

The TAX TIMES

Nov-Dec
2024

Newsletter of the "BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION."

Volume 39, Issue 6

BCTA Files Wisconsin Supreme Court Amicus Brief

The BCTA filed an amicus brief in *LeMieux v. Tony Evers*, a case before the Wisconsin State Supreme Court which challenges the Governor's creative, expansive and unprecedented use of line-item veto power. The amicus brief, filed on behalf of BCTA by the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty, supports the plaintiff's position that the Governor's action is not legal. Oral arguments in the case were heard by the Wisconsin State Supreme Court on October 9th. A ruling is expected around the end of the year.

The Governor took a passage from the Legislature's last two-year budget bill and butchered the text into a 400-year commitment of annual increases in state education funding. The governor did this by deleting individual numerals, letters, and even a non-alphanumeric hyphen, and then closing the resultant gaps to assemble a statute which in no way reflects the Legislature's intent.

"The Governor's action in this matter shows arrogant disregard for the separation of powers established in our State constitution and citizens deserve better", said BCTA President Glen Schwalbach.

Brown County Property Taxes

	2023	2024
Brown County Tax Levy	92,506,847	94,578,818
City, Village & Town Totals	174,973,048	188,301,422
Technical College Totals	18,506,818	18,676,766
Public School District Totals	212,165,373	235,426,669
Brown County Totals	498,152,087	537,381,986

Source: Wisconsin DOR Statement of Taxes

The Growing Burden of 2025 Property Taxes

Brian K Verheyden

In the coming weeks, property owners will receive their 2025 property tax bills, and many can expect yet another increase. While rising taxes may feel inevitable, it's important to remember these bills aren't arbitrary; they directly reflect decisions made by local governments. Each bill is a sum of contributions to four main taxing bodies: your city, village, or township; Brown County; your local public school district; and the technical colleges. Individually, these entities justify their revenue needs, but together, the burden on property owners has grown substantial—and for many, unsustainable.

Local officials set these tax rates through a budget planning process, often presented as transparent and open to public input. Yet, few residents have the time or resources to attend these sessions or review lengthy budget reports. By the time these budgets reach the final voting stage, they're often locked in, limiting public influence on spending decisions. As a result, tax increases are typically approved with minimal resistance, placing a growing financial burden on property owners who have little power to push back.

Consider Brown County's property tax collections: in 2024, they rose to approximately \$537 million, an alarming increase of almost 8% over the previous year. Year after year, these increases contribute to significant financial pressure for property owners, especially as other costs rise. While these funds finance public services and infrastructure, many owners wonder where their hard-earned money truly goes.

(Continued on page 2)

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
In our 39th Year of Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government.

August Meeting Notes

Guest Speaker: Lucas Vebber, WILL

Today's speaker was Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty (WILL) Deputy Counsel, Lucas Vebber. WILL is a nonpartisan, nonprofit law and policy center, based in Milwaukee. They have a total staff of 22, with 11 attorneys doing both policy and legal work. Their mission is to advance the public interest in the rule of law, constitutional governments and a robust civil society. WILL does this through litigation, education, and participation in the public discourse. Their Policy team does policy research and analysis on various subjects of public interest throughout WI. The Restoring American Education project develops model school board policies to help train new school board members. Additional areas of focus include: Citizen's Guide to Open Government, School Choice, Healthcare price transparency, and social media impact of political polarization. In the area of litigation, WILL focuses on four areas: Equality under the Law, Preserving Democracy, First Freedoms, and Education. Attorney Vebber outlined several recent and current cases they are involved with in these areas. WILL represents their clients at no cost. They are funded by private donations. The BCTA will be joining WILL in a case addressing the power of Governors in Line item Vetsos.

Business items: Vice President Scott Liddicoat reported that voting guides were still available for placement if members needed more. Treasurer Sladek reported that candidate forum invitations had gone out to candidates in the 88th, 89th, and 90th Assembly Districts and 30th Senate District. President Schwalbach reported that our meeting time would change from noon to 1:00pm, beginning with the September meeting. He also noted that the September speaker would be Michelle Seidl, Bellevue Village Director of Finance/Clerk-Treasurer.

