

FUNDAMENTALS

Rich Heidel - BCTA President

We read and hear about it every day: the divisiveness that's evident throughout our country. A Republican and a Democrat wouldn't be able to screw in a light bulb these days! Family members and friends can't even agree to disagree anymore. Compromising, reaching across the aisle, bi-partisan agreement – these concepts no longer grab traction. Perhaps not since the Civil War has America been set so asunder. Why?

Up until about 50 years ago, Americans could substantially agree on the fundamentals, the goals (the "what"): economic growth and balanced budgets, law and order, national defense, and confronting our enemies. Understandably, however, Democrats and Republicans would disagree on policy (the "how"). The two parties had varying opinions on how to achieve the same goals while yet being united in our national view of common values and goals.

Today we don't even share, let alone cherish the same fundamentals as a nation - the "what". We are embroiled in a national struggle to define our very underpinnings, our support structure. This has occurred twice before in our history. The first instance was at our founding; the second occasion was the Civil War when the nation struggled with a most fundamental value: equality of rights, i.e. the issue of slavery. Today, the third instance of defining what we hold to be everlasting truths is on full display. The following are examples.

It's one thing to defend life from conception until death. It's another thing to deny life even exists until every last toe is out of the birth canal. No right is safe if the right to life, the most basic, is denied.

It's one thing to consider humans as biologically male or female. It's another thing to provide as many genders on job applications and census forms as there are Heinz varieties.

It's one thing for families to provide food, role models, and discipline, and serve as both a laboratory and building block for society at large. It's quite another for government (public) schools to substitute (at everyone else's expense) for those things that families traditionally provided.

Life, gender, family - the most fundamental starting points for all of us as human beings is being redefined by, you got it: human beings. When these are under assault, it's no wonder that we can't agree on ANYTHING anymore! What's left for everyone TO agree upon? Climate change, only man can remedy? Second amendment right of self-defense while abolishing law enforcement? A national debt too large to imagine? First amendment right of free speech at universities in a "woke" society? Mask mandates for law-abiding Americans while illegal immigrants with a 10% Covid-19 infection rate are released unmonitored? As serious as these issues are – and they are, we have even bigger issues.

When truth, natural law, and the underlying principles of our Constitution – including the assumption of a Higher Power – no longer matter, anything is possible. Everlasting truths and objective right and wrong are obsolete. Government is our god and the US Capitol is our cathedral. The inference is that God and natural law have royally screwed up and now we must straighten out the mess!

While no one knows where or how this will end, I hold to Martin Luther's quote of five hundred years ago: "Peace if possible, but truth at all cost!"

Rich H

MARCH MEETING NOTES

Several topics of current interest were discussed.

Difficulties with evaluating school board candidates were identified:

In Brown County, there is no one location to find who is running in school board elections. This year, there are 14 races to fill 24 seats in school districts with land within Brown County.

There are three regional elections in the Pulaski School District, but in the rest of the local school districts, whoever gets the most votes, wins. It is very difficult to challenge an incumbent board member's performance. Name recognition seems to be a major factor in these races. This is unfortunate as school boards spend much more tax money than most other units of local government. Also, it's difficult to find candidates.

The American Plan the House of Representatives passed last week proposes spending one and a half trillion dollars for green energy and more climate change prevention. That will take it up to somewhere around \$67,000 per person. It's a recipe for disaster. We are now energy-dependent again. Government spending is going through the roof. All the variables are moving in the direction of more inflation. So, if you're getting a \$600 per month pension, you will still get \$600, but it's only going to have \$300 of purchasing value after inflation erodes its value.

It was reported that the City of Green Bay has entered into a service agreement with the Oneida Tribe. It was

noted that the City isn't required to have such an agreement. It was also noted that the City wasn't hurt the last five years without a service agreement.

The service agreement doesn't take any property off the City tax rolls, but it does obligate the City not to object to requests by the Tribe to place parcels of land into Federal Trust status, thereby taking the parcels off the City tax rolls. In addition, the State of Wisconsin compensates the Tribe for its payment to the City under the terms of the gambling agreement between the State and the Tribe.

Senate Bill 204, election reform legislation recently introduced in the Wisconsin Senate, was discussed.

One item SB 204 focuses on is applications for absentee ballots.

