

## I Won't Buy New Cars for Tony Evers

Scott Liddicoat

Finally! Some clarity on the state budget process moving forward. Gov. Evers veto power was upheld in the courts. You remember, the veto power that enabled him to creatively increase per student spending \$325 each year for the next 402 years. With this kind of selective striking of words, numbers, and characters, what's next? Will I be vetoed into buying Tony Evers a new car every month for life in the next budget? One wonders.

Historically, both Republican and Democrat governors have used their veto power in ways that everyone agrees is abusive and was never intended. The opposing party always complains. Lawsuits ensue. But neither side ever has the integrity to propose reasonable changes to this power while their guy is governor. If this reminds you of immature siblings unwilling to stand down while squabbling, you probably have the right idea. But I digress.

Clarity on the Governor's veto power now enables further development of the two-year state budget to move forward. Gov. Evers started the process in February by proposing a \$119 billion biennial budget.<sup>[1]</sup> On its face, it increases state spending by a whopping \$21.6 billion, or 22%.<sup>[1,2]</sup> An example of his Christmas wish list of spending increases is this gem:

*Provide 8.0 FTE PR-S positions to the Department of Administration's Division of the Capitol Police to ensure appropriate security capabilities without needing to rely as heavily on agencies such as the Wisconsin State Patrol.*

Note this request does not suggest there are citizen services lacking anywhere. So this proposal might be fine if it also recommended a corresponding 8.0 FTE reduction in positions at "agencies such as the Wisconsin State Patrol." Worded that way, the recommendation would mean no expansion in government size or increase in state spending.

Beyond his proposals, negotiation from Gov. Evers in the development of a legislative budget has usually been minimal. This approach has worked for him. It's a win if an item from the Governor's wish list stays in the legislature's budget. Items that don't stay provide fodder for complaints from interest groups that make for good media sound bites. And like last time, maybe he'll be able to fix things with an inspired veto.

Recent history tells us Republicans will be reduced to a photo op next to the towering stack of papers that make up Ever's proposed budget. They'll complain that the Governor's proposal is expansive, expensive, and wasteful. Then they'll pass a budget with a large—but not enormous—spending increase.<sup>[2]</sup> After that, they wait to see how they've been outflanked with the creative vetoes that are sure to follow.

In the end, most Wisconsin citizens lose in this process. Government jobs, programs, and spending swell. In the past six years, the people of Wisconsin have lost more and more, and then more money to inflation.<sup>[3]</sup> In exchange, Wisconsin politicians have given all of us even larger spending increases (see the graph below!). Neither politicians nor the media talk about this.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## February Meeting Notes

Today's speakers were Nathan Qualls and Tricia Garrison of NEW Water. Nathan serves as Executive Director and Tricia serves as Public Affairs and Education Manager. NEW Water is the "brand" of the Green Bay Metropolitan Sewage District. They are a public utility providing wastewater conveyance and treatment services for 15 municipalities in NE Wisconsin. In 2024 they cleaned more than 14 billion gallons of water. They are an essential service for public health, economic development, and residential growth. NEW Water is a non-profit utility with shared community cost based on system usage with a 2025 budget of \$53.6 million. They state they provide their services for about \$27/month for a typical family. Industrial users pay much more, depending on volume. A comprehensive plan was conducted in 2021 concluding a need to invest \$310-\$480 million over the next 20 years. This will require 5%-7% revenue increases for 10 years to fund those capital needs plus operations and maintenance. Major challenges to complete that plan include limited access to low interest loans and PFAS impacts. Ways that families and municipalities can help include projects to reduce the inflow during weather events, adaptive environmental/horticultural management, and reducing the infusion of non-flushable materials.

Business items: President Schwalbach reviewed the list of potential speakers over the next few months. A priority is getting a legislative speaker from the state Finance Committee to speak on the budget. If one is not available for a regular meeting, it was requested the Executive Committee (EC) set up a separate meeting. Director Sladek reminded attendees that they can provide names of potential members to him for inclusion in our newsletter

distribution for a year for free to encourage them to join. Last year 4 of 11 people in the trial chose to join. There was further discussion on methods to grow membership including an informational recruiting packet.

Committee/other reports: Director N. Leuthner shared her experiences being a poll worker in the Village of Bellevue and encouraged others to consider volunteering. Directors Liddicoat and Fletcher shared their experiences being poll observers. President Schwalbach reported on the NEW Patriots forum on local school board activism. He also encouraged members to go the Wisconsin Institute of Law & Liberty website and review their explanation of the multiple Executive Orders coming from President Trump. Director T. Leuthner shared a letter he had sent to our House Members urging renewing legislation to streamline the process to allow veterans to become educators.

President Schwalbach reported that over 200k names have been removed from the voter rolls, gave an update on the state budget progress, and was encouraged by a bill introduced requiring civics to be taught in WI schools. Director Parins shared the Governor's recent support towards closing the Green Bay Correctional Institute and encouraged community members to get involved in those discussions. Director Goldhahn reminded members about the various education related choices that will be on the April ballot including DPI Secretary, local school board elections, and a West De Pere referendum.

