



Accountability



A Report To Weston Taxpayer-Investors on 2008 Tax Dollar Use

Accountability: Our One Desire

There is nothing more sacred to the Village Board and staff than wise use of the tax dollar. We believe there is a special accountability that comes with the use of the local property tax dollar. Unlike state or federal taxes, you can audit our service daily with how well we perform with garbage pick-up, snow plowing, ambulance response, water quality, police protection and the many other services we provide.

The Village has included an annual report within the December Focus to tell you exactly how we used the local property tax. We have entitled this report "Accountability" – a word that means a statement of one's conduct or actions. It is intended to give you a snapshot of how we used the over \$3 million we collect in property taxes.

Some general statistics you may wish to consider in your review begins with the fact that our tax rate of \$5.08 / \$1000 of home value is considerably lower than our neighbors in Rothschild, Schofield, and Wausau. While most communities our size (14,000-15,000 people) have between 100-120 full-time employees – we have 45 full-time employees. If you include the 18 officers that make up our portion of the Everest Metro the number rises to 63, well below the state average. All of our senior managers perform at least two other functions of government that would mean additional jobs elsewhere. We have a street and utility crew that you do not typically see in government these days. They are cross-trained in all forms of street construction and pipe repair; saving us thousands of dollars in not having to hire out. The crew is engaged in cost savings too, whether it is developing a new salting strategy, equipment maintenance, or using bicycles to meter read - everyone is an active conservator of public funds.

We also have over 40 active volunteer committee members helping to shape our government. We have CPAs on the Finance Committee, HR professionals on the Personnel Committee, and some of the sharpest minds in Weston on the Planning Commission and the Community Development Authority. Our Public Safety and Parks & Rec Committees put the taxpayer's needs first and spend money wisely.

Yes, accountability is a watchword here and I hope you take the time to read this report and see how seriously we take it.

Dean Zuleger, Village Administrator

By The Numbers...

JAN 2008: Received "Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting" for Comprehensive Annual Financial Report ("CAFR") for fiscal year ended 12/31/2006 (4th year in a row)

JUNE 2008: Completed 2007 financial audit for the Village of Weston & Everest Metro; prepared and submitted the Village's CAFR for year ended 12/31/2007

JULY 2008: Received Moody's bond rating upgrade for General Obligation Debt from "A2+"(positive outlook) to "A1"; took only 5 years to receive the full upgrade from "A2" rating (May 2003) to an "A1" rating (July 2008)

JULY 2008: Received Moody's bond rating upgrade for Water Revenue Bond Debt from "A3" to "A2"; last rating upgrade had taken place in May 2001; this completes the successful cycle of requesting Moody's bond rating upgrades or first-time ratings for all 5 types of debt that the Village issues: General Obligation, Water, Sewer, Stormwater, and TIF/CDA

AUG 2008: 2008 Village of Weston population is certified as **14,040** by the Wisconsin Department of Administration; eclipses the 14,000 population mark for the first-time ever; 2000 census = 12,079 (+ 1,961 new Village residents from 2000 – 2008)

AUG 2008: 2008 Village of Weston total equalized valuation is certified as **\$1,059,625,700** by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue; eclipses the \$1 billion valuation mark for the first-time ever; 2008 increase was 10.83% from previous year; \$574 million of new valuation from 2000 – 2008

AUG 2008: 2008 Village of Weston TIF District equalized valuation is certified as **\$216,274,600** by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue; eclipses the \$200 million valuation mark for the first-time ever; 2008 valuation increase was \$49.6 million from previous year

DID YOU KNOW?

The Village of Weston wellness programs has held employee health care insurance premium increases **below 10% for the third straight year** – and the 2009 increase is **only 3%**, or 11% below the state average.

Information Management...

In 2008, the Village of Weston upgraded its management information systems to create data processing efficiency and software synergies. **Energov** is a parcel management software that ties all that the Village does to individual land parcels. The program aids with license processing, building permits, zoning, nuisances, and other Village land requirements. **Civic Systems** is a municipal finance software that also serves the Weston water & sewer utility as well. Both software programs are integrated and “talk to each other” reducing the amount of clerical data entry.

In addition, the Village implemented a new online GIS module that is accessible by any user on the Village network.. The program creates many custom reports to be accessed via GIS. For example, any user can simply select parcels they want letters mailed to, and the report kicks out Avery 5160 mailing labels. Also, public works users can select a water main and get all the info they need associated with that pipe. Even pull up a pdf of any as-built construction plans in the Village. GIS programs were created for conducting a tree inventory and a municipal sign inventory.

In the late summer of 2008, the Village Board, Public Works & Utilities, and Planning Commission went paperless allowing the Village to save close to \$23,000 in paper, duplication and packet assembly costs. Board and Committee members now work off of computers and taxpayers can access the same data on-line as well.

