

"You Can't Handle the Truth!"

Rod Goldhahn, BCTA Secretary

This iconic line from the 1992 movie, "A Few Good Men", seems to be coming back in vogue. Cries of "Fake News!", "Misinformation!", "Disinformation!" fill the air waves.

For years, we have been trained to be careful trusting what we hear from politicians. While it is absolutely wrong to paint an entire group with a broad brush, entertainers, comics, satirists and everyday people have delighted in poking fun at the veracity of politicians. We may have shrugged it off, because we could always go back to the science, or the experts, or trusted news sources to get the real facts. And we've had high levels of faith in the institutions that were created to keep us safe and share the truth. It's troubling to think those days may be behind us. This isn't a new phenomenon.

Those of us that are old enough, likely recall the scandals of Watergate, the Pentagon Papers, and others. These were shocking, but we still held on to faith that the truth would win out, and efforts like those would be investigated, exposed, and corrected.

Elon Musk's purchase of Twitter and the revelations being brought to light in the released emails reinforce that even those trusted with protecting the "truth", define the term through their own lens. And those we trust to report the "truth", whether old school, like the major newspapers and networks, or the new school of cable TV and social media, are willing, or unwilling, participants in clouding the definition. As far back as 1983, former CIA agent John Stockwell admitted that an important part of his role was using reporters to pass fake stories and even fake photos to direct and

control public opinion. It's been going on for decades, regardless of which party is in power.

Even In the last Green Bay City Council elections, we saw independent campaign literature that opposing candidates agreed was not true.

This should be a major concern of every American, regardless of your political affiliation. We often are seduced into thinking this is OK, if the "truth" matches what we believe and it's the right thing to do to convince those who don't understand as well as we do! Or we justify it saying the other side is doing the same thing. Is it OK if our side has the power, and not OK if the other side does?? Actual truth, and science are powerful forces and can prevail, but only if discussion and debate are free from the restraints of those sharing (or do we say, controlling) the information.

The BCTA does not endorse individual candidates. We regularly invite candidates to speak at our monthly meetings, to expose our members to their points of view and positions. We encourage citizens to attend forums and look for other opportunities to listen and ask questions. Then, we can form their own opinions without the interference of outside "noise" trying to formulate those opinions for us.

The truth will prevail, but only if we seek it. It requires effort, and it's our responsibility to make that effort, and stay away from the Kool Aid stands on either side of the street!

Rod

October Meeting Notes

Guest Speaker: Eric Wimberger, State Senator

President Schwalbach introduced today's speaker State Senator Eric Wimberger. Senator Wimberger is from Green Bay and represents the 30th Senate District. He currently serves on the committees on Finance, Judiciary & Public Safety, Natural Resources & Energy (Vice Chair), and the joint committees on Finance, Law Revision, and the Legislative Audit Committee (Co-Chair). Generally, committee assignments are made on background and skill sets. Senator Wimberger is the only practicing attorney on the Republican side.

Some of the most notable issues he is working on include PFAS remediation grants, and DOT incorporation of the Southern Brown County bridge into the state budget. He discussed the change in shared revenue to municipalities to be based more on sales tax than income tax, resulting in some major changes for certain communities. There was also a change in the school funding formula. Of concern to the Audit Committee is the management of the huge sums of money being provided for rural broadband. The complexity of the issue and the varied methods to provide service open the door for waste and abuse. Another issue is improving the efficiency of the professional licensing process, to reduce the sometimes months long wait for licenses in critical need areas. The Senator also spoke about the Constitutional amendment to restrict private funding for elections which will likely come before the voters in April.

Annual BCTA Board elections were held. Brian Verheyden and Tom Sladek were reelected as Directors to three year terms. Officers for the next year are: President-Glen Schwalbach, Vice Presidents-Dave Dillenburg and Scott Liddicoat, Secretary-Rod Goldhahn, Treasurer-Tom Sladek.

