dec 21st

If you give your daughter \$10,000 on the condition that she use it to reduce her burdensome credit card debt, can she use it for anything she wants? Can she use the money to finance a vacation to Europe on the theory that she could have charged the trip on her credit card and her balance is "reduced" because she didn't have to borrow the money? What does it mean to "reduce" something? What does it mean to say that money has to be used for a specific purpose? These simple questions are at the heart of this case.

State law says that counties can collect a sales tax, but that the money from the tax can only be used for one thing. A county sales and use tax "may be

imposed only for the purpose of directly reducing the property tax levy." Wis. Stat. § 77.70. To determine whether a sales and use tax is lawful then, the question is simply this: "Did the county's property tax levy decrease by the amount of sales and use tax raised?"

At issue in this case is the legality of Brown County's new sales and use tax ("County Sales Tax"), which became effective on January 1, 2018. Did Brown County use revenue from that tax to directly reduce its property tax levy? No. Instead, the County used that revenue to fund a dramatic increase in spending and still raised its property tax levy. The County Sales Tax is therefore unlawful and should be declared void.

Please send an email to [BCTaxTimes@gmail.com](mailto:BCTaxTimes@gmail.com) to request the full Brief.

## Things That Make Us Wonder.

Whether or not the candidate of your choice was victorious in the November elections, we are probably all thankful that at least for the present, we don't have to watch a steady diet of TV ads telling us that this or that candidate or incumbent is "*Wrong for Wisconsin*", for any number of partisan reasons.

At least now we can get back to the more familiar car ads, urging us to remodel our bathrooms, or replace all the windows on our houses.

\* \* \* \* \*

President Trump has been taking a lot of flak over his Mexican Border wall proposal. The problem stems from whether we as a nation should be expected to arbitrarily accommodate unlimited, uninvited numbers of refugees who expect to receive the same privileges of citizenship as residents.

We would like to think the thought of a wall to be symbolic due to the cost and time to con-

struct, but the project has become more immediate with the large numbers of refugees clamoring at our border. We heard that the new incoming President of Mexico has offered asylum to refugees from other countries on their way to try and sneak into the U.S. Maybe he was just trying to replace his citizens who are already here.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Mexican wall brings to mind the French Maginot Line along their border with Germany to keep them from invading them again. In 1940 the Germans took one look, laughed, and drove their tanks around the north end of the line and you all know how that ended.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Federal government has imposed strict privacy regulations upon financial institutions and medical providers to safeguard personal information about their customers, which is fine with most of us. However, they saw fit to leave some groups off of the list which is probably the most annoying.

We refer to charities, magazines, and political interests. Since

laws are written by politicians, it is easy to understand their rationale. We also appreciate the need and good deeds of the many charitable groups we have, and the

## Legal Challenge to Brown County's Sales Tax - update

Members ask about the status of the legal action the BCTA initiated, asserting that Brown County's imposition of the half-percent sales tax violates state law. In this matter, the BCTA is being represented by the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty (WILL). The Deputy Counsel and Litigation Manager for WILL has provided the following schedule information:

Motions for summary judgment and supporting briefs must be submitted by December 21st.

Response briefs are due January 21st, with reply briefs due February 11th.

The judge has set a hearing for 1:30 p.m. on April 2nd.

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fact that many of the services they provide could otherwise be on our tax bill.

Unfortunately, these groups are constantly seeking funding for their operations, which in the case of politics and charities means donations. Since they constantly need more money, their usual source is a list of donors. Better yet for a price, exchange your lists, including phone numbers with similar agencies, providing immediate cash and a source of prospects. We sincerely doubt this is a common practice, and apologize for any misunderstanding. However, I can think of no better explanation for the deluge of mail and phone calls received during election times and the year-end for tax reductions. If at all true, this could be a gross breach of privacy.

We should all support candidates representing our interests and philosophies, and be generous with the charities of our choice. However, we also have our limits and desire for privacy.

\* \* \* \* \*

Kimberly-Clark has requested \$100 Million in tax breaks from the State of Wisconsin and threatened to move a mill with 400 employees to another state. They are regarded as a prosperous company with deep roots in Wisconsin and their problem was not entirely made clear.

While a number of industries have left the state in recent years, the cause has more likely been consolidation from buyouts moving manufacturing elsewhere and foreign competition.

While our taxes may be high, and regulations regarded annoying, there are a lot more positives than negatives here. Our low unemployment rate proves it. Unfortunately, taxes are the price you pay for the services you receive.

\* \* \* \* \*

Work on the Foxconn Complex is proceeding and hopefully will live up to its promise.

Although it has never been made clear what they will be making when finished, we assume some will be computer circuit boards. This is one item we import big time from China and giving them a technological edge. I read where even our military buys from China and there have been instances of deliberately build-in sabotage.

\* \* \* \* \*

"America's Cold Civil War," is a good title for the contentious relationship between Democrats and Republicans, or liberals and conservatives if you prefer, that exists in this country today. While actual combat is not involved, the use of propaganda, fear, and harassment are skillfully applied.

It seems that at one time there was bi-partisan and amicable cooperation between our two major parties to compromise and work out solutions to our countries problems agreeable and affordable to everyone, but now it's my way, or not at all. It's not right, and we all lose as a result.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is probably fair to say, "nobody likes the IRS." It would also probably be true to say, "we would all suffer as a result."

While Congress constantly

finds new ways to spend our money, they must also come up with new schemes to raise it. Then it becomes the job of the IRS, with auditors to assure that everyone complies with the tax payment and collection system we have in place.

