



# Accountability



## A Report To Weston Taxpayer-Investors on 2009 Tax Dollar Use

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### Understanding Our Economy

We could see it coming early last year. The State of Wisconsin reduced our shared revenue while at the same time increasing our fees for things like weights & measures, water utility operating fees, and report filing. Health insurance premiums were destined to rise despite our attempts at wellness. Our taxpayers – really our bosses – were beginning to lose their jobs. Therefore, in January of last year, the Village Board and senior staff members announced to all (including our labor unions), that it was our intent to hold taxes in line even if it meant job losses. This was eight months earlier than we normally start the budget, but it gave us a fighting chance. So I thought I would give you a little look into our process.

From January to October, we renegotiated, we whittled, we lobbied, and we squeezed our operations to the point that we were able to hold the tax rate at \$5.08 for the second straight year. To do this we have given up (2) FTE positions in our Department of Public Works, (4) LTE summer employees (sorry kids!) and we have altered the health insurance to higher deductibles and additional co-pays (our employees already pay more of their insurance than other local governments in the area). We have managed our risk in other insurance areas to create savings, we have gone to electronic board packets, we have bought about two years of reasonably priced salt, and we will not borrow for capital projects in 2010. Departments cut up to 7% of their day to day operational expense.

None of this would have been possible without the cooperation of our frontline employees. Our street, utility, park, police, clerical and finally fire employees recognized early on that times would be tough for those who pay our salaries and wages. It was a budget built upon trust, sacrifice and flexibility. Sure, there were days of gnashing teeth and boiling blood, but in the end management and labor worked it out – as it should be.

As an example of collaboration, we have not hired a Street Operations Manager since Don Smith retired in 2007 – because we found that our crew chiefs could split his duties and accomplish the task. The same holds true for an engineering position that will now be covered by our senior utility operator. A member of our park staff will work in the utility this winter and another will come inside and help collect taxes – where there is a need. We have our snowplowing down to a fine science to clear the roads but minimize overtime. Everyone is pulling

their own weight to keep costs down, but basic taxpayer services will not be affected at all – even though we have, on average, 30% less employees than other WI communities our size.

One of the biggest budget challenges came in the uncertainty of the future of the Everest Metro Police Department and we were grateful to have a new police chief with an MBA. Through the use of technology, grant writing and redistribution of resources, the EMPD budget came in roughly at the 2009 level. It was quite a baptism by fire for Chief Sparks, but you would be hard pressed to find another chief in the State who knows his budget as well.

There were savings in other areas. In 2009, we were able to secure \$3.75 million in federal funds for the reconstruction of Ross Avenue and the expansion of Schofield Avenue. And whatever your political persuasion, we owe a debt of **gratitude to Congressman Dave Obey**, who saw the merit of our projects and helped us secure funding.

I could go on talking about our aerial partnership with Wausau or **thank the City of Schofield** for hanging in there with the most efficient policing partnership in the State of Wisconsin. Similarly, I must recognize our **vital business partners** like Veolia, CWE, Tito, Inc., D & L Signs, K Tech, L & S Printing and the many others who worked with us all year to manage our overhead costs.

But I would be remiss if I did not **magnify the good work of the DC Everest School Board and their Administration** for holding the line on school taxes when most other school boards could not, due to the actions of our state legislature. Together, we were able to make sure your tax bill **was less** this December – we know you will have a better use for the money.

So please review the next three pages of **Accountability** – our way of telling you how we used your money in the past year. We did our best to make sure that we did not waste a penny and that you got what you paid for every day. And I can personally attest that you have the finest public employees in North Central Wisconsin and they all deeply appreciate your trust, confidence and support in our daily performance.

I wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a more prosperous New Year.

