

It's GO Time!

Scott Liddicoat, BCTA Director

Local, county, and state budgets...

It's GO Time!

Budget time is here. Annual budgets for the City of Green Bay and Brown County will be endorsed this fall. State representatives will gather in Madison after the fall elections. Their first order of business in the new year? Put together the biennial (2025-2027) state budget.

Here are some previous budget results to consider: City of Green Bay spending is up 20%¹ in the last four years. In the same time, Brown County expenditures swelled 37%². The state budget increased 10.5%³ in the last biennium.

Final approvals for city and county budgets are a few months off. The state budget will be finalized sometime next summer. But...it will all be over in a blink. And then we'll live with the results. So the time to pay attention and to influence budgets is now.

Here are some important budget questions and comments to consider:

1. Are the politicians who develop budgets financial specialists? The answer is they may be. But just as likely they may not be. Specialist or no, they probably have much **different priorities** than yours. For example, I live in Green Bay. There are many roads in the city that need extensive repair or replacement. I don't know one adult in the city who would dispute this. Yet road repairs drag. We're far, far behind on road replacement, and current replacement rates place us further behind with each passing year. Plainly, if your government and what it does with your money matters to you, then political **priorities matter** to you.

2. Can governments make well-chosen budget cuts? Nearly all households and businesses have had to make budget cuts in recent years. Are politicians and administrators capable of what ordinary citizens and businesses regularly do? Many people simply allow that government is different and cannot be brought to work like a household or a business. But of course, government administrators can make budget cuts, become more efficient, discard the inefficient, innovate, and find ways to save money.

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Either that, or we must concede from the jump that people in government are not as capable as those who live and work in the private sector. I don't accept that. Do you? Cutting—or expanding—a budget requires establishing **well-chosen priorities**. So once again, if your government and what it does with your money matters to you, then political **priorities matter** to you.

3. Will taxes increase as the last of the covid "relief" entitlements are spent this year? This will be the elephant in the room no one wants to talk about in many places. If monies were used for legitimate covid "relief" needs that have come and gone, then taxes and budgets should be unaffected. But if covid money was used to start new programs or fund projects that require continued support, we may hear that taxes must be increased. Are continuing covid programs or projects also continuing **legitimate priorities**? We see here once again, if your government and what it does with your money matters to you, then political **priorities matter** to you.

Budgets and taxes can be a dull, off-putting subject. To the media, they aren't sexy, or trendy, and they don't bleed. But taxes take substantial amounts of cash from you and shrink the free choices you can make with your money. And if you happen to be poor, unemployed, or living on a fixed income? Increased taxes can push you further into a challenging or oppressive lifestyle. Or poverty. Budgets and taxes plainly have consequences. And as you've read here, **taxes follow budget priorities**.

Now is our time to play the part demanded of us as citizens in our representative republic. Call, email, or meet with each of the government officials you personally influence with your vote. Consider attending a finance committee meeting where the upcoming budget will be discussed. **Then politely but firmly, make your priorities clear. Challenge political priorities that don't measure up.**

It's GO time!

Scott

GO Time notes:

- 1. greenbaywi.gov: \$110m (2020), \$132.5m (2024)
- 2. browncountywi.gov: \$239.5m (2020), \$328.5m (2024)
- 3. wisconsin.gov: \$89.2b (2021-23), \$98.6b (2023-25)

April Meeting Notes

Guest Speaker: Jim Rafter

Today's speaker was Allouez Village President Jim Rafter. President Rafter has served on the Village Board for 10 years, with 8 as President. He was speaking on efforts to close the Green Bay Correctional Institution (GBCI). The GBCI, second oldest correctional facility in WI, was established in 1898. A 2019 Legislative Audit Bureau report recommended closing the facility after determining it would take \$200 million to bring it to standard. It is past it's workable lifespan and inconsistent with modern prison design. It houses over 1,000 inmates, 45% over its capacity and has the highest number of inmate-on-staff assaults in

the WI prison system. It lacks the capacity to create foundations for rehabilitation success and has only a 16 bed mental service capacity with a need of over 600. The Joint Finance Committee recommended \$5 million in the 2019-22 budget to begin the process to identify a new site, but it was vetoed, and the problems remain. The current facility sits on 64 acres of land along the Fox River and Highway 172 in the Village of Allouez. A recent St. Norbert College study projected that redevelopment to mixed use could bring in over 1400 new jobs and an additional \$153 million in economic output for Brown County. This would include \$2 million in new tax revenue. Closing GBCI is supported by the Brown County Board, the Village of Allouez Board, 1000 residents and more than 100 local business leaders. The remaining hurdle is legislative action.

