

Town of Dunn  
4156 County Rd B  
McFarland, WI 53558

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# 2024 Fall Newsletter

www.townofdunnwi.gov (608) 838-1081 4156 County Road B, McFarland WI 53558

## Views from the Chair

Article by Steven Greb, Town Chair

We recently had a dedication ceremony at the Town Hall to celebrate the installation of solar panels on top of the Highway Garage, (see article on page 2). As I was standing there admiring this technological advancement, I was admiring our Town Hall and realized how little I knew about the actual building and its history. How long has it been here? Was it an old schoolhouse as many believe? I decided to dig into these questions a little deeper by visiting the local libraries, looking at town records, and talking with long-time residents. Along the way, I learned some interesting things and gained a greater appreciation of the Hall.

Turns out, the current Town Hall is actually our third Town Hall. Early on, town residents assembled in local homes to conduct town business. We know the first town meeting was held at Alwa Wetherby's home on April 4th, 1848, where R.T. Rawson was elected town chair and William Colladay was elected as clerk (23 votes cast in first election).

Starting in 1853, town meetings were held at School House Number 3 on County Road B. In 1854, at the Annual meeting, town voters approved the purchase of a desk to

hold the town paper and books, not to exceed \$15. The Town Board continued to hold meetings at the school for around 20 years.

In 1869, there was a motion to approve \$500 to build a town hall near the center of town on a highway. The motion failed.

In 1870, the motion to approve \$250 for a town hall was approved and was built in 1871. This first Town Hall was constructed on the southeast corner of Schneider and Hawkinson Roads. I was able to locate it in the 1871 and 1890 plat. It was listed as the "Town House", picture located on page 2 of this newsletter.

The second Town Hall was located at the corner of Keenan and Mahoney Roads. That hall was sold, moved and converted to a private residence, which now sits just south of the Squirrel's Nest Bar on US Highway 51.

The current Town Hall, located on the corner of Keenan Road and County Highway B, was built in 1931. Bertha and William Keenan Jr donated the 1/4 of acre of land where the town hall sits. The Hall is located almost exactly in the center of the township's 36 square miles.



Photo by Andrea Zacharias

Whether the town board consciously knew this, I don't know, but it does seem fitting to place it there.

We know the Hall was built by a carpenter named Sorenson, who was a former Norwegian ship builder. The town hall also originally had two outhouses which were used until the late 60's.

The Wisconsin Historical Society Inventory lists the Town Hall as Neoclassical/Beaux Arts. I'm not familiar with the lexicon of American architecture but this seems to overstate the opulence of this Midwest clapboard white frame structure. The description pays particular note of the small round window in the front gable.

Continue reading on page 2.

## General Election Early Voting Dates and Hours

Tuesday, Oct. 22 - Friday Oct 25: 12 PM to 4 PM

Monday, Oct. 28 - Friday, Nov. 1: 12 PM to 4 PM

Saturday, Nov. 1st: 9 AM to 12 PM

If unable to vote during these times, call (608) 838-1081 for an appointment. See page 3 for more voting information.

## Special Town Meeting and Budget Hearing November 19th, 2024, 7:00 PM

Notice is hereby given of the Special Town Meeting and Budget Hearing called pursuant to Wis. Stats. 60.12 by the Town Board of the Town of Dunn, on November 19th, 2024, at 7:00 PM. Attend in-person at the Town Hall. To view the meeting agenda please visit [dunn.civicweb.net](http://dunn.civicweb.net).

## Upcoming Town Hall Closures

The Town Hall will be CLOSED the following days:

Thursday, November 28th	Friday, November 29th
Tuesday, December 24th	Wednesday, December 25th
Wednesday, January 1st	Monday, January 20th

\*A secure drop box is available for document or tax payment drop offs.

## 2025 Extra Trash Pick-Up Days June 12th & October 9th

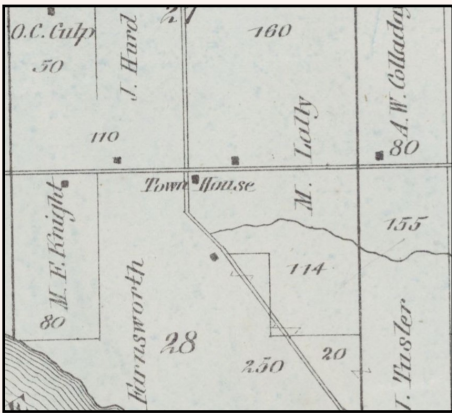
Regardless of your normal service day, all extra items must curbside by 6:00 AM, THURSDAY.