Dean Zuleger Village Administrator



## Street Smarts:

### Paving the Way

The Village of Weston utilized close to \$3.7 million of local, state and federal funds that supported approximately construction / engineering 70-80 jobs in fiscal 2009. \$400,000 of these funds was spent on preventive maintenance that includes chip sealing, crack filling, and overlays. In 2009, the following projects were completed:

#### Street Reconstruction (1.22 miles)

**MT. VIEW, NORMA, GLAD, ROSE, FOX** (4,960 Feet)

**\*\*SCHMUTZLER, BAYINGTON, KNAACK** (1,200 Feet)

**\*\*THOMAS STREET** (300 Feet)

#### Street Resurfacing (1.25 miles)

**ROSS AVENUE** (From Camp Phillips to Babl)

#### Chip Seal Road Life Extension (9.1 miles)

The Village placed chip seal in five subdivisions and on Alderson, Sandy Lane, Shorey, East Jelinek, Ryan and Zinser to extend functional road life.

#### Overlays, Striping, Railroad Tracks & Sidewalks

A thin asphalt overlay was applied on Alderson Street from Jelinek to Park Ridge, and the road was re-striped to the STH 29 overpass. The Village also worked with the railroad and Marathon County to remove three sets of rail crossings on Camp Phillips and Ross Avenue. In addition, the 180 trip hazards were eliminated on Village sidewalks with a saw-cutting operation on select sections of sidewalk replacement.

#### Stormwater / Drainage Repair Issues

The Village installed culverts and storm sewers on Chadwick and El Segundo. Large storm water outfalls were structurally repaired along the Eau Claire River at Le Duc Street and Pleasant View Streets. Since 2008, the Village has replaced 25 storm water catch basins to improve community drainage flow.

#### Snow Removal

The Village Street Crew, in cooperation the Utility and the Parks Department, plowed 11417 lane miles and 2210 cul-de-sacs in 2009. Their cumulative snow clearance efficiency was **8.7 out 10**. The Village only used 998 tons of salt (down 57% from 2007-08) in the winter of 2008-2009 and had no snow plow accidents. Mail box replacements totaled 21, down 24% over the winter of 2007-2008. The Village recycled approximately 200 tons of road sand during spring street sweeping.

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

**The Street Crew plows/salts Schofield Avenue a total of six times (x four lanes) during every significant snowfall ( more than 1" of snow or icy conditions). In addition, the crew plows and salts the Ross Avenue roundabout as many times as needed during snow and ice events.**

## Clean Water: A Weston Priority

The Village of Weston operates a municipal water & sewer utility with one main objective: providing safe potable water to our taxpayers. The following activities were completed by the Department of Public Works in 2009:

- **550 meters** over 10 years old tested and replaced;
- Thawed **52 customers frozen service lines**;
- Rate case including 7% revenue increase and residential conservation water rate approved in January 2009. First increase since 1988; Water rates Weston rates still at average level statewide.
- Foremost water tower **re-painted** interior and exterior October;
- Foremost well screen and casing **were cleaned** in October;
- Bloedel Well (Well No. 5) well screen and casing was cleaned in February;
- Replaced **30 water service lines** with history of freeze-up in the Mt. View project area (Norma, Mt. View, Glad, Rose), Ross Avenue, and Gordon Street;
- Replaced **3,680 feet of asbestos cement water main** on Mount View, Norma, and Glad Street;
- Replaced **4,320 feet of structurally unsound sanitary sewer mains** on Mount View, Norma, Glad, and Rose Streets;
- Co-hosted a rain barrel workshop in May. 64 storm water utility customers received their one-time credit for having a rain barrel installed and in use, and **27 Village taxpayers** and utility customers took advantage of obtaining a 55-gallon drum to be used as a rain barrel at their home;
- Cleaned approximately **25 miles of sanitary sewer mains** Insulated approximately 600 feet of sanitary sewer susceptible to freezing on Ross Avenue;
- **960 hours** of directional hydrant flushing which includes the functional testing of **675 water valves**.

In addition, the Village manages a private well program, mandated by the WI Department of Natural Resources for taxpayers not on municipal water or sewer services. The purpose of this program is to insure private well users have suitable drinking water and to protect the Village's municipal water supply. **A total of 49 5-year private well permits** were issued this year. There were **27 private wells** abandoned this year.



