

How Were Your Property Taxes?

By Brian K. Verheyden, BCTA

Most Wisconsin homeowners experience a familiar sense of dread at the end of each year when the property tax notice arrives. For many, the initial reaction is a mix of frustration and resignation. We see the final number, perhaps complain to a neighbor, and then write the check because it feels "too late" to do anything else.

But is it truly too late? While you cannot change last year's bill today, the cycle of taxation for the coming year is already in motion. If we simply shrug our shoulders and wait for the next notice, we guarantee ourselves another year of passive participation. The truth is, there is much more we can do—provided we understand how the system works.

Understanding the "Four-Headed" Tax Monster

Property taxes do not simply materialize; they are the result of specific, local budgetary

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Federal Budget Process Proposal Update

In our last issue of the Tax Times, Director Tom Sladek described a legislative proposal the BCTA has recommended for action to Congressman Tony Wied, and Senators Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson. In short, we proposed these legislative incentives as requirements to prevent the continued abuse of the federal budget process:

When the government is operating under a Continuing Resolution (a nearly permanent state of affairs in Washington), Congress, the President, and their assigned staff are not paid. Back pay and benefits are restored to them once they properly complete the budget process.

When the government goes into a "shutdown," Congress, the President, and their staff, once again, are not paid. But during the shutdown, their compensation is lost to them forever.

Congressman Wied, and Senators Baldwin and Johnson have all confirmed receipt of our proposal. Detailed responses specific to our proposal should be communicated from their offices in time for the next issue of the Tax Times.

Brown County Property Taxes

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2 year Increase
Brown County Tax Levy	92,393,848	92,506,847	94,578,818	97,532,279	5.4%
City, Village & Town Totals	164,015,791	174,973,048	188,301,422	199,200,425	13.8%
Technical College Totals	18,354,373	18,506,818	18,676,766	18,981,652	2.6%
Public School District Totals	208,027,489	212,165,373	235,426,669	246,002,527	15.9%
Brown County Totals	482,791,500	498,152,087	536,983,675	561,716,983	12.8%

Source: Wisconsin DOR Statement of Taxes
<https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/Report/sot-final.aspx>

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
In our 41st Year of Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government.

December Meeting Notes

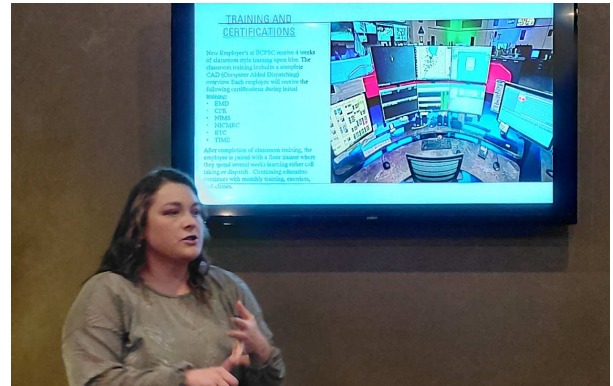
Today's speakers was Chancy Huntzinger, Director and Jessica Skelecki, Operations Manager, of Brown County Public Safety Communications (BCPSC). The mission of the BCPSC Center is to provide the vital link between those in need and emergency responders. Those communication flows go both ways. The BCPCS is the Public Safety Answering point for all of Brown County and a consolidated dispatch center.

In 2024, they processed 313,982 calls with 79,033 being 911 calls and 202,040 being calls for service with roughly 80% police related and 20% fire. Daily operations are divided between a communications supervisor, multiple call takers, 3 police dispatchers, 2 fire dispatchers, and 2 teletype operators. They also have a surge staffing contingency and a fully functional backup center. In all they have about 50 employees. BCPCS serves over 30 agencies across police, fire, and EMS and provides backup for 5 neighboring counties.

The presenters spoke of their use of standardized protocols across all their services to provide consistent, accurate, and immediate support. Dispatching is stressful job requiring unique multitasking skills, so many candidates do not make it. Those that do, receive significant classroom training followed by hands on supervised training culminating in multiple certifications. They shared the multiple complexities presented by the NFL draft and how well all their staff and the many associated groups performed during that event.

The BCPCS 2026 budget is just over \$9.5 million, with 72% personnel costs, 19% equipment, software, & maintenance, and 7% other. There are several significant improvements planned for 2026 dealing with equipment, protocols, services, and new and emerging technology including the rural broadband project which will enable true redundancy across all the 911 radio towers. It was a very detailed presentation, well received by the audience. The speakers also welcomed members to tour the center and see it in action.