Only one trip through the Town will be made. If Pellitteri is unable to finish on Thursday, the event will continue into Friday. Visit [pellitteri.com/pages/copy-of-clean-up-events](http://pellitteri.com/pages/copy-of-clean-up-events). Contact Pellitteri with questions: (608) 257-4285.



Views from the Chair  
(Continued)

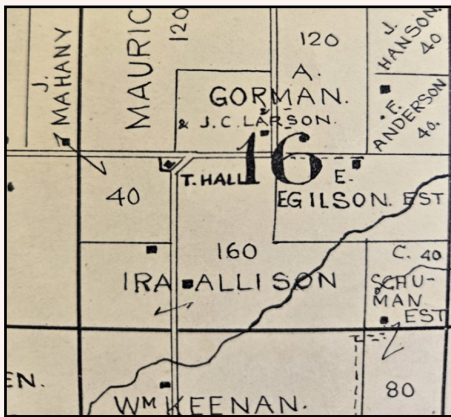
Contrary to popular thinking, the town hall was never a schoolhouse, although there was a stage in the town hall used by the rural schools for their programs, such as Christmas pageants. At one time, Dunn was its own school district and had six schoolhouses. The hall was also used by residents for square dances.



Location of Town hall (Town House) in 1871 at the corner of Schneider and Hawkinson Roads.

Over the years, improvements and expansions have included indoor plumbing, bathrooms, removal of the stage, and increased office space. An addition on the parking lot side included a foyer, office, and an elevator. Originally, outdoor cement steps led to an entrance door by the upper-level hall.

Jim Manson remembers a cold winter day when he and Bill



Location of Town hall in 1911 at the corner of Keenan and Mahoney Roads.

Offerdahl were completing the expansion, and they had to heat the shingles three at a time with the basement boiler before nailing them on the roof.

I’ve grown to admire and appreciate this building. Besides housing the Town’s administrative and informational function, it also brings the community together where we discuss issues impacting the Town. This hall is part of the town’s identity and a symbol of local democracy.

Our town hall has held innumerable debates and made decisions large and small over the years which have shaped this town. I’m humbled by the history held in its walls. The town board and staff will continue to strive to be diligent conservators of this place and follow the legacy of those before us. I want to thank town staff, Stoughton library, Jim and Betty Manson, and Roz Gausman for contributions to this article.

Powering Progress: Town’s Highway Garage Goes Solar!

Article by Ben Kollenbroich, Dunn Planning and Land Conservation Director

In an exciting step towards sustainability, the Town has officially gone solar with the installation of a new roof-top solar energy system on top of the Town’s highway garage. The project, completed on September 24th, features a total of 56 solar panels. The panels will generate over 41,000 AC kWh annually, which is enough energy to meet the usage needs for the whole Town Hall property, thereby reducing our energy costs over time (estimated at over \$350,000 over a 30-year period). Additionally, over 35% of the cost of the project was offset by incentives offered by Focus on Energy and Direct Pay through the Inflation Reduction Act.

The Town would like to thank the following people for their help with the project: Paul Smith, resident who started the solar conversation; Tony Hartmann, consultant for Legacy Solar Wis. Cooperative; Olson Solar Energy; Jim Krier and Dan Treinen of Alliant Energy; and Hardy Krueger and Kelsey Shepperd, Town project coordinators.



‘Flipping the Switch’ at the Solar Dedication Ceremony held on September 24th, 2024. Pictured left to right: Town Chair, Steve Greb; Mike Kerska of Olson Solar Energy, Town Supervisor, Jeffery Hodgson; Town Resident, Paul Smith; Jim Krier of Alliant Energy; Town Clerk, Cathy Hasslinger; Tony Hartmann of Legacy Solar Co-op. Photo by Andrea Zacharias.

Recycling Guide

Pellitteri Waste Systems

Accepted Paper Products

Empty cardboard, catalogs, magazines, phone books, empty food boxes, paper, envelopes, junk mail, wrapping paper (no foils), newspapers, paper cups (no plastic lids or straws), paper egg cartons, paper grocery bags, paper milk and juice cartons, pizza boxes (no food or grease), shredded paper (place in a clear or transparent plastic bag and tie shut, bag no larger than a basketball).

Accepted Plastic & Glass Products

All plastic bottles besides motor oil or gasoline bottles, #1-7 plastic items (including #1 clamshell), glass bottles and jars (clear, blue, brown, or green translucent glass).

Accepted Metal Products

Empty aerosol cans, aluminum cans or plates, metal pots and pans, metal appliances and plumbing fixtures/ faucets (nothing larger than a basketball), and tin and steel cans.

