

The TAX TIMES

July-Aug
2025

Newsletter of the "BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION."

Volume 40, Issue 4

TIME TO MOVE ON

Federally recognized Indian tribes are eligible to request their land be placed into federal trust on their behalf. When this occurs, local and state governments lose property tax base but must still provide government services, thereby making it worse than traditional annexation in which such services are discontinued. Taxable land being absorbed by the federal government represents significant issues:

- Loss of property tax revenue for local and county governments as well as public schools and the NWTC;
- Even worse, loss of jurisdictional powers (e.g., zoning, public safety and health, economic development, infrastructure projects, and municipal planning); and
- State sovereignty is short-circuited by the loss of its land to the federal government without even ceding it.

Tribes will reimburse local governments for services provided with service agreement payments, a variation of "payment in lieu of taxes", i.e., a PILOT. However, unlike a traditional PILOT, these service agreements come with conditions, one of which is that the local government must surrender its right to protest any future taxable lands going into federal trust. For this concession, the local government receives nothing. If it doesn't agree to this condition, the tribe will not reimburse for any services. Brown County and the city of Green Bay have such agreements in place with the Oneida Tribe. The village of Hobart does not. As Hobart village president, I can provide several reasons for this, not the least of which is that we don't believe it's legal nor prudent to put our jurisdictional authority up for sale. Thus, we "eat the cost" of providing government services to the Oneida's - but we've preserved our tax base and jurisdictional autonomy and have openly opposed Tribal trust applications submitted to the federal government. By telling the Oneida Tribe that we're not for sale and to keep their endless supply of federal monies, we resist any leverage asserted by the Tribe.

Our nation is undeniably founded on Judeo-Christian principles as well as concepts from Europe's

Enlightenment. Whether we're atheist, Hindu, Quaker, agnostic, Republican or Democrat, each one of us benefits from this foundational heritage. Doubtlessly, our forebears visited atrocities on our nation's indigent tribes generations ago. Yet, on the other hand, no other country can point to a civil war in which 360,000 white soldiers died for the sake of freeing four million slaves. What made this necessary and even possible was our fundamental Judeo-Christian value system which holds that our freedoms are God-given and inalienable. As formalized in the preamble of our American Constitution, reference is made to forming a "more perfect union", implying that we claim progress, not perfection. This is what makes America so different, so unique, so free. An underlying concept in our legal system, as broached in the 3,000-4,000 year old book of Deuteronomy, is that the son is not guilty of his father's sins and vice versa. So, given all the above, how is it that the practice of awarding trust land to tribes and the burdens thereby represented is endlessly allowed? Is it not time to put on our big boy pants, acknowledge historical evils, and realize that contemporary Americans are not guilty of our forefathers' sins and that contemporary American Indians are no longer victimized as they once were? We're ALL Americans, to be treated equally under the law, who must shake off this institutional form of reparations and move on!

For a firsthand account of how federal Indian policy is adversely affecting local jurisdictions and representative government, Jim Skulstad of the Menominee County Taxpayers Association and Legend Lake Homeowners Association will be our July 17, 2025 BCTA speaker at the Village Grille. He will share updates on court actions currently being pressed by him and his associates, including one before the Wisconsin State Supreme Court, and an initiative for impacted governments to collectively deal with dysfunctional American Indian policy. Please join us for this substantive lunch meeting!

- Rich Heidel
BCTA Director
Hobart Village President

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
In our 40th Year of Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government.

April Meeting Notes

Today's speaker was UWGB Economic Development Director Alan Peters. Mr. Peters is a Civil Engineer with a Masters in Real Estate and over 20 years' experience in real estate development. He joined UWGB about a year ago through a partnership between the University and Brown County to build on the collaborative success that started with the UWGB STEM center. His focus is the creation of an "Innovation Park" on campus, patterned after UW Madison's very successful "Research Park". That park has generated \$285M in taxable real estate, engaging 128 companies and employing 4000 people. It operates as a non-profit entity outside of the University System. The vision for UWGB is to create an environment that blends technology, research, and science with private investment to create commercialized enterprises that benefit the university, the community, and the region. He shared a rendering of some ideas for campus development but stated the work is in its infancy and he is looking for input and ideas as the concept takes shape. Mr. Peters responded to numerous questions from the group.

Business items: GB Area Public School representatives will be speaking to the group in May, and Adam Pfost of NWTC in June. Options concerning our monthly meeting location and time were discussed. Each Director will be asked, via email, to submit a name for a trial annual membership to recruit new members. President Schwalbach reported on the Green Bay Correctional Institute replacement discussions in the WI budget planning. The BCTA is on record supporting its relocation. Also being discussed are additional Brown County judges and assistant district attorneys. There was a request to expand the 'Tax Times' to include more articles of interest to our members, similar to what we did several years ago.

Committee/other reports: President Schwalbach reported that the WI Supreme Court will soon be releasing an opinion on the challenge to Gov. Evers use of the line-item veto to create new legislation. The BCTA participated in an amicus brief against that veto power abuse. He also shared information about the number of bills before the legislature. Regarding the NFL Draft, some attendees asked about the impact of early road closures on surrounding businesses. Secretary Goldhahn reported the DePere School



Alan Peters, UWGB Economic Development

District referendum concerning Tech Ed passed easily and noted members of the Green Bay School District will be speaking at our May meeting. Director Bowers reported on continued DPI resistance to private school vouchers. Director N. Leuthner reported on her experience as an election observer in Bellevue and how well the process worked.