## **Blue Team Concentrates on Efficiency and Training**

The Everest Metro Police Department serves a resident population of 17,232 across three municipalities with a staff of 25 officers and three civilian personnel. Our staffing levels have remained the same for yet another year and our staffing ratio has declined to 1.45 officers per 1,000 residents. With only 25 officers, we are well below these comparatives which would project average staffing levels at 34 to 43 officers. Despite our size, the department provides a full spectrum of services including patrol, investigations, a K-9 officer, special investigations / drug unit, school resource officers and a community service officer.

For 2010, the EMPD will keep our staffing levels and budget slightly below 2009 levels through lean and efficient operations coupled with a federal Justice Assistance Grant that should fund our officer in the Marathon County Special Investigations Drug unit for the next two years. The department also obtained another grant in 2009 in the amount of \$23,939 that is funding training and equipment that will substantially increase our ability to process crime scenes and manage criminal investigations. During 2009, the department trained two officers as Evidence Technicians and two officers as Accident Investigators and upgraded the equipment used in these areas.



The Police School Resource Officers have done an exemplary job in the DC Everest schools this year and have attended specialized training in emerging technology areas such as social networking sites, that will help our school children to avoid the dangers associated with this technology. The department is continuing to upgrade our technological abilities in numerous areas including TraCS (paperless citation and accident reporting), conversion to digital evidentiary photography and imaging, and an increasing use of paperless computer applications in our general operations.

In 2008, the department handled 13,991 calls for service, up from 11,761 calls for service in 2007. In 2009 we are on pace for around 14,000 calls for service. The Village of Weston contributed \$2,075,872 to the EMPD budget or 76.63% of the total.

## **Fire Service Improves Response**

The Weston Fire Department continues to improve in emergency response, operational efficiency, and prevention & inspection advocacy. During 2009, the Weston Fire Department switched our vehicle maintenance program from the City of Wausau DPW to Mid State International in Wausau and saw a total vehicle maintenance bills drop by 70%. The FD also

received free D.O.T. inspections from Mid State at a savings of \$720.00. Annually the WFD must test all pumps on our fire apparatus; we were able to provide \$600.00 in savings by switching to a new vendor who also included some minor repairs at no additional charge. Our paid-on-call (POC) members bought EMS response jackets and a computer out of donated funds at no cost to the taxpayer. The Fire Department implemented a new software program called Firehouse and is currently fully staffed with POC and ten full-time members.

The Weston Fire Department, along with our paramedic intercept partner Ministry Health Care, responded to 874 ambulance calls and 144 fire calls through November 2009 for



an average of 92.5 calls per month. If this average continues WFD will have responded to 1,110 calls during 2009. To date we have responded to 800 EMS calls in the Village of Weston, 32 in Ringle, 26 in Easton, 5 in the Town of Weston, 5 in the City of Wausau, 1 in Rothschild and 5 in Schofield. We have responded to 123 fires in the Village of Weston, 7 in Ringle, 4 in Easton, 3 in the Town of Weston, 4 in Schofield, 1 in the City of Wausau, 1 in Rothschild and 1 in the Town of Wausau.

From a time of day standpoint, 45.31% of the EMS calls occur between 8:01 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., 35.47% between 4:01 p.m. and 11:49 p.m. and 19.22% between midnight and 8:00 a.m. Our fire call breakdown is as follows: 56.25% between 8:01 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., 29.86% between 4:01 p.m. and 11:59 p.m. and 13.89% between midnight and 8:00 a.m.