Non-Recyclable Items

Batteries or propane tanks (FIRE HAZARD! Check [call2recycle.org](http://call2recycle.org)), brake rotors or drums, construction waste, electronics, frozen food or microwave dinner plates, glassware and ceramics, metal items larger than a basketball or heavier than 10lbs, mirrors, windows, motor oil and gasoline containers, plastic film or wrap, styrofoam, recyclable containers containing liquids or food, carpet, clothing, diapers, fishing line, food, hoses, ropes, and shoes.

Recycling Tips

- Stop “wishcycling” and download the Pellitteri Waste Systems Mobile App to use the Recycle Right search to dispose of specific items properly.
- Additional recyclables outside of recycling carts must be prepaid for and prescheduled for pick-up. Contact Pellitteri a minimum one day prior to your normal service day. Additional recyclables must be in clear plastic bag (s) next to the recycling cart, no larger than 32 gal., and no heavier than 50 lbs.

Cut down cardboard to fit in bags, do NOT bundle or place in a bigger box.

- Only flatten/crush cardboard boxes, NO plastic or metal items.
- Don’t place smaller items inside larger ones. Items should be loose and empty.
- Remove all food waste, plastic, Styrofoam, and packing peanuts. Containers containing food or liquids, construction waste, or electronics CANNOT be recycled.
- Recycling carts will not be picked up if it contains trash, yard waste, prohibited items, or if overloaded.
- In a week containing certain observed Holidays, pick up is delayed by one day. Check with Pellitteri for a schedule.
- For additional pick-up volume or for questions, contact [info@pellitteri.com](mailto:info@pellitteri.com) or call (608) 257-4285.

Electronic Recycling

TVs, laptops, cellphones, and other electronics contain valuable materials that can be recovered through recycling. Electronics also contain hazardous materials which can harm human health and pollute the environment if not properly managed. Wisconsin has a electronics recycling law which prohibits the following electronics from being put in the trash or sent to Wisconsin landfills and incinerators:

TVs, computers, printers, scanners, fax machines, monitors, computer accessories such as keyboards, mice, speakers, external hard drives, flash drives, e-readers, VCRs/DVD players, and cellphones.

These electronics can be recycled at various locations across the state. For a list of collection sites, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search “ecycle”.

Some collectors may charge fees and may not accept all devices. Contact collectors beforehand to learn about their policies. Please direct additional questions to Wisconsin DNR ECycle at (608) 264-6001.

Town Transfer Site

Open to Town residents only. Located at 4030 County Road B, 1/4 mile east of the Town Hall. Open monthly on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays from 8 AM to 4 PM, exceptions may be on Holidays or Holiday weekends. April through the end of November, the Transfer Site is also open Wednesdays from 2 PM to 4:45 PM.

Accepted Items

Brush and wood free of soil, leaves and grass clippings, any compostable material, holiday trees without tinsel, decorations, or stands, antifreeze that is free of oil, motor oil that is free of other liquids, automotive type and rechargeable batteries, all appliances (except water softeners and dishwashers), scrap metal, and motors free of gas and oil.

Tires are also accepted for a fee. Fees are based on our costs for disposal. At the time of this publication, auto tires without rims are \$5 and \$10 for tires with rims. Fees for semi-truck tires are \$10 and tractor tires are \$25.

Non-Accepted Items

Construction materials, dishwashers, electronics, furniture, mattresses, household batteries, lumber, shingles, stumps, TVs, and water softeners.

Dane County Clean Sweep

7102 US Hwy 12, Madison, WI 53718. Dane County Clean Sweep offers a place to bring hazardous household materials and electronics. For a list of acceptable items, visit [danecountycleansweep.com](http://danecountycleansweep.com). Fees apply. Prior to delivering items or for current hours, contact Clean Sweep at (608) 838-3212.

Medication Drop Off

Protect our water resources! Do not flush medications down the drain. Drop off unwanted or expired medication at local police departments:  
McFarland: (608) 838-315  
Oregon: (608) 835-3111  
Stoughton: (608) 873-3374



Upcoming Highway 51 Construction (2025-2027)

You have likely noticed the recently installed roundabout at the intersection of Highways 51, B, and AB. In the coming years, additional reconstruction work will take place on US Highway 51 between Stoughton and McFarland. The remaining proposed improvements from the Wisconsin DOT include downward lighting and new signage at roundabouts, a continuous median from B (east) to County B/AB, four lanes from Tower Road to McFarland, intersection improvements and turn lanes, and wider shoulders. Roundabouts at County B east (2026), Rutland Dunn Town Line Road (2026), Tower Road (2026), Exchange Street (2026), and Mahoney Road (2027), will also be constructed. During construction, parts of the road will be closed to thru traffic. In the end, the project will improve safety along this approximately 5.6 mile section of road.