Water Works...

Even though Weston Public Utilities publishes a Consumer Confidence Report each summer, we thought we might remind you of a few of their hallmarks in 2008.

Rate Case Filed – 1st rate change since 1988, but overall only 7% increase in revenue needed.

Twice Annual System Flushing completed to maintain water quality.

Meter Change Outs – 313 meters older than 10 years were replaced and tested.

Foremost Well –Screen was reconstructed.

DID YOU KNOW? That if the Village of Rothschild had not annexed portions of Weston back in the mid-1990s, the power plant, the Cedar Creek area and Wausau Tile would still be in our community and your tax rate would be approximately \$3.40 / \$1000 rather than \$5.08.

Red Team Improves Response Time...



Seven minutes. That is the gold standard for emergency medical services response time for the Weston Fire Department within the Village of Weston. In 2008, the Fire Department **met that goal 100% of the time.** Critical partnerships with St. Clares, Aspirus and the City of Wausau have provided comprehensive 24 / 7 service at a low per capita cost.

The Weston Fire Department responded to **905 EMS calls** and administered care to 861 patients in 2008. 656 of these calls were medical emergencies and 204 were serious traumas. 819 calls were within the Village of Weston, 33 calls were to Ringle, 27 calls were to Easton and 13 calls were to the Town of Weston.

On the fire side, the Department responded to **123 fire and carbon monoxide calls.** Wausau Fire Department responded with the Village-owned aerial to 42 working fires.

Blue Team Most Efficient in the State...

The WI Taxpayer's Association reported that the Everest Metro Police Departments service to the Village of Weston is the most efficient per capita in Wisconsin. (\$124.00 per resident). Couple that with a high close-out rate for investigations, innovative programs like Red Zone traffic policing & Everest Men Respect, an active school police program and an award-winning canine patrol – and it is easy to see that taxpayers are getting their dollars worth. The EMPD has a 1.5 officer to 1,000 residents staffing ratio, which is .5 lower than the national average and implemented a 12 hour shift schedule in cooperation with the WI Professional Policemen's Association to improve efficiency.



In 2008, EMPD officers issued 2,722 ordinance and traffic citations, down from the 2,976 citations issued for the same time period in 2007. Officers responded to 11,352 calls for service which tracks very closely with the 11,366 calls for service in 2007.

The Village of Weston contributed **76.63% or \$2,075,450** towards the operation of the Everest Metro Police Department. The cost share formula is based on equalized value, population, road miles, calls for service, case investigation, traffic accidents, municipal court citations and court revenues.

Keeping it Clean...

In 2006, the Village of Weston created the position of Taxpayer Relations Coordinator to help serve our residents with their day-to-day concerns and maintain a superior level of quality of life. Since then, Renee Hodell has resolved **2,480 nuisance issues with only one case going to prosecution**. In the first eleven months of this year, **764 nuisance cases** have been handled in the following areas: weeds, animal complaints, property maintenance, snow removal, junk vehicles, noise and other general nuisances.

The Annual Yard Waste Pick-Up and Yard Waste Drop-Off site collected over **13,250 cubic yards of leaves, trees, shrubs and branches in 2008** – which is used for compost for right of way restoration. In addition, the Annual Large Item Drop Off done each spring filled **22 large dumpsters at a total of 198,000 pounds and 478 coupons** were issued for taxpayers to take other items to Yaeger's Auto Salvage.



Orderly Development



The Community Development Department (the CDD) maintains order and stability throughout Weston by managing the Municipal Code and reviewing new building development. In 2008, the CDD conducted **13 public land zoning hearings**, issued **402 building permits**, reviewed **29 architectural and site plans**, issued **93 sign permits**, approved **29 certified survey maps** and developed a multi-community zoning strategy with the Town of Weston. Permitted development in the Village of Weston in 2008 amounted to **\$32,834,298 in construction**.

In addition, two major policy ordinances were developed in 2008. The **Animal Ordinance** amended Chapter 10 of the Municipal Code to create a comprehensive pet control and animal management plan. The **Small Wind Energy Systems Ordinance** allowed for taxpayers and businesses to use wind turbines as a means of alternative energy supply.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Village Clerk's Office issues hundreds of permits each year for everything from bartending licenses to cigarette sales to cat licenses to video games licenses. All totaled licenses and fee permits generate over \$846,000 in income for the Village.

Taking it to the Streets...

Each year the Village of Weston allocates over \$400,000 to street repair and on average over \$1,500,000 to major reconstruction. In 2008, the following street projects were completed:

Street Reconstruction (2 Miles)

***BIRCH STREET** (Schofield Ave. to Jelinek Ave.)

***JELINEK AVENUE** (Birch St. to Alderson St.)

***ALDERSON STREET** (Schofield Ave. to Jelinek Ave.)

***MACHMUELLER STREET** (Jelinek Ave. to Heuss Ave.)

***VOLKMAN STREET** (Everest Ave. to Business Highway 51 (Village Crew Re-Build)

Drop off areas and sidewalks around DC EVEREST JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL (Safe Routes to School Grant) - The second

portion of the project, the reconstruction of Machmueller from Everest Avenue to Heuss Avenue, was completed by the middle of September.



