

Frequently Unasked Questions (FUQ's) About Yet Another Government Budget Shutdown Scott Liddicoat

When was the current federal budget process created? It was created by Congress in 1974 with the passage of the Congressional Budget Act (CBA). The Act set up an advance planning process that is intended to proceed in an orderly, scheduled way. It is supposed to be completed annually by October 1st, when the new federal fiscal year begins.

How is the federal budget process designed to work? As you read this, keep in mind "*the budget*" is meant to be completed for the *next* fiscal year while *spending* is taking place during the *current* fiscal year. The President is supposed to send Congress a budget each year in February (for the following year, beginning October 1st). Congress is then expected to adopt a Budget Resolution by April 15th. This Resolution, which is not signed by the President, provides a broad taxing and spending plan for the (next) fiscal year. The House and Senate follow that plan, negotiating among themselves and with the President. The required product is twelve, detailed individual "regular appropriations" bills. Congress and the President are supposed to sign all twelve before October 1st (the start of the new federal fiscal year). The required appropriations bills fall into these categories:

- Agriculture
- Interior / Environment
- Commerce/Justice/Science
- Labor / HHS / Education
- Defense
- Legislative Branch
- Energy / Water
- Military
- Financial Services
- State / Foreign Operations

- Homeland Security
- Transportation / HUD

How often is the budget process followed properly? The last time the budget process was followed properly was in 1996.

What happens when the CBA process isn't completed by October 1st? The lack of funding authorization forces a "government shutdown," which we all know isn't a shutdown at all. After all, our taxes continue to be collected. But many non-essential government services are temporarily reduced or closed. Until resolved, some federal employees are furloughed or laid off, while other "essential" employees are required to work without pay. As indispensable workers, the politicians continue at full pay and benefits during any and all shutdown periods.

How is a government shutdown resolved? There are three ways.

1. Congress passes and the president signs all twelve required, regular appropriations bills.
2. Congress passes and the president signs a Continuing Resolution. A CR provides funding at levels from the previous fiscal year for a defined period of time. One or more CR's have been used to extend funding to avoid a shutdown every year since 1996. In theory, this gives Congress and the President more time to negotiate passage of all twelve regular appropriations bills.
3. Use a CR (or several of them) to get through the fiscal year without a budget, starting the next budget year under a CR.

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August Meeting Notes

Today's speaker was WI District 2 Senator Eric Wimberger speaking on the recently passed state budget and audit committee activities. Senator Wimberger serves on the Finance Committee and is co-chair of the Audit Committee. Highlights from the budget bill include a \$1.4B tax cut across income and sales tax components including specifics targeted at families and seniors, \$1.4B in new K-12 school funding, \$1.3B for roads and bridges, \$30M for the Southern Bridge rail crossing in De Pere, \$20M for Green Bay Port expansion, 7 new Assistant District Attorneys in Brown County, and \$732M in new bonding authority for the Environmental Improvement Fund. The Finance Committee continues to work on ways to increase transparency and accountability of organizations receiving state dollars by requiring front end spending proposals before funds are released. The committee is also investigating ways to reduce the use of lawsuits by groups attempting to use the court system to draw money from the state in the form of settlements. The Audit Committee has several audits in progress including the lowering of DPI testing standards, state grant spending documentation, Unemployment Insurance spending waste, DEI in the executive branch, and Fish and Wildlife spending to support hunters and fishermen. Senator Wimberger personally has bills in the Legislature dealing with PFAS contamination and clean up, and protecting children in failed abortions.

Business items: Our September speaker will be Dan Nemke of BC Organics. Options were discussed for future speakers, including the Dispatch Center, Brown County Budget, and affordable housing development. Directors Sladek and Goldhahn had investigated the option of moving our meeting location to the Drift Inn to accommodate a noon meeting time. It was determined that site would not meet our needs. President Schwalbach continues to seek legislative support for a state wind turbine study. Glenn reminded members that anyone interested in submitting editorials or items of interest for the Tax Times should send them to Treasurer Tom Sladek or Secretary Rod Goldhahn for review and inclusion. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for October 1.

Committee/other reports: President Schwalbach reported that 387 Assembly bills and 390 Senate bills are pending. Thirty-three have become law. Director Parins reported on an article comparing growth of municipalities across the county. Director Goldhahn reported that with the

passage of the state budget, school districts now have the state funding information needed to proceed with their budget development, referencing the presentation the Green Bay District made to us at our May meeting.