The tentative schedule is to begin construction on the Tower Road to Exchange Street section in 2026, County B (East) to County B/AB in 2026-2027, and County B/AB to Exchange Street in 2027.

The Town of Dunn would like to thank our residents in advance for patience during this construction project. We hope the end result is a safer highway for everyone. For more information or questions about the HWY 51 reconstruction project, please contact Kevin Drunasky of the Wisconsin DOT at [kevin.drunasky@dot.wi.gov](mailto:kevin.drunasky@dot.wi.gov).



Red circles showing the location of US Highway 51 proposed roundabouts to be constructed 2026 through 2027.

School Bus Safety

Article by Deputy Zach Barton, Dane County Sheriff’s Department

Although school buses are designed to protect our children and are safer than passenger vehicles in preventing crashes and injuries, most injuries and accidents occur while children are boarding and exiting the bus. This is your reminder to put the cellphones down, obey traffic signs and laws, and obey the speed limit. Watch for



Photo from WisDOT

children who may be headed to or from the bus, slowdown in school zones and near bus stops.

Wis. Statute 346.48: VEHICLES TO STOP FOR SCHOOL BUSES DISPLAYING FLASHING LIGHTS

Vehicle operators approaching from the front or the rear of any bus which is stopped on the roadway and when displaying its flashing red lights, shall stop the vehicle not less than 20 feet from the bus and shall remain stopped until the bus resumes motion or the bus operator terminates the red flashing lights. This does not apply for operators of vehicles proceeding in the opposite direction on a divided highway. Motorists who illegally pass a stopped school bus may be subject to a citation.

Tips to teach your kids who ride the bus:

- Stand a safe distance away from the road.
- Wait for the bus to stop completely before approaching and boarding, one at a time.
- If you need to cross the street, make eye contact with the bus driver, then take five giant steps in front of the bus, and cross when the driver indicates it is safe. Look left, right, and left again before crossing.
- Use the handrails and be careful of drawstrings or backpacks that could be caught in the door.
- If you drop something, tell the bus driver and make sure they see you before picking the item up.

Voting Frequently Asked Questions

When is Early In-Person Voting and Registration Available at the Town Hall?

**Early Voting and Voter Registration:**  
Tues. 10/22 – Fri. 10/25: 12PM – 4PM  
Mon. 10/28 – Fri. 11/1: 12PM – 4PM

**Early Voting ONLY – No Registration:**  
Sat. 11/2: 9AM – 12PM  
(registered voters only)

What if the Early Voting and Registration hours aren’t convenient for me?

Please give us a call as soon as possible for an appointment at (608) 838-1081, ext. 5. We will do our best to find a time that will work. Early voting ends Saturday, November 2nd at 12PM and no appointments are available after that.

Registration is allowed up until 5PM on Friday, November 1st at the Town Hall. Registration will be available again at the polls on Election Day Tuesday, November 5th.

How can I request an absentee ballot to be mailed to me?

If you choose to have your ballot mailed to you, please plan ahead so there is ample time for your ballot to arrive and be returned to the Town Hall by Election Day, November 5th. The ballot must be received by 8PM on Election Day for your vote to count. Postmarks are not accepted. Be aware ballots cannot be forwarded. Make sure you request

your ballot be mailed to the address where you will actually be located. As the election draws near, early In-person voting may be a better option.

If you choose to vote absentee by mail, visit the [MyVote.wi.gov](http://MyVote.wi.gov) website to set up your request. You may also download the Application for Absentee Ballot request form on our website at [www.townofdunnwi.gov/elections](http://www.townofdunnwi.gov/elections) or stop by the Town Hall to pick up a copy.

What are Election Day hours?

Election Day is Tuesday, November 5th, and the polls are open from 7AM to 8PM at the Town Highway Garage. The Highway Garage is kitty-corner to the Town Hall at 4156 County Road B, McFarland WI 53558.



The November 5th Election will be held in the Highway Garage. Photo by Kelsey Shepperd.

What is Curbside Voting?

If injury, illness, or disability prevents you from entering the polling place during early voting or on Election Day, we will bring your ballot to your vehicle. Once you arrive in our parking lot, notify us by calling: Early Voting - (608) 838-1081, ext. 1 Election Day - (608) 473-5779

Your driver may also come inside instead to alert a poll worker.