Meeting Notes by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary

*(Continued from page 1)*

They also don't talk about how private employers and employees across the state have coped over the last six years. They've withstood the onslaught of Covid and inflation. Some have gone out of business. Others have cut unnecessary costs, innovated, and stayed relevant during the hard times.

State government went the other way. Its reach expanded dramatically and so did state spending. If Gov. Evers gets his proposed \$119 billion budget, state spending will have nearly doubled since just 2015.<sup>[1, 2]</sup> During that time, no politician has ever suggested that people in state government should cut costs, innovate, and stay relevant like their private counterparts have. How sad and disrespectful to the people who work for the state. Seems the politicians believe state workers simply aren't as capable as their private counterparts.

So how will things play out this year? Will Governor Evers enter the budget development process beyond his spring proposals? Will Republicans play hardball? Will they threaten to let the budget lapse in

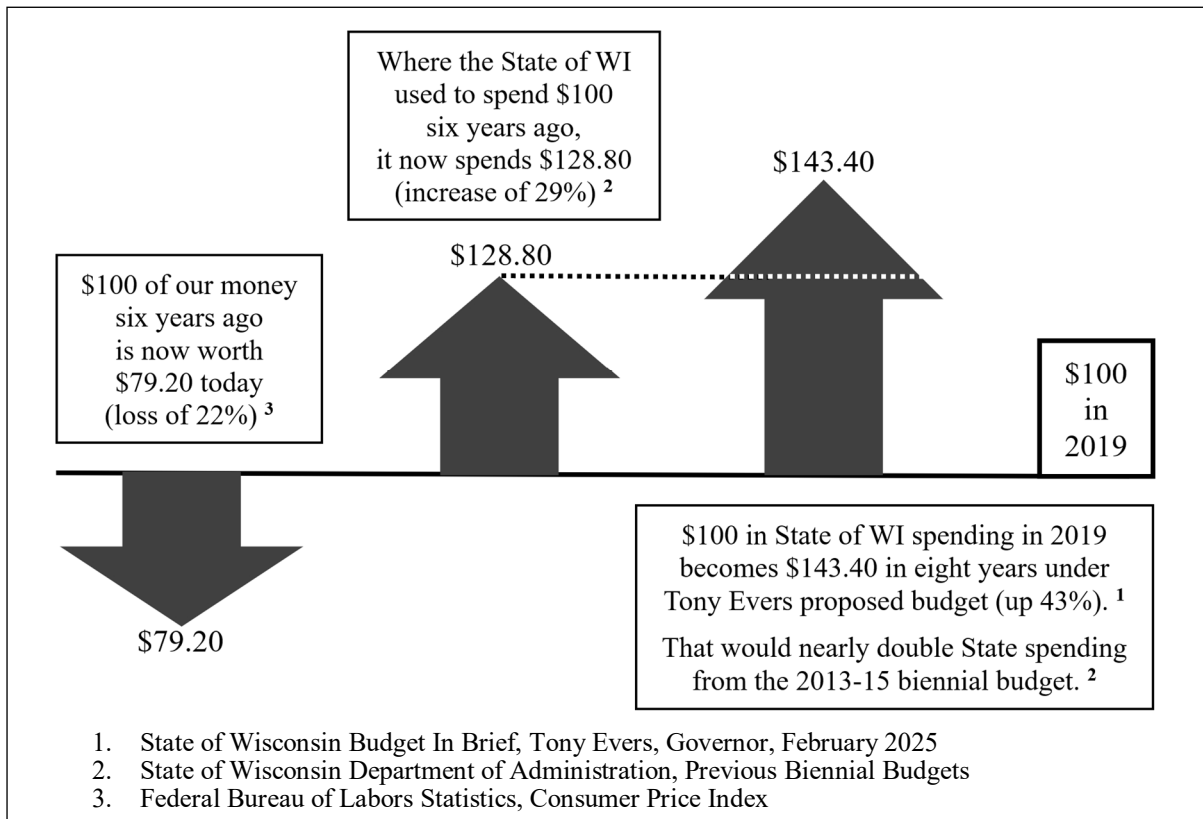
an effort to force Gov. Evers into budget agreements? Might they actually let the budget lapse, with 2023-25 spending levels becoming our next state budget by default? None of these actions seem likely.

The past tells us that without our firm engagement and the threat of removing political support, we'll get another budget increase beyond the cost of inflation. We'll also get more creative vetoes that we can only complain about, and nothing more.

But as you read this, we have a large state surplus. State debt is down. So, with the history of our last six years (check out the graph below!), my representatives have been put on notice. I expect no increase in state spending for this biennium. And I won't buy new cars for my favorite Wisconsin Governor either.

*Scott*

P.S. It took me four minutes to email my Assemblyman, Senator, and Governor on the budget. If you don't know yours, contact information for them may be found elsewhere in this issue of the Tax Times.



