



Office of the County Executive

Joshua Schoemann, County Executive

Herbert J. Tennes Government Center
432 E. Washington Street, Room 3029
P.O. Box 1986
West Bend, WI 53095-7986
(262) 306-2200

June 30, 2023

Dear Fellow Citizens of Washington County,

In light of the referendum results this past November and this past April, we as the Chief Elected Officials of your towns, villages, cities, and county, are writing to report our most recent efforts to work together to maximize the effectiveness of every tax dollar you pay to your units of government, while maintaining small and effective local government services. We have met twice in the past year, even before both referendums, and we plan to meet several more times in the coming months with a focus on getting the biggest bang for your taxpayer dollar in key areas such as public safety, roads, and more.

Whether it is knocking on doors, attending community events, walking the grocery store aisle, or learning the results of these referendums, we consistently hear a few key themes: many local roads need urgent repair. This adversely impacts our quality of life and local economy; public safety is your highest priority, and accordingly it is ours; and, a big reason why so many of you moved here and stay here, is small and effective government and low taxes, and we should not mess with that. In fact, last April several municipalities placed a referendum on your ballot regarding shared county sales tax, and last November the county placed a referendum on your ballot regarding increased spending on public safety, in both cases we heard you say there is already enough tax revenue, and we need to work together to live within our means and deliver the high-quality services you expect. In response, we write to you together today pledging to find solutions in a timely manner.

We acknowledge that the system for funding local government in Wisconsin is deeply flawed, especially at this time of skyrocketing inflation, worker shortages, and rising costs; and there is simply too much government. Recent shared revenue reform at the state level is a positive step in the right direction. Similar to those efforts, your local elected leaders are working together, and are having productive conversations, studying how we can best share services and existing revenue to try to maintain and improve strong public safety departments, fix roads, and keep taxes low.

We each have a leadership responsibility to act on behalf of you, our constituents—and we take that role seriously. In the coming weeks we will be meeting again, and in the coming months we will be formulating a task force to develop a clear list of priorities and a plan to make your governments work better to accomplish our priorities with immediate action steps. We are all in this together. Most importantly, we all agree that this is your money, not government's money. You have our pledge and commitment to spend it accordingly.

(Continued)



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Your input is crucial throughout the process, and we sincerely thank everyone who already offered it by voting in November and April. As we embark on this work, please feel free to reach out to your chief elected officials to make us aware of your thoughts.

In Your Service,

Chief Elected Officials of Washington County

Josh Schoemann – Washington County Executive
Jeff Schleif – Chair, Washington County Board
Tim Michalak – Mayor, City of Hartford
Joel Ongert – Mayor, City of West Bend
Dave Deluka – President, Village of Newburg
Brian Heckendorf – President, Village of Jackson
John Jeffords – President, Village of Richfield
Fuzz Martin – President, Village of Kewaskum
Scott Stortz – President, Village of Slinger
Dean Wolter – President, Village of Germantown
Bob Bingen – Chair, Town of Addison
Robert Hartwig – Chair, Town of Jackson
Dennis Kenealy – Chair, Town of Erin
Ryan Lippert – Chair, Town of Hartford
Mike Lipscomb – Chair, Town of Trenton
Paul Metz – Chair, Town of Germantown
Doug Neumann – Chair, Town of Farmington
Albert Schulteis – Chair, Town of Polk
Kris Turner – Chair, Town of Barton
Scott Wollner – Chair, Town of Kewaskum
Troy Zagel – Chair, Town of West Bend