How long are lines on Election Day?

Wait times vary, and can be about 30 minutes. Parking is congested during those busy periods. We do our best to keep lines moving, but please note our poll workers must take time with each voter to check photo ID, collect their signature and mark the pollbook. Small delays in voter lines can add up to longer wait times. If a longer wait time is a concern, consider having your ballot mailed to you or voting early in-person at the Town Hall. Wait times for early voting are typically minimal.

During Early Voting you may vote on the main floor, so you won’t have to use the stairs or elevator. Curbside voting from your vehicle is another solution, allowing us to bring a ballot to your vehicle.

How do I register to vote?

The MyVote website ([MyVote.wi.gov](http://MyVote.wi.gov)) has helpful information about registration, including the types of Proof of Residency documents needed in order to register. Registration is also available at the Town Hall until 5PM on Friday, November 1st and at the polls on Election Day Tuesday, November 5th. Bring valid Proof of Residency documentation with you if you plan on registering in-person. Please note that registration is not allowed on Saturday, November 2nd through Monday, November 4th.





Leaf Collection Sites

Weather permitting, there are eight leaf collection sites available for Town residents (no contractors) until the week of December 4th. If significant snow is forecasted before December 4th, sites will be removed for the season. If the orange containment areas have been removed, please **DO NOT** place leaves there. Bring them to the Transfer Site.

**Sites are for leaves and grass clippings only.** NO brush, twigs, garden waste, potted plants, seaweed, stones, rocks, animal waste, or any other non-leaf material. Non-leaf material will damage the leaf vacuum machine. Bags must be emptied and removed.

Make use of the sites listed and refrain from burning leaves, grass clippings, yard waste, and other wet materials which result in smoldering and nuisance fires, which the Town prohibits. Maps of the sites are also available at [www.townofdunnwi.gov/leaf-management](http://www.townofdunnwi.gov/leaf-management).

- Amundson Boat Launch
  - Colladay Point Park
  - Fish Camp County Park
  - Dunn Heritage Park
  - McConnell St
- Goodland County Park Parking Lot
  - Tower Rd at Crescent Dr
  - Camp Leonard Rd by Babcock Park



Photo of a leaf collection site showing the orange containment area by Hardy Krueger.

2024: An Outlier Year for Lake Waubesa

Article by Lake Waubesa Conservation Association

This year, Lake Waubesa witnessed some extraordinary aquatic activity, marking 2024 as a true outlier. From the increased water levels to an explosion of lake plants, it’s been a season unlike any other in recent memory. All the lakes in the Yahara chain of lakes experienced high water, but only Lake Waubesa experienced such excessive plant growth. It is important to remember that aquatic plants are critical for the health of our lake.

Benefits of aquatic plants:

- Provide habitat for fish and other aquatic critters.
- Absorb nutrients from the water and compete with floating and blue green algae.
- Help to attenuate wave energy and stabilize shorelines.

However, this year was an example of too much of a good thing for Lake Waubesa.

Runoff & Water Levels Rose Quickly and Then Consistently Descended

Heavy rains in May (4.5 inches) and June (7.1 inches) raised the lake level but also brought excess nutrients from runoff, which impacted water clarity.

On June 9, visibility in the water was as deep as 15 feet, but by June 27, it dropped to just 4.25 feet. In July and August, clarity averaged less than 3.5 feet, compared to over 6.5 feet in 2023, a drought year.

With an additional 7.9 inches of rain, Lake Waubesa reached 20 inches above the summer maximum by July 16. While the rise in water level may have been striking, it had serious consequences for the lake's plant life.

Bumper Crop of Lake Plants

With more water came a surge in lake vegetation. Residents and lake enthusiasts witnessed an extreme amount of aquatic plants floating on the lake’s surface throughout the season. Chara, a type of green algae that resembles underwater plants, covered large swaths of the lake bottom, creating thick carpets. Meanwhile, White Water Crowfoot, a delicate flowering plant and Coontail, gathered in masses at the surface. These plants, while part of a healthy aquatic ecosystem, created navigational and recreational challenges due to their sheer volume.

Article continued on page 5.



2025 Proposed Tax Levy Increase of 1.9%

By Cathy Hasslinger, Clerk Treasurer/Business Manager

Each year the town has public budget discussions where participants learn more about proposed projects for the coming year and provide input on budget priorities.

Town residents in attendance at our Special Town Meeting on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, then vote directly to set the Town’s local tax levy. The meeting is held in-person at the Town Hall at 7 PM. You can view the proposed budget for road work, proposed equipment upgrades, purchases and expenses by reading the attachments to the agenda for the budget hearing and Special Town Meeting published on our website at [www.townofdunnwi.gov](http://www.townofdunnwi.gov).