Business items: Next month's speaker will be Attorney General candidate Eric Toney. 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



Jessica Skelecki
BC Public Safety Communications

for review and inclusion.

As a follow up to Vice President Liddicoat's Nov/Dec Tax Times Cover concerning the federal budgeting process, Treasurer Sladek submitted a proposed resolution calling for legislators and their staff to forfeit their pay during government shutdowns and any collected taxes are not paid to the government until the shutdown ends. It also calls for Legislator and staff pay and benefits to be withheld during continuing resolutions.

Officers Heidel, Schwalbach, and Sladek attended the Wisconsin Institute of Law and Liberty's Christmas reception. Officer Schwalbach attended a Wisconsin Policy Forum webinar concerning the difficulty in recruiting fire and EMS members. In an effort to help this the legislature and governor passed legislation to help pay for a portion of student training. The webinar also spoke to the cost and lead time in replacing equipment and a push toward consolidation. Schwalbach also shared that the governor has signed 26 bills, including one concerning restricting use of electronic devices in schools, when not used to aid education, and one concerning the process to chose electors. He spoke to several more bills being considered.

Committee/other reports: Director Bowers alerted the group that multiple school districts across the county are considering spring referendums.

Notes submitted by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary

January Meeting Notes

President Heidel called the meeting to order. Visitors were welcomed and invited to introduce themselves.

Today's speaker was Eric Toney, current Fond du Lac (FDL) County District Attorney and Republican candidate for WI Attorney General. He is a native of FDL County and is in his 14th year as the elected DA. DA Toney is also the immediate Past President of the WI DA's Association, where he worked with State government to fund additional DAs across the state, including for Brown County. He was awarded DA of the year in 2024. He wants to bring the successes of the DA's Association to state government, stressing public safety over politics.

This would include filling open positions in the crime lab of the Department of Justice to better serve law enforcement and prosecutors. He stated he has garnered endorsement from County Sheriffs and DAs from both sides of the aisle. DA Toney further responded to questions from the group across a variety of subjects.

Business items: President Heidel reminded members interested in submissions to the Tax Times to get them to Directors Sladek or Goldhahn. The group discussed several options for future speakers or subject matter. Next Executive Committee meeting will be April 8th. Director Sladek reported that our resolution concerning withholding legislative pay during government shutdowns had been delivered to area legislators and he was awaiting a reply. President Heidel discussed moving our meetings to noon at the Depot beginning in March and those in attendance agreed to make the move. He will also investigate different options like an occasional breakfast meeting to enable more people to attend. President Heidel also shared that the Executive Committee is working on an agreement with Director Verheyden to provide contract services to improve the appearance and use of our website. There was a discussion around dissolving our standing committee structure and replace it with an ad hoc structure to focus on specific issues. At present we



Eric Toney speaks to BCTA

will continue with the standing committee themes.

Committee/other reports: Director Schwalbach reported on a presentation by Dr. Douglas Frank at the Fox Valley Initiative meeting concerning a statistical analysis of voter roll changes before and after elections. He also shared information on WI bills dealing with taxes on tips, State of WI and UW doing business with China, and a pending Constitutional amendment restricting the use of the partial veto to create or increase taxes or fees. There was discussion around the local debates on the siting of data centers around the state. Director Verheyden reported on an effort with widespread support across 15 organizations to create bills to reduce red tape in governmental regulations. Member Schmitt expressed concern about the lack of contested local elections. Director Goldhahn reported on pending school referendums covering both facilities and operations. Districts considering spring or fall referendums include Howard Suamico, De Pere, and Green Bay.

Notes submitted by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary

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.



January 29, 2026
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Richard Heidel, President
Brown County Taxpayers Association
(920) 655-3107 rheidel@new.rr.com

Another Federal Government “Shutdown”? Taxpayer Association Calls for Accountability in Federal Budget Process

The Brown County Taxpayers Association has called for legislation to impose accountability in the federal budget process. Citing renewed threats of yet another federal government “shutdown”, BCTA President Rich Heidel said “This nonsense has gone on long enough. Congress legislated a budget setting process over fifty years ago and simply continues to disregard it.”

“The law requires Congress and the President to complete a budget by October 1st for the succeeding calendar year. And year after year they disregard the law, resulting in continued deficit spending and a national debt now exceeding 38 trillion dollars”, Heidel said. “The people chosen to be stewards of our government are ignoring their duties and leading our nation down a path to financial ruin.”