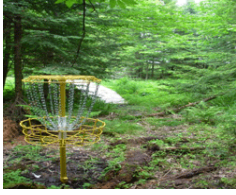
## **Keeping it Clean...**

In 2009, the Village of Weston handled 683 nuisance violations concerning weeds, animal complaints, noise, property maintenance, snow removal, junk & inoperable vehicles, garbage and other property nuisance. For the first time since 2007, the Village took several properties to both municipal and County Circuit Court for prosecution. The Annual yard Waste Pick-up and yard Waste Drop Off site collected over 15,200 cubic yards of leaves, trees, shrubs and branches in 2008. The Village Street Crew will now turn this material into compost and use the dark, rich soil for right of way restoration. The Annual Large Item Drop Off event filled 17 large dumpster at a total 153,000 pounds and 428 coupons were issued for taxpayers to take other large items to Yaeger's Auto Salvage.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

**The Village of Weston is recognized as one of the top recycling communities in the 10,000- 15,000 population category and one of the handful communities to operate both a year-round yard waste site and recycling center (@ Veolia).**

## Park Yourself in Weston



The Weston Park & Recreation Department continued to offer a variety of activities and recreational space for taxpayers. In 2009, the Village added a ten station fitness trail and twelve-hole disc golf to Vilas E. Machmueller

Family Park. The fitness trail, built and signed by Village staff, was created in response to the ad hoc Quality of Life Committee's goal of promoting healthy lifestyles in the Village. Machmueller Park also received a blacktop parking lot that allows for ample parking for a site that includes a baseball/softball diamond and a soccer field. Other Park & Rec highlights include:



**\*In cooperation with RSW Little League, reconstruction of the Babe Ruth Field at Kennedy Park;**

**\*Participated in the WDNR Emerald Ash Borer surveillance program to protect Village trees;**

**\*Landscaped Village entrance signs and pruned/marinated over 30 miles of Village landscaping.**

**\*Completed site selection and design of the Boundless Playground to be constructed at Yellow Banks Park;**

**\*Constructed two picnic shelters and bird viewing observation tower at the Smith conservation area (located on Progress Way).**

**\*Certified over 100 youth coaches in two sports using the National Association of Youth Sports training program. The nationally-recognized program emphasizes sportsmanship, character and fun.**



**\*Received a \$3,000 grant from Target for the Aquatic Center Operational Use and allocated \$11,000 of room tax funds for the promotion of bowling, softball and gymnastics events.**

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

That the Village of Weston Finance Department staff has recently been awarded their 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The Certificate is the highest form of recognition in government accounting and financial reporting in the nation. Way to go, John Jacobs and Jessica Trautman!

## Peyton's Promise



The Village partnered with Peyton Meddick, a sixth grader at the DCE Middle School, to fill our local food pantries. Peyton's Promise will collect over 12,000 non-perishable items that will be donated to Covenant Community Church, Mt. Olive Church and St. Agnes food pantries. The community-wide effort involves all of Weston's schools (including the DCE Junior & Senior Highs), Village government (including police and fire department), and several area businesses.

"It is very poignant, especially this time of year that a child should lead us in the effort to serve our fellow man. Peyton's Promise is the shining example of how a community can respond when there is a time of need," said Dean Zuleger, Village Administrator.

## Village Growth Statistics

Rezoning – 15  
Architectural and site plans – 20  
Certified Survey Maps – 14  
Conditional Use Permits – 2  
Variance hearings – 1  
Street Vacation – 1  
Subdivision Reviews – 3  
Sign Permits – 79  
Building Permits – 417

Permitted Development Value Total as of 12/17/09 =  
**\$13,821,656**

## Intangibles That Build Community

**Weston / WATS Bus Service** – On average 97 riders per day use the bus service to get to and from work or school.

**Weston's Farmers Market** had over 40 vendors marketing fresh produce on Saturday mornings from May to October. The Spring & Fall Arts & Craft Festival had 83 local vendors.

**Weston Fest Health Tent**, sponsored by Marshfield Clinic and Ministry Health Care, had over 1800 attendees – and the fireworks sponsored by Aspirus had 2300 attendees. Weston Fest also contributed \$1,000 each to the Women's Community and the Boys & Girls Club.

Over **200 taxpayers** receive news alerts and web feeds via the Village's Facebook Fan Page. Over 4000 taxpayers access the website per month.