**An increase in the Assessed Value Mill Rate of 1.9% is proposed:** The town tax mill rate is proposed to increase from \$2.15 per thousand of assessed value to \$2.18 which reflects an increase of \$40,000 in the tax levy. The increase in the levy would fund an \$8,675 increase in fees paid for Fire and EMS services, an increase of \$325 for other costs in the General Fund, and a \$31,000 increase in loan payments for road reconstruction projects. No increase is proposed for the town’s Rural Preservation fund levy which remains the same as last year at \$382,000. The proposed levy amount could be changed at the Special Town Meeting because the levy is set by a vote at that meeting.

**A decrease in the Equalized Value Mill Rate of 3.0% is proposed:** This mill rate is down from \$1.67 in the current year to \$1.62 per thousand proposed for next year. This equates to \$162.00 local tax per \$100,000 of

real estate property value. For a property valued at \$400,000, the local portion of the tax bill is \$648 and this funds town services, road maintenance and reconstruction, law enforcement, and fire and emergency services.

The proposed budget includes over \$700,000 in payments for fire and EMS services provided by Oregon, Stoughton and McFarland Fire and EMS services and law enforcement services with the Dane County Sheriff. It also includes \$450,000 in debt payments for loans obtained for road reconstruction projects in recent years.

Other highlights in the 2025 budget year are an increase in town revenue related to interest earned on the town’s fund balance. A grant of \$35,000 is anticipated for reimbursement of a portion of the solar installation costs. The town will continue seeing a revenue entry for state aid payments designed to replace the discontinued personal property tax revenue. On the expense side, we will budget for work at Dunn Heritage Park this year because the work could not be completed in 2024 due to the mild weather. We will need solidly frozen ground to dredge the ponds and complete the work. Much of this project is funded by grants.

Highway equipment purchases are proposed to include purchasing an interest in a used leaf vac machine from the City of Stoughton funded by a grant from the Friends of Lake Kegonsa. The town would then sell our existing leaf machine. A new Ford F-550 Diesel Truck with dump box and plow at \$115,500 and a Ford F-350 gas truck with dump box for \$90,000 is proposed. The final budget is considered for adoption by the Town Board at their December 17, 2024 meeting.

VALUATION	2022	2023	2024	
Assessed Valuation	956,473,300	965,686,700	972,667,500	
Equalized Valuation	1,100,203,300	1,242,945,700	1,306,226,000	
Tax Levy and Mil-Rate	2023	2024	2025	Variance
General Fund Tax Levy	1,264,248	1,279,000	1,288,000	0.7%
Debt Service Tax Levy	327,582	419,000	450,001	7.4%
PDR Tax Levy	366,605	382,000	382,000	0.0%
Total Levy	1,958,435	2,080,000	2,120,001	1.9%
Assessed Value Mil-Rate	2.04756	2.15391	2.17957	1.2%
Equalized Value Mil-Rate	1.780066	1.673444	1.622997	-3.0%
General Fund Undesignated Balance	595,100	799,357	722,821	
Prior Year Assessment Ratio	86.8245%	77.6934%	74.4640%	



Dunn Heritage Park Dredging

By Ben Kollenbroich, Town of Dunn Planning and Land Conservation Director

In 2023, the Town obtained permits to remove built up sediment in three ponds at Dunn Heritage Park. These ponds help manage runoff prior to it reaching Lake Waubesa. The largest pond also serves as a fish spawning habitat. To improve the ponds’ efficacy, Dunn staff planned to complete this work last winter but, due to mild winter temperatures, the ground never froze. Frozen ground was a condition of the permits in order to mitigate land damage from the heavy equipment necessary to complete the dredging. We are hopeful the weather will cooperate this winter so the Town can complete this project. The Town was awarded a Dane County grant to fund this project along with future boardwalks, trees, and a regravelling of the canoe/kayak launch. We hope you enjoy these park updates once they are completed.

Green Burials May Be A Future Option in Dunn

Currently the Town of Dunn offers a traditional burying ground or cemetery where people can purchase gravesites for burial of caskets or cremation urns. The Town also cares for a section that is closed for new burials and includes historic Civil War era graves. The Town of Dunn Burying Ground was established in 1852, though the land had been used as a burial ground by the Beebe Family before they sold it to the Town. The Burying Ground is located on the southeast corner of



Photo by Kelsey Shepperd

Town Prairie Burning

Conditions and weather permitting, fall prescribed prairie burns may occur at Town parks. Prescribed burning helps maintain healthy prairie ecosystems by stimulating native plant growth and controlling woody vegetation and invasive species. Not only is it one of the most efficient management tools, it’s also the most cost effective!