To its credit, Congress started downsizing government departments to reduce expenses, but, unfortunately, and the IRS, with its army of auditors, was a popular choice. In 2017 they had 9,510 auditors, or 33 percent fewer than in 2010, and about the same number as in 1953 when the economy was about a seventh of its current size.

The result was the audit rate dropped dramatically, with big winners being the wealthy and large corporations who have tax lawyers to devise special strategies. Needless to say, a great amount of revenue has been lost affecting all of us.

\* \* \* \* \*

Effective campaign promises in the November mid-term elections were better health care for all of us, and tax reductions for most "working people." This apparently was taken as factual by the "soak the rich" crowd, and we will see what happens in the months ahead. Unfortunately, relationships in Congress and Madison will be strained as a result of the election but somehow things usually work themselves out before the next election as people figure out who to blame.

\* \* \* \* \*

There are two problems that must be addressed though. One is the cost to every one of the out-

Articles and views appearing in the "TAX TIMES" do not necessarily represent the official position of the Brown County Taxpayers Association. We want to encourage discussion and input on current issues of taxpayer interest and invite your comments or articles suitable for future "TAX TIMEES." Please send them to the BCTA, P.O. Box 684, Green Bay, WI 54305-0684 or email BCTaxTimes@gmail.com

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geous cost of healthcare, whether it was Obamacare which led people to expect too much from the government, providers taking advantage of the increased demand for their services or the insurance companies caught in the middle. It is a bad situation getting worse and needs solutions.

One problem related to the recent election is that no one running for office showed any concern for our national debt. As of today, with the U.S. Government shut down over a dispute about spending more money the National Debt is just short of \$22 Trillion, or \$66,747.22 for each of us. This doesn't include another \$50 Trillion for Social Security, Pension accounts, State debt, accrued interest, and a bunch of other things that are getting swept under the carpet.

Anyone with a revolving credit account will tell you how the unpaid interest gets added on at the end each month. About a trillion of this amount if unpaid student loan debt. There have been proposals to forgive this obligation. Sure, if the Chinese go along.

\* \* \* \* \*

We are probably all getting a little tired of hearing about Russian involvement in our last Presidential election. True or not, it has done nothing to improve the relationship between our two countries which is far more important than trying to pick a fight.

Also getting tiresome is the Hillary crowds excuses for losing

the election. Maybe both parties will have a different approach next time around.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is difficult to understand the clamor in some way to legalize marijuana use. Does our government want to discourage or actually encourage its use? The past record for crime and ruined lives is not good, and trying to control its sale and use could be a nightmare. Proponents citing cases where it reduces pain should make their case to make it available by prescription only if that is what our society needs. Making sales legal as a source of state income would only encourage a black market, as you can grow the stuff almost anywhere. Like the state lottery, when the state found it was a source of income, they started advertising it big time so even more chumps lined up to blow their paychecks to beat the odds buying get rich quick tickets.

\* \* \* \* \*

As President, George H. W. Bush was a class act. Recall they had partisan politics and foreign intrigue in those days also, but it seems the media was a bit more cooperative then, and he had a way of negotiating differences. R.I.P.

\* \* \* \* \*

As usual, lots of things to wonder about.

*"Things That Make Us Wonder," consists of taxpayer related thoughts that occur to us from daily news events. We use reliable, published information and statistics, Some items are unimportant and probably not*

worth commenting about while others could easily be expanded to full-length feature articles worthy of future study and action to protect our interests as taxpayers. We try to cover a wide variety of subjects in limited space and perhaps put a different spin on items from what you read in the papers or see on TV. We acknowledge that some of the views and comments expressed in this column may be contrary to that of some of our readers. However, one of our purposes is to encourage debate, and we realize there are two sides to every question. Comments or suggestions are welcome for inclusion in future "TAX TIMES."

Jim Frink-BCTA

**"Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong solutions."  
... Groucho Marx**

**SUPPORT THE BCTA  
New Members are Always Welcome.  
Visit our website  
www.BCTAxpayers.Org  
for Details.**

### Monthly Meetings @ The Village Grille

Monthly meetings are held at **The Village Grille, corner of Hoffman and East River Drive, Allouez.** The location has no stairs or steps, convenient parking, and a room to better accommodate speakers and conversation. There will be three selections from which to choose lunch - each one will be priced at \$10 (including tip.) Lunch is at 12:00 noon with monthly speakers presenting.

# The TAX TIMES

Brown County Taxpayers Association  
P. O. Box 684  
Green Bay, WI 54305-0684

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## *Inside This Issue*

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## Meeting Location

**The Village Grille, Allouez**

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## BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

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**Thursday - Jan 17, 2019 BCTA Monthly Meeting.**  
12:00 at The Village Grille, Allouez  
Speaker - Pat Evans GB Mayor Candidate, BC Sup.

**Tuesday - Feb 19, 2019 Vote Spring Primary**

**Thursday - Feb 21, 2019 BCTA Monthly Meeting.**  
12:00 at The Village Grille, Allouez  
Speaker - GB Police Chief Smith

BCTA monthly meetings are held the Third Thursday of each month, 12:00 Noon, at , at The Village Grille, Allouez.

Meetings are open to the public. BCTA Members, their guests and other interested parties are cordially invited to attend and participate in our open discussions.

**COST: \$10.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.**  
Call Tom Sladek – 499-7701 for information or to leave message.

Jan - Feb 2019



Spring Elections  
**Tuesday, Feb 19**  
**Tuesday, Apr 2**