Automatic mailing of absentee ballots would be severely curtailed. This bill eliminates the option other than military voters. Unsolicited transmission of absentee ballot applications themselves would be curtailed.

Photo ID requirements must be addressed for occupants of residential care facilities. It looks like the state will stay with absentee ballots one way or another.

They are asking now that the Wisconsin Election Commission develop a form with instructions for all the applications for absentee ballots.

Dave Nelson, Secretary

"No man is entitled to the blessings of freedom unless he be vigilant in its preservation."

– General Douglas MacArthur

SUPPORT THE BCTA

New Members are Always Welcome.

www.BCTaxpayers.Org

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

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 \$12 (including tip.) Lunch is at 12:00 noon with monthly speakers presenting.

Wisconsin Supreme Court to assess legality of Brown County Sales Tax

Accepts certification from Wisconsin Court of Appeals

The Wisconsin Supreme Court announced it would grant review (Case 2020AP940) of a lawsuit championed by the Brown County Taxpayers Association arguing that Brown County violated state law in adopting its sales tax. BCTA has maintained that by using its tax to pay for a slate of new spending projects the County failed to impose the tax “only for the purpose of directly reducing the property tax levy” as mandated by Wis. Stat. s. 77.70. The Wisconsin Supreme Court has ordered additional briefing and will set oral argument for a future date.

The lawsuit, litigated on behalf of BCTA by the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty, was filed in 2018 shortly after the County adopted a 0.5% sales and use tax expected to raise \$147,000,000 dollars over its six year duration. Although the County prevailed at the circuit court level in March of 2020, BCTA appealed the decision to the Court of Appeals, which in turn asked the state’s high court to take up the case.

BCTA President Rich Heidel said, “We are pleased the Supreme Court has agreed to issue a definitive ruling as to the legality of Brown County’s sales tax. The County should be held accountable for disregarding state law.”

APRIL MEETING NOTES

Broadband

Brown County Supervisor Rick Schadewald spoke about Brown County's broadband efforts. Rick, the Brown County Board's longest-serving member chairs the Subcommittee on Broadband and High-speed Internet.

He came to talk about broadband and high-speed issues and options.

He explained that his subcommittee's job is to make recommendations to the Brown County Board's Administration Committee. The County has identified the focus of the subcommittee and what the plans might be going forward. It's called maximizing the broadband subsidies effects.

Brown County is receiving \$51 million from the American Rescue Plan. We are getting \$26 million of it if we have a plan within six months to spend it. But there are great restrictions. The first thing is only lost revenues qualify; property tax reductions are not acceptable. We had the zoo, the golf course, and the airport: the supplies we bought. So it was about eight or nine million dollars of lost revenues, which we'll take out of that fund. Then it goes to water, sewer, and broadband.

We don't do water or sewer now, so we're going to take the lead on broadband. The County is going to start by

hard lining (fiber optics) to all of our 911 towers because, in some areas, heavy rains or high winds can cause problems with the microwave communications we have to the towers now. We want to alleviate those problems and create a more secure 911 broadband service. We always wanted to expand broadband in Brown County, but we didn't have the money.

The 911 towers are our community police and fire safety communications system now. In the past, all our police and fire services had their own communication. With 911, we have now gone countywide, so all police and fire, all EMT, plus other functions all communicate using the same system.

We have to give Hobart credit. They've been working on this for years. The County started into it more recently. There was never enough money, eight to nine million dollars just to get to our 911 towers. We will probably need another 10 to 12 million dollars if we connect school districts. We do want to spend that money on broadband. The County Executive and the County Board have committed to broadband. Most of the County Board is rural.

Whenever Brown County builds, not just resurfaces, a new highway, we install a conduit for future fiber optic cables. What's secure is a little different. It's secure in that it's buried and protected from physical damage.

Dave Nelson, Secretary

The TAX TIMES

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Meeting Location

The Village Grille, Allouez

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday - May 20, 2021 BCTA Monthly Meeting.
12:00 at The Village Grille, Allouez
Jim Fitzgerald, Chairman BC Republican Party

Monday - May 31, 2021 Memorial Day

Thursday - June 17, 2021 BCTA Monthly Meeting.
12:00 at The Village Grille, Allouez

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: \$12.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.
Call Tom Sladek – 499-7701 for information or to leave message.**

May - Jun 2021



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