Photo of Dunn Heritage Park by Cathy Hasslinger

the intersection of County Road B and Sandhill Road. Neighboring burial places, like Natural Path Sanctuary in Verona, have introduced an option for more environmentally friendly burials, sometimes called Green Burials. These burials eliminate or reduce reliance on toxic embalming chemicals. This has a benefit to both the environment and to the health of workers handling these chemicals. The Green Burial Council website ([www.greenburialcouncil.org/greenburialdefined.html](http://www.greenburialcouncil.org/greenburialdefined.html)) describes some of the attributes of green burials:

- Caring for the dead with minimal environmental impact that aids in the conservation of natural resources
- Reduction of carbon emissions
- Protection of worker health
- Restoration and/or preservation of habitat

If you are interested in serving on a committee to learn more about green burials and how they might be offered in the Town, contact Cathy Hasslinger at [chasslinger@townofdunnwi.gov](mailto:chasslinger@townofdunnwi.gov).

2024: Outlier Year for Lake Waubesa (Continued)

LWCA’s Action Plan for Aquatic Plant Management

Lake Waubesa Conservation Association (LWCA) worked with Dane County Land and Water Resources to try new ways to address the plant overgrowth. Aquatic plant harvesters were present on Lake Waubesa more frequently than in past decades. This uptick in harvester activity was pivotal in controlling the massive plant spread, ensuring the lake remained usable for residents and visitors alike.

Early in the season, LWCA kicked off an Aquatic Plant Management (APM) committee. This initiative helped LWCA build relationships with state and county officials, fostering valuable collaboration to learn best practices for managing aquatic plant overgrowth. Through these partnerships, we are better educated and seek to propagate what we have learned with the community.

Pier Pickup Program

The increased plant growth also led to more activity around the lake, with the Pier Pickup Program seeing a higher-than-average participation. This initiative helped homeowners and volunteers remove plant debris that collected around docks, ensuring clear water for recreation and reducing potential decaying plants from adding to the nutrient load.

Piloting Floating Plant Pushouts

One of the most promising developments this year was LWCA’s pilot program for floating plant pushouts. In collaboration with Dane County Land and Water Resources management and the operators of the aquatic plant harvesters, large amounts of unwanted floating plants were removed from shoreline areas in both public and private areas. This initiative involved several volunteers to be in the water pushing plants onto the harvester conveyors and proved to be an efficient way to remove the large amounts floating lake plants that were too great for the pier pickup program. While the pilot program showed strong potential, there’s still work to be done. The team identified several tweaks and improvements needed to make the pushouts a viable, long-term solution for lake maintenance.

Looking Ahead

As we continue to study the Yahara watershed, we’re gaining a better understanding of the common challenges facing our lakes. All of the lakes struggle with high phosphorus levels, and Monona, Waubesa, and Kegonsa also face contamination from PFAS. At the same time, each lake has its own unique ecosystem and set of issues. Organizations like Clean Lakes Alliance, which focuses on reducing phosphorus, and Yahara Lakes Association, which addresses PFAS

and regulatory changes, play a critical role in improving the watershed. By partnering with and supporting these groups, LWCA can concentrate on initiatives specific to Lake Waubesa.

While 2024 presented its challenges, it also showcased the strength of the Lake Waubesa community and the resilience of the lake itself. With the ongoing efforts of the LWCA and its partners, as well as the insights gained from this year’s extreme conditions, we are confident that the lake will remain a treasured natural resource for years to come.



Photo of Dane County Land and Water Resources completing pier pick with aquatic weed harvesters. Photo from LWCA.



Photo of Tamara Knickmeier on a large pile of lake weeds. Photo from LWCA.



## Oak Decline Continues In Southern Wisconsin

Article by Michael Hillstrom, WiDNR Forest Health Specialist

Bur and white oaks, most of them more than 100 years old, have experienced rapid mortality (within one to two years) over the past four years in southern Wisconsin and neighboring states. Research into the cause is ongoing, but the evidence so far suggests it's an oak decline.

Oak declines are not caused by a single issue, but rather by the stacking of multiple health issues. Drought, flooding, storm damage,

age, two-lined chestnut borer, Armillaria and other root pathogens, and spongy moth and oak leafroller defoliation all play a role in the damage.

Oak wilt is not a part of this decline. Generally, damage is scattered throughout a stand with healthy oaks remaining.