Meeting Notes by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary

September Meeting Notes

Today's speaker was Dan Nemke, VP of Engineering at Sagepoint Energy, discussing the BC Organics Dairy RNG facility which converts dairy animal waste to natural gas. This facility in Wrightstown, is one of the world's largest manure biogas projects. The facility partners with 12 area dairy farms with over 30,000 cows, processing nearly one million gallons of manure per day to be processed through 16 anaerobic digester tanks to capture methane and create 1,630 MMBtu's of renewable natural gas. This is roughly equivalent to two tanker trucks of gasoline per day. After processing, the liquid digestate is pressed and dried to create 135 tons of fiber bedding to be used by those dairy farms. The liquid from the process is sent through a cleaning and reclamation system which produces and discharges over 400,000 gallons of clean water every day. The natural gas produced by the facility is discharged into a WPS pipeline to be sold on the open market, largely to customers in California which requires a higher concentration of bio-gas than other states. Much of the technology used in these processes are reapplications of those present in the papermaking and wastewater industries. One of the largest contributing factors to BC Organics success is their total control of the operation, including engineering, design, construction, and operation.

Business items: Our October invited speaker will a Brown County representative to provide an update on the Brown County Budget process. President Schwalbach reminded members that anyone interested in submitting editorials or items of interest for the Tax Times should send them to Treasurer Tom Sladek or Secretary Rod Goldhahn for review and inclusion. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for October 1. Glen appointed a nomination committee of Dave Nelson, Tom Sladek, and Rod Goldhahn for directors and officers for next year. Anyone wishing to serve or recommend candidates should contact one of

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the committee members.

Committee/other reports: President Schwalbach reported attending a Fox Valley Initiative meeting focused on free speech on college campuses. He also reported very few new bills had been approved by the legislature and forwarded to the governor. None of which had major taxpayer consequence. There are currently 427 active bills

in the senate and 434 in the assembly. Director Parins reported significant school construction progressing. Director Goldhahn commented on the wealth of comparative data concerning public schools available on the Wisconsin Institute of Law and Liberty website.

Meeting Notes by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary

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FUQ's - Government Budget Shutdown

What are the consequences of going through a substantial portion or all of the budget year under a CR? Our government goes into (or through) the fiscal year without the required advance revenue and spending plans. The President and Congress fall further behind in (or never perform) the preparation desperately needed for the next budget year. Spending decisions are made up by the politicians as they go along, often without regard to revenue limitations. Following a non-process like this, it should be no surprise that the result has become continuous deficit spending. Yet federal politicians still have the audacity to call it all "the budget process."

What is the take home message? We now have an entire generation of politicians and bureaucrats in power that have no understanding of the need for advance financial planning and budgeting. Alternatively, it may be that they have no respect for it.

Meanwhile, the politicians have run deficits in all but two of 28 years since 1996. For this reason, it may be said the procedure they follow virtually demands

deficit spending every year. The "father" of deficit spending, John Maynard Keynes, promoted it as a way to stimulate the economy during an economic recession. Deficits would be repaid with surpluses in the good and boom years. Plainly, Keynes' model has nothing to do with our current pattern of nonstop deficit spending.

Whether intended or not, this process also results in a confused, convulsed, and angry public. A public that understands little of what has been written above and may not even care. A public whose confusion and anger can be manipulated for political ends.

Those who found what's written here to be acceptable stopped reading this a while ago. But if you found it to be disagreeable, doing what's within your power to bring about an improvement in government leadership becomes your obligation as a citizen. Founder and President Three, Thomas Jefferson, got it right when he wrote, "...wherever the people are well informed they can be trusted with their own government; that whenever things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, they may be relied on to set them to rights."

Scott

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 1:00 pm 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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Meeting Location

The Village Grille, Allouez

1:00 pm Meeting

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday - Nov 20, 2025 BCTA Monthly Meeting.
1:00pm at The Village Grille, Allouez

Thursday - Dec 18, 2025 BCTA Monthly Meeting.
1:00pm at The Village Grille, Allouez
Chancy Huntzinger, Director of Public Safety
Communications

BCTA monthly meetings are held the Third Thursday of each month, 1:00 pm, 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.

Nov-Dec 2025



www.BCTAxpayers.com