“We have contacted our Congressman and U.S. Senators asking for legislation which would impose these three things:

- 1) **Whenever the government is “shutdown,” (budget process not completed by October 1st and no Continuing Resolution), Congress, the President, and their assigned staff are not paid. Their pay and benefits during a shutdown are lost to them forever.**
- 2) **Whenever the government is “shutdown”, tax collections don’t have to be sent to the IRS. Taxes are still collected, but they may be held back and interest earned on them by the business entities involved. Once the shutdown is over (budget process completed or a Continuing Resolution passed), tax collections that were held back must be submitted within a month.**
- 3) **When the government is operating under a Continuing Resolution (budget process not completed by October 1st but with a CR in place), Congress, the President, and their assigned staff are not paid. Back pay and benefits are restored to them once the budget process for the fiscal year is completed.**

We asked Congressman Wied and Senators Baldwin and Johnson to advise us of their viewpoints on this matter and look forward to further engagement with them.

Members of the House and Senate need to have consequences administered when they fail in their duties, and this would put those consequences in place.”

(end)

(Continued from page 1)

decisions. In Brown County, your tax bill is typically composed of levies from four primary taxing entities:

1. **Your Municipality:** The City, Village, or Town where you reside.
2. **Brown County:** Supporting county-wide infrastructure and services.
3. **The School District:** Often the largest portion of your bill.
4. **Technical Colleges:** Such as Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC).

Each entity operates on its own fiscal calendar, holding public hearings where spending is debated. By the time you receive your bill in December, these boards have already voted and the "mill rate" is locked in. To make a difference, you must engage during the **planning process**.

The Rising Cost of Local Government

The numbers tell a compelling story. **In 2023, property tax collections in Brown County totaled approximately \$498 million. By 2025, that figure climbed by more than 12% to over \$561 million.** When collections rise at this rate, it places a compounding burden on everyone, from young families to retirees on fixed incomes.

High Stakes: The 2026 Spring Election

The most direct way to influence your tax bill is through the ballot box. Wisconsin's Spring Election is Tuesday, April 7, 2026. This non-partisan election features local leaders who decide exactly how much of your paycheck goes toward local services.

On the ballot this spring, you will find:

- **County Board Supervisors, City Alderpersons, and Town Supervisors**
- **School Board Members**

In Brown County, over 30 local races will be decided. These are the individuals who approve multi-million dollar projects or, conversely, find efficiencies to keep rates stable.

The Wisconsin Supreme Court Race

This year, the stakes are even higher with an open seat on the **Wisconsin Supreme Court**. Following **Justice Rebecca Bradley's** decision not to seek re-election, voters will choose between **Judge Maria Lazar** and **Judge Chris Taylor**.

While the court does not set your local mill rate, it frequently rules on matters that impact your wallet, including the legality of tax caps, school funding formulas, and the limits of government spending power. The person in this seat helps define the legal landscape in which our local taxing entities operate.

How to Take Action

If you are tired of the "sticker shock" every December, here is how you can pivot from complaining to contributing:

1. **Research the Candidates:** Don't vote based on name recognition alone. See where candidates for local boards and the Supreme Court stand on fiscal responsibility.
2. **Contact Your Officials:** Call or email your current representatives. Ask them about the 12% increase in county collections and what they are doing to mitigate future hikes.
3. **Attend Budget Hearings:** Most municipalities hold these in the fall. They are often sparsely attended, meaning a few voices can carry significant weight.
4. **Mobilize Your Circle:** Talk to your neighbors. When local officials know citizens are paying attention to the line items, they tend to be more scrutinizing of the spending.

Conclusion

The 2026 Spring Election is your chance to choose the architects of your next tax bill. From the local school board to the highest court in the state, these positions matter to your bottom line. It is up to you to become informed, ask the hard questions, and make your voice heard at the polls on April 7th.

Brian K. Verheyden, BCTA

The TAX TIMES

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Meeting Location

The Village Grille, Allouez

1:00 pm Meeting

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

- Thursday - Mar 19, 2026 BCTA Monthly Meeting.
1:00pm at The Village Grille, Allouez
Guest Speaker: Rep. David Steffen
- Tuesday - Apr 7, 2026 Local Elections Please Vote
- Thursday - Apr 16, 2025 BCTA Monthly Meeting.

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.

Mar - Apr 2026



www.BCTAxpayers.com