Committee/other reports: Director Fletcher reported on voting preparation and testing of voting machines going on across the County. President Schwalbach reported on the turnout/results of the primary elections and the impacts of the recent redistricting. Governor Evers visited the Town of Morrison to present a \$2 million grant as part of the Agricultural Roads Improvement Program. Director Bowers noted he and his wife are members of an ad hoc committee of the GBAPSD working to identify the attributes of a high



**Lucas Vebber, WILL Deputy Counsel
speaks to BCTA**

school graduate in the future. Representatives of WILL will be part of a panel in the area in October to provide guidance to School Board members in their roles and responsibilities. A discussion was held dealing with providing our members dates, times, and locations of governmental meetings they may be interested in attending. Director Nola Leuthner shared her experiences as a poll watcher and at central count in Bellevue.

Meeting Notes by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary

(Continued from page 1)

Ultimately, residents are left paying for decisions they may not agree with but have little power to change. The current property tax system prioritizes revenue collection over considering the financial strain on property owners, many already stretched thin by other expenses. Local governments often seek new funding sources but rarely explore alternative strategies or cost-saving measures. This is why public awareness and engagement are essential: without them, the cycle of rising property taxes is unlikely to change.

As the 2025 billing period approaches, we need to question this continued tax escalation. It's crucial to hold officials accountable for responsible spending and demand greater transparency in budget planning. Without speaking up, these unchecked increases will persist, burdening residents who deserve more oversight and fairness in the tax process.

Brian

September Meeting Notes

Guest Speaker: Michelle Seidl, Bellevue Finance Director/Clerk

Visitors were welcomed to introduce themselves and share information with the group. State Assembly District 88 candidate Ben Franklin introduced himself and spoke about his campaign. Green Bay District 11 Alder Melinda Eck introduced herself to the group.

Today's speaker was Michelle Seidl, Bellevue Village Director of Finance/Clerk-Treasurer. Michelle addressed the group on election security. Ms. Seidl joined the Village of Bellevue in 2023 but has experience as a municipal Clerk/Treasurer since 2011 and serves as a trainer for the WI Elections Commission. She shared the election related responsibilities of a municipal clerk in the areas of preparation, candidate requirements, voter registration & confirmation, staffing, equipment/materials, testing, records, absentee voting, in person voting, results, verifications, and follow up concerning issues or suspected fraud/abuse. Ms. Seidl highlighted the need to have the proper identification for registering or voting and leaving sufficient time when requesting and returning mail-in ballots. She responded to several questions from the group on the potential for multiple voting, residential care facility voting, or non-citizen voting.

Business items: Vice President Scott Liddicoat reported that demand for the voting guides had subsided, but based on the number distributed the project was a success. President Schwalbach reported that the planned Assembly & Senate candidate forum was cancelled due to lack of commitment from several candidates to take part. Today's meeting was the first held at the later 1:00pm time and multiple members expressed a preference for the noon timing. President Schwalbach will research options. President Schwalbach reported that the BCTA has joined the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty in a Supreme Court challenge over Governor Evers partial veto on school financing, essentially rewriting timing that was never approved by the



Michelle Seidl, Bellevue Finance Director/Clerk speaks to BCTA

legislature, violating the WI Constitution. He also noted that the October speaker would be Patrick McIlheran, Director of Policy for the Badger Institute. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for October 9th.

Committee/other reports: President Schwalbach reported there are several Legislative Study Committees holding hearings in Madison, some seeking input. He noted Gov. Evers, in his "back to school" tour comments, committed the largest biannual increase in state funding for the UW system in his tenure. Director Parins asked Alder Eck to update the group on City of Green Bay activities. She noted the City Market Project on Broadway was moving forward and that the GB Wheel Tax would increase from \$20 to \$25 effective in 2025. Consideration of a Transportation Utility fee in lieu of the tax was stopped before any money was spent on a study due to a recent Supreme Court ruling. Secretary Goldhahn reported that the Green Bay Area Public School District will be meeting with our Executive and Schools Committees to share details of the upcoming \$183M referendum dealing with security improvements and school consolidations. He also noted the De Pere School District had updated the details of their referendum.

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 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
P. O. Box 684
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Meeting Location

The Village Grille, Allouez

**1:00 pm Meeting
Time Change**

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday - Nov 21, 2024 BCTA Monthly Meeting.
1:00pm at The Village Grille, Allouez
Jeff Flynt, Brown County Deputy Executive,

Thursday - Dec 19, 2024 BCTA Monthly Meeting.
1:00pm at The Village Grille, Allouez

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 2024



www.BCTAxpayers.com