Business items: Following President Rafter's presentation, the BCTA Board voted unanimously to support the efforts to close and relocate the GBCI. President Schwalbach encouraged members to continue distributing copies of the Voter Guides in public places. Treasurer Sladek reported the Executive Committee had approved renewing our membership in the WI Policy Forum and noted any member can ask to be added to their email updates. A discussion was held on hosting a forum for Congressional candidates this fall.

Committee/other reports: The group discussed the Press Gazette post concerning the nearly \$300k cost of the Green Bay Schools Superintendent issue and the revisitation of the boundaries debate with school consolidation. President Schwalbach reported that 272 pieces of legislation were signed by the Governor, with 74 vetoes. Senator Jacque joined the meeting and gave further information on a number of the bills that were signed.

Meeting Notes by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary

May Meeting Notes

Guest Speaker: Tony Wied, 8th District Candidate



Tony Wied, Candidate 8th Congressional District speaks to BCTA

Today's speaker was 8th U.S. Congressional District candidate Tony Wied. Tony shared that he is a political newcomer. He and his wife have been business owners in De Pere for 30 years, and taxes have been a key issue for them. They recently sold their businesses and when Congressman Gallagher resigned, he saw that as an opportunity to enter the political arena. He is a conservative and fan of President Trump, so he successfully sought that endorsement. He feels career politicians are failing us. Tony thinks his business experience will be essential to his success. His priorities include securing the border, inflation, and the economy. Term limits are another needed issue to bring business knowledge into government. He feels the budget process is non-existent. Government spends and then tries to figure out how to pay for it. Tony looks forward to bringing experts together to help formulate solutions. He responded to several questions and discussions from the floor.

Committee/other reports: Director Parins raised questions about the impact of the NFL draft expenses on the local economy. President Schwalbach reported there were efforts in the state legislature to override several of Governor Ever's vetoes. President Schwalbach and Directors Heidel and N. Leuthner attended a recent forum conducted by the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty to update supporters about various actions of the organization. President Schwalbach attended a forum in Madison to show our organization's support for closing the Green Bay Correctional Institution.

Meeting Notes by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary

Business items: President Schwalbach encouraged members to continue distributing copies of the Voter Guides in public places. Director Liddicoat reported he has gotten several requests for the guides. There was discussion about the potential confusion caused by a special election and general election occurring on the same ballot. A committee of Directors Sladek (chair), Parins, Schwalbach, and Goldhahn was formed to create a proposal for a candidate forum prior to the fall elections. President Schwalbach will invite the other District 8 Congressional candidates to speak at future meetings.

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 **\$15 (includes tax and tip)**. Lunch is at 12:00 noon with monthly speakers presenting.

SUPPORT THE BCTA

New Members Welcome

www.BCTaxpayers.com

The Brown County Taxpayers Association is a local group working to bring information and awareness to issues that affect tax policy or impose regulatory burdens.

The TAX TIMES

Brown County Taxpayers Association
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Green Bay, WI 54305-0684

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Meeting Location

The Village Grille, Allouez

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday - July 18, 2024 BCTA Monthly Meeting.
12:00 at The Village Grille, Allouez
Roger Roth, Candidate 8th Congressional District

Tuesday - Aug 13, 2024 **Fall Primary - Vote**

Thursday - Aug 15, 2024 BCTA Monthly Meeting.
12:00 at The Village Grille, Allouez
WILL, Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty

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: \$15.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.
Call Tom Sladek – 499-7701 for information or to leave message.

Jul-Aug 2024



**US National Debt
\$34.9 Trillion**

www.BCTaxpayers.com