Management is difficult because the main drivers are weather, age and the native insects and pathogens taking advantage of the stress.

Hopefully, the consistent rain this spring and summer will help get the oaks in better health and able to fight off the insects and fungi.

For additional details, check out the management section of the Minnesota Forest Health Team's new webpage at:

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/treecare/forest\\_health/oak\\_decline/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/treecare/forest_health/oak_decline/index.html)



Photo taken on the Yahara River by Kelsey Shepperd

## West Waubesa Trail (Waucheeta Connector)

This nearly 1-mile long trail is now open to bicyclists and pedestrians! The trail connects the Lower Yahara River Trail in William G. Lunney Lake Farm County Park to the Waucheeta neighborhood in the Town of Dunn through the Capital Springs State Park. The trail is a paved asphalt trail through prairie with two sections of wetland boardwalk (500') and a short section of crushed limestone trail (200') along the western shore of Lake Waubesa. The trail offers bicyclists and pedestrians a safe off-road alternative to Lake Farm Road.



Photo of a scene West Waubesa Trail Connector. Photo by Dane County Parks.

## Phase II Lower Yahara River Trail

This 1.6-mile trail is a mix of boardwalk, bridge and paved trail along the northern shore of Lake Kegonsa and is now open to bicyclists, pedestrians, and other forms of non-motorized transit. The trail is located between Fish Camp County Park and Lake Kegonsa State Park and connects to the Village of McFarland via a 2-mile on-road route along CTH AB. Future phases will connect to Stoughton. Accessible fishing and boating improvements at Fish Camp County Park are also complete.



Photo of ribbon cutting ceremony at the Lower Yahara River Trail entrance. Photo by Cathy Hasslinger.

## On the Road Again...

Article by Town Public Works Department

The Town has approximately 64 road miles to maintain. An important part of our work also involves road-side mowing which helps with traffic safety, invasive vegetation control, and to prepare for snow removal. Our goal is for all roads to be safely passable as soon as possible after a winter weather event. For major events, removal operations involve **at least** two rounds of plowing on major roads. Secondary streets may take longer to clear as they may not be done on the first round. Snow must be winged back off of the road and shoulder, especially in drift prone areas. This is done for safety, roadside parking, and road longevity. A deep frost is needed along the shoulders of the road to help support the asphalt and roadbed during the winter and spring thaw.

### How can you help?

- **Don't Park On Roadsides:** When snow is forecasted, refrain from parking on the shoulders or roads.
- **Garbage and Recycling Carts:** Place carts in your driveway apron on the morning of pick-up and remove them as soon as possible. Do not place carts in the road or on the shoulder. The Town is not responsible for damaged carts or tipped over carts.
- **Do Not Push Snow Into The Road:** It is illegal. As a word of advice, place snow on the right side at the end of your driveway (as you are looking at the street) so the plow doesn't push it back in.
- **Do Not Follow Too Closely:** For safety, Wisconsin law states vehicles must remain at least 200 feet behind a snowplow. If you can't see both mirrors ahead of you, you are too close.
- **Be Aware, Be Patient:** Snowplows make sudden stops, weave around obstacles, and back up – especially at intersections. Give them room.
- **Do Not Place Items In The Road Right-of-Way:** Keep trailers, burn barrels, or any other obstacles out of the RROW. This includes markers, stakes, or signs. Snow must be able to be winged back.

Please give your plow driver a break by following these instructions, and if you can, a wave, thumbs up, smile or even a sign can help with the long nights and long days of keeping the roads safe.

## 2025 Federal Funding for PDR Program

In 2025, the State of Wisconsin is expected to receive funds from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help protect farmland through conservation easements. Through the Town's Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, Dunn landowners meeting eligibility requirements may be eligible for this funding. Landowners are compensated for the value of their land's development rights, which is the difference between what the land would be worth prior to placing restrictions on the property and the value of the land with the new conservation easement. So far, 39 properties, totaling almost 4,000 acres have been protected through the Town's PDR program. Grants, such as the USDA funding, help offset the PDR program's costs.

If you are interested in beginning a discussion about your property and the PDR program, please contact Ben Kollenbroich at (608) 838-1081, ext. 3 or [bkollenbroich@townofdunnwi.gov](mailto:bkollenbroich@townofdunnwi.gov) by November 20th. More information about the Town's PDR program can be found by visiting [www.townofdunnwi.gov](http://www.townofdunnwi.gov) and searching "PDR".



Photo of Delphine and Daphne Phillips thanking "Mr. Plow" by Hardy Krueger.