Meeting Notes by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary

May Meeting Notes

Today's speakers were from the Green Bay Area Public Schools (GBAPS). Vicki Bayer- Superintendent, Cale Pulczinski-Chief Operating Officer, Angie Roble-Chief Financial Officer, and Lori Blakeslee-Director of Communications and Public Relations.

The reps shared the desire to have the community proud of the facilities and academics of the GBAPS. With community focus group involvement, they developed a model describing a "Portrait of a Graduate" beginning at 4K through graduation and a 5 year strategic plan to achieve it. Graduation rates have increased 3% over the past three years to 87.9% with a goal of 90%. They lead the state in students graduating with industry certification in trades and services and 66% of graduates have college credits. Both targeted successes.

With declining enrollment, which is projected to continue, the District is consolidating facilities through last year's referendum. Three schools will be consolidated into the new Starr Elementary School on the west side, projected to be ready for the 26/27 school year. Groundbreaking occurred in April and work is progressing with urgency to secure lower construction costs. The facility boasts multiple energy saving designs in-

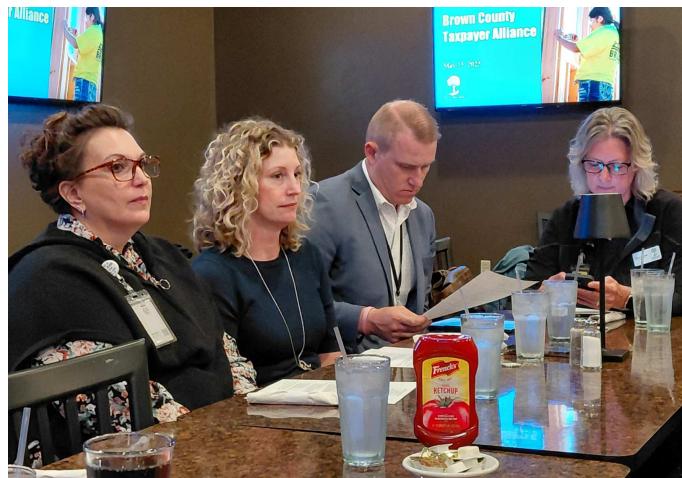
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cluding geothermal heating and ventilation, solar collectors, and window glazing which saves on ongoing expenses and qualifies for federal energy credits. It is also designed with community space and a “pod” structure to keep grade levels together.

Two schools will be consolidated into the Doty location and Chappell is consolidating parts of three schools. Land exchanges with the city of Green Bay were part of this work. Although they are waiting for resolution of the state budget, the District is projecting a 10-12M deficit. They state the reasons for this are: 1) Revenue limits which place GBAPS in the lowest per pupil category in the state, 2) State spending increases have not kept up with inflation since they were reduced in 2010, and 3) State mandated Special Ed funding reimbursement has dropped from 66% to 30%. This necessitated the \$16M operational referendum that passed in 2016/17. Although maintenance budgets have increased slightly, maintenance and construction costs have increased an average of 6%/yr since the 90's. They expect to request another operating referendum in 2027 when the current one sunsets. The amount will be dependent on what happens in the state budget.

It was pointed out that the administrative staffing has risen even in the face of declining enrollments, and the increased taxes puts a large burden on a portion of the population. The District acknowledged that and noted that they had reduced FTE administrative roles by 400 over the last three years. In light of the issues in Milwaukee, it was asked if GBAPS was current on state audits and it was noted that they were and no significant issues were noted. In response to a question, they also stated we should expect to see a significant increase in reading results due to a returned focus on fundamentals. Our groups will continue to meet regularly to continue our relationship.

Business items: June speaker will be Adam Pfost, VP of Finance and Administration at NWTC sharing their newly developed Strategic Plan. In July we'll have Jim Skulstad of the Menominee County Taxpayers Association and Legend Lake Homeowners' Association speaking about the loss of taxable land going into Federal Trust through Tribal ownership. Treasurer Sladec reported three Directors have provided names for trial memberships and encouraged the rest of the Board to submit names before the month end deadline. President Schwalbach announced our press release supporting closure of the Green Bay Correctional Institute and relocating inmates to other facilities had been



Green Bay Area Public School District Leadership

distributed to news outlets and state legislators. This issue is currently being debated in the state budget discussions. He also stated the Executive Committee would be developing a review plan for Tax Times article submission. The WI Supreme Court recently ruled in favor of maintaining the Governor's power to make major changes in legislation via the line-item veto. We had submitted a brief in this matter stating the current practice violated WI law by enabling Governors to rewrite legislation which is a practice the provision was not intended to allow.

Committee/other reports: President Schwalbach reported he had several meetings with legislators over the past few weeks, representing our organization as well as others. He updated the group on several subjects being discussed as the state budget is being debated. One striking piece of information he shared is that the Data Center being built in Beaver Dam is projected to use as much electricity as the city of Madison! Based on this and other major energy needs on the horizon, nuclear energy opportunity discussions for WI are actively occurring. Director Parins reported on County discussions concerning movement of the coal piles near the mouth of the Fox River, pending replacement of District 8 Alder Chris Wery, and the recent passing of Tom Hintz who served our area as a public servant for many years.

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 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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TIME TO MOVE ON

Apr Meeting Notes

May Meeting Notes

Meeting Location

The Village Grille, Allouez

**1:00 pm Meeting
Time Change**

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday - July 17, 2025 BCTA Monthly Meeting.

1:00pm at The Village Grille, Allouez

Jim Skulstad, Menominee County Taxpayers Association
& Legend Lake Homeowners Association

Thursday - Aug 21, 2025 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.

July-Aug 2025



www.BCTAxpayers.com