Business items: President Schwalbach updated the group on the Brown County Broadband project. November's speaker will cover the project in detail. Director Liddicoat updated the group on his research into early/absentee voting. The group decided not to take a position on the matter at this time, and that Scott would likely prepare a position paper for future



State Senator Eric Wimberger talks to BCTA

discussion. Treasurer Sladek updated the group on the question of the BCTA becoming a member of the WI Conservative Coalition. It was recommended we not join the group because their work was much broader than fiscal issues and was not a good fit for our mission. Tom also updated the group about his attendance at a recent Liberty Alliance of WI meeting. The consensus was that, while the BCTA mission and the missions of these types of groups don't fully match to warrant joining, there is some overlap so continuing to share positions and ideas is of value.

Committee/other reports: Local-The GB Assessors office declined our offer to work with them concerning improvements to their website. We will continue to look for ways to better inform taxpayers. Schools-Members of the Schools committee and Exec Committee met with members of the GB Area Public School to talk their current budget process. It was an open and frank discussion. One of the ways the BCTA can have the biggest impact on getting our voices heard is to have members serve on various joint ad hoc committees. The next opportunity will be the committee to review school boundaries and propose changes in light of the excess capacity.

Meeting Notes by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary

November Meeting Notes

Guest Speaker: August Neverman

President Schwalbach introduced today's speaker August Neverman, Brown County Broadband and BCCAN (Brown County Community Area Network) Director. He shared information about the \$27.2M project cost, the BCCAN transition, and Broadband in general. Mr. Neverman noted that this all started with a desire to fix communication issues with the 911 towers. Initially the intent was to link the seven 911 towers and the Sheriff's department with fiber optics. It grew to linking the town/village halls and county locations.

Bug Tussel agreed to do the project with a \$27.2 million loan. In addition to the fiber installations, there will be wireless on the 911 towers and BT will



August Neverman answers questions regarding the Brown County Broadband Project

take over BCCAN. There will also be other towers built for wireless broadband. The end result will be significant for the County and eliminating future equipment and lease costs. The \$27.2M loan will result in approximately \$56M back to the County

through \$27.2M in principal, \$19M in interest, and \$10M in returned ARPA funds.

Business items: VP Liddicoat shared there would not be a request for the organization to take a position on early voting, but rather work on an information piece to inform citizens about the various procedures available and how to execute each. Scott had also done some follow up with the Green Bay Assessors office and shared information about processes to challenge assessment during reassessment years and those between reassessments.

Committee/other reports: President Schwalbach reminded members that they can go to the Legislature's website and make push requests for information on bills, committee activity, and other subjects. He shared there are a large number of bills in play at this time, including over a dozen just dealing with aspects of elections. Secretary Goldhahn reported about the current survey being conducted by the Green Bay district and urged district citizens to take part. Items included are school consolidations and proposed referendums for maintenance project and constructing a new school. An ad hoc committee to study and propose changes to school boundaries has also been formed. Director Parins reported that the Green Bay budget was passed with an increase and little opposition. There was discussion about how citizen input could be shared. He also shared that a Green Bay Energy Plan was being developed.

Meeting Notes 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 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
P. O. Box 684
Green Bay, WI 54305-0684

Address Service Requested.

PRSR STD
U. S. Postage
PAID
Green Bay, WI
Permit No. 255

Inside This Issue

You Can't Handle the Truth

Oct Meeting Notes

Nov Meeting Notes

Voter Guide

Meeting Location

The Village Grille, Allouez

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday - Jan 18, 2024 BCTA Monthly Meeting.
12:00 at The Village Grille, Allouez

Thursday - Feb 15, 2024 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: \$15.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.
Call Tom Sladek – 499-7701 for information or to leave message.**

Jan - Feb 2024

~~**\$30.9 Trillion**~~²⁰²²

~~**\$32.7 Trillion**~~²⁰²³

\$34 Trillion¹⁻²⁴



www.BCTAxpayers.com