Traffic Signal Projects

New Signals at Camp Phillips Road and Howland Avenue – Completed November

Pedestrian Signal Additions on Schofield Avenue at Birch Street; Target/Ace Hardware Entrance; and Alderson Street – Completed in November.

Chip Seal Road Life Extension (4.3 Miles)

In addition, the Village placed chip seal on 4.3 miles of roadway to extend the functional life of the road. Alderson Street, Fuller Street and Northwester Avenue were included in this project.

Snow Removal

The Village Street Crew, with help from the parks Department and Utility, plowed 6307 lane miles and 1616 cul de sacs in 2008. Their cumulative efficiency average was 8.8 out of 10. The Village used 2300 ton of salt in 2008. Backup cameras reduced winter accidents snow plow accidents to "1" in 2007-2008. The number of mail box replacements also fell 43% in 2007-2008.

Right of Way Mowing, Shouldering & Culvert Repair

The Village of Weston Street Department spends about 30% of their year mowing right of way, shouldering streets without curbs, repairing culverts & catch basins for storm water run-off and patching holes. The Street Department also does a majority of line painting and operates its own sign shop. In 2008, the crew completed all of the site prep for the Skateboard Park and Machmueller Park.

Quality of Life...

Weston Park Department (with the help of several individuals and organizations) was able to complete a project like no other in the area - the 8,000 square foot skate park designed and built by **nationally-renowned Dreamland Skate Parks**. An estimated 2,500 skaters from as far away as Virginia and Washington State used the facility this summer.



Virginia and Washington State used the facility this summer.

***Purchased a ball diamond-grooming machine with ½ of the funding provided by Little League.**

***Had an employee pass her International Society of Arborist exam and become a certified urban arborist.**

***Participated in the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Gypsy Moth Aerial Spray Program to mature hardwood trees.**

***Continued partnership with the school district to grow the annual flowers for Schofield Avenue saving thousands of dollars.**



Received a grant from Target Corporation to continue support of the Aquatic Center and keep annual operations off of the tax rolls.

***Parking lot improvements (crack sealing and seal coating) and building maintenance (ceiling replaced, painting and caulking) at Aquatic Center.**

***Construction of a walking path, ball diamond, soccer fields and the installation of site amenities at Machmueller Park. Completed the design of a 9 hole disc golf course.**

***Provided funding for the second girls softball diamond at the DCE Softball complex.**

***Certified over 110 youth coaches in two sports using the National Association of Youth Sports training program The programs emphasized ethics, fun and sportsmanship.**

DID YOU KNOW? That the Village of Weston mows over 1100 acres of turf and maintains 100 miles of walking trails between April and September?

Little things make a big difference...

Weston / WATS Bus Service – On average, **90 regular riders per day / 2000 riders per month** use the bus service to get to and from work...

768 Everest Area men have signed the Everest Men Respect petition pledging to help end domestic abuse in our community...

Two new smoke free restaurants, Wish & Buffalo Wings & Rings opened in 2008...

Over 100 new jobs created at Schofield Enterprises (way to go Rich!) in the Weston Business & Technology Park...

On average, **25 vendors** participated in the May-October Weston Farmer's Market. **40 vendors** participated in the fall Arts & Craft Show...

Village staff spearheaded a holiday food drive with DCE Schools that collected **over 7800 non-perishable** items for the Weston Food Bank located at Covenant Community Presbyterian Church...

\$23,500 raised in corporate sponsorships for Weston Fest with net proceeds going to five local charities...

Investing in the Future...

With 70% of our taxpayers under the age of 45, the Village of Weston Board and Staff invested time in 2008 to make the Village more accessible to our Generation X and Millennial taxpayers – and put nineteen young adults through a six session leadership academy.

Using the website, podcasts, and RSS feeds taxpayers can now access agendas, minutes, information updates, and other Village news via computer and PDA technology.

The 2008 Future Weston Academy was designed to train adults age 35 and under in the six major areas of Village government: Economic Development, Finance, Zoning & Planning, Public Safety, Public Works & Park & Recreation.

The Livable Communities Study surveyed Weston residents on community mobility and lifestyle choices. Conducted by a University of Minnesota sociology student, the project focused on where people spend their after-hours time and how easy it was to get there.

Sustainable Weston is the community's green initiative that focuses on woodland / wetland preservation, energy conservation, and recycling/solid waste management. Weston is one of the highest per capita recycling communities in the state.