## March Meeting Notes

President Schwalbach called the meeting to order at 1:00pm. Elliot Christenson, candidate for Green Bay Board of Education, and Green Bay District 11 Alder Melinda Eck were recognized.

Today's speaker was Green Bay Police Chief Chris Davis. Chief Davis is a 26-year police service veteran with the last four serving the city of Green Bay. He provided a brief update and then spent significant time responding to questions. A current focus is the NFL Draft preparation. NFL security experts reported that Green Bay Police, Fire, and surrounding agencies were a month ahead of where Detroit was at this time last year. He noted that Detroit, Kansas City, and Nashville have been very helpful in providing documentation concerning their draft prep over the last three years. Local Public Safety costs associated with the draft are projected to be about \$2 million and there is activity in Madison to help defer some of those costs with state dollars. Overall crime rates in Green Bay are down slightly, but crimes against persons was up slightly, driven by domestic violence cases. Work is progressing to determine root cause. Gun violence incidents are down dramatically with the increased focus given to that issue in the past year, as are opioid overdoses tied to fentanyl due in large part to increased border security reducing the availability of the drug. The PD has been able to add two officer positions to their neighborhood response team to help with focused deterrents to crime. This puts the department staffing at 190 sworn positions with another three dozen professional support positions, which is tight for a community our size. In responding to questions, He was happy to report that local crime clearance rates were significantly above the national average and expressed appreciation for the high level of community support. The use of technology is playing an increasing role in reducing and solving crimes. Responding to a question concerning ICE enforcement, Chief Davis noted the GBPD has not received any request for assistance in any actions, but if a request was made, the department would comply.



**Chris Davis, Green Bay Police Chief speaks to BCTA**

Business items: Future speakers will be UWGB Economic Development Director Alan Peters in April, GB Area Public School representatives in May, and Adam Post of NWTC in June. Members of the Executive Committee met with State Senator Eric Wimberger concerning the state budget. Treasurer Sladek reported the trial membership program was open to participants, but he has yet to receive any names.

Committee/other reports: The WI joint Finance Committee will be holding a budget listening session for this area in Kaukauna. Director Parins reported on the increased activity in reaching an agreement to move the coal piles now located near the mouth of the river. Secretary Goldhahn shared that the Green Bay School District and City were working out an agreement to trade property around several school locations. Next month's elections include several location School Board races as well the WI Secretary of Public Instruction and urged people to get to the polls. He also shared that the DePere District has a nearly \$10 million referendum on the ballot dealing with increased demand for tech ed. Director Parins shared a binder containing 15 years of history of our Tax Times newsletter.

Meeting Notes by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary

## Find and contact your State Representatives:

Go to: **myvote.wi.gov**  
Click on: **My Voter Info**  
Click on: **My Elected Officials**  
Enter your: **Location details**  
You'll get: **Names for your Assemblyperson and Senator (and many others, too!)**

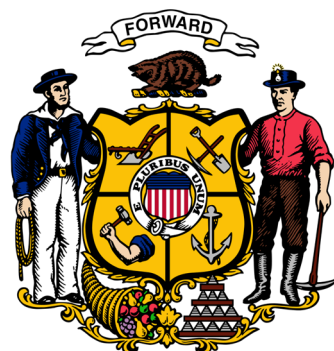
Search Internet: **Wisconsin State Legislature**  
**There you'll find email contacts / website links for your Legislators**

Search Internet: **Contact Governor Tony Evers**  
**Click and follow directions to contact him**

## Brown County State Legislators:

Assembly District 1: Joel Kitchens (R)  
Assembly District 2: Shae Sortwell (R)  
Assembly District 4: David Steffen (R)  
Assembly District 5: Joy Goeben (R)  
Assembly District 6: Elijah Behnke (R)  
Assembly District 88: Benjamin Franklin (R)  
Assembly District 89: Ryan Spaude (D)  
Assembly District 90: Amaad Rivera-Wagner (D)

Senate District 1: Andre Jacque (R)  
Senate District 2: Eric Wimberger (R)  
Senate District 30: Jamie Wall (D)



**See it online at [www.BCTaxpayers.com](http://www.BCTaxpayers.com)**

Wisconsin Budget in Brief 2025-2027  
2025-27 Governor's Budget Letter to Agencies

### **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](http://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

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## Meeting Location

**The Village Grille, Allouez**

**1:00 pm Meeting  
Time Change**

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## BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

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**Thursday - May 15, 2025** BCTA Monthly Meeting.  
**1:00pm** at The Village Grille, Allouez  
**Green Bay Area Public Schools**

**Monday - May 26, 2025** Memorial Day

**Thursday - Jun 19, 2025** BCTA Monthly Meeting.  
**1:00pm** at The Village Grille, Allouez  
**Adam Pfof, NWTC CFO**

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.**

May-Jun 2025



**Memorial Day  
Remember and Honor**

[www.BCTaxpayers.com](http://www.BCTaxpayers.com)

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