Village of Bloomfield Public Safety Referendum – November 6, 2018

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What is the proposed public safety and road maintenance referendum that is on the ballot for Tuesday, November 6, 2018?** The proposed referendum is a resolution authorizing the village to exceed the levy limit by $600,000 starting in 2018 for 5 years. The funding will be used to maintain current public safety and road maintenance.

2. **What will appear on the November 6, 2018 ballot?** The formal resolution requesting permission to exceed the state revenue limit will appear as follows on the November 6, 2018 ballot:

   Under state law, the increase in the levy of the Village of Bloomfield for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year, 2019, is limited to 0.83%, which results in a levy of $1,863,163. Shall the Village of Bloomfield be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year, 2019 through 2023, for an amount not to exceed $600,000 each year to be used toward Public Safety and Road Maintenance by a total of 32%, which results in a levy of $2,463,163?

3. **When and where do I vote?** Election day is Tuesday, November 6, 2018. POLLING TAKES PLACE AT THE VILLAGE HALL AT N1100 TOWN HALL ROAD, PELL LAKE, WI 53157. POLLING WILL BE OPEN AT 7:00 AM AND WILL CLOSE AT 8:00 PM. Wisconsin voters are required to show an acceptable photo ID to vote.

4. **Why is the Village placing the referendum on this election?** State statute regulates when communities can put referendum questions on the ballot. Referenda cannot be called until after the municipality knows its allowable levy increase for the following budget year, which the state publishes in September. The referendum must be held before the municipality begins to collect the levy on January 1 of the following year. That leaves the fall election as the only option.

5. **Why do we need a referendum to raise the tax levy limit?** The State of Wisconsin limits the amount of property taxes a municipality can collect each year. To exceed the levy limit, the municipality needs voter approval through a Village wide referendum.

6. **If state law limits the amount of property tax a municipality can collect based on new construction growth, why has my tax bill gone up by more that that in some years?** The state allows some exceptions including changes to a municipality's debt obligations or a need to collect for rescinded or refunded taxes from a prior year.

7. **Why are we proposing this referendum now?** The Village of Bloomfield has been in a negative budget position for many consecutive years and has been borrowing annually to cover budget shortfalls. More than a decade of state-imposed levy caps has limited the amount the Village can increase the levy limit forcing borrowing as the only way to cover budget shortfalls. The Village has seen minimal increases with virtually zero net-new construction over the last ten years.

8. **Why is the referendum being proposed for Public Safety and Road Maintenance:** The referendum is being proposed to allow the Village to maintain the current levels of these primary services while the board works to restructure the Village and budget over the next 5 years. As the Village of Bloomfield is already at minimum standards for these departments further cuts could jeopardize the integrity of the programs with long term consequences.

9. **Has the village taken any action to reduce costs:** In the face of decreased state aids, frozen levy limits and declining funding the Village has made many cuts since 2010:
    - Increase employee contribution to insurance benefits
    - Merge Bloomfield Fire & Rescue with a joint services agreement with Village of Genoa City, Village and Town of Bloomfield
    - Have recently not replaced the Village Clerk, and have re-distributed this work load temporarily to other staff
    - Cut road maintenance program from a 2-year budget to a 3-year budget with the same total spend (50% of the budget is state funded – and require a Village to match spending dollar for dollar).
    - Renegotiated the Village Garbage/Recycling contract
    - Considered a Pilot Tax to generate revenue
    - Constructed a salt shed to save on the cost of salt and labor for plowing
    - Wages freeze in 2013 for some employees.
    - Implemented a Voice over IP Phone System to consolidate all Village entities on one system and save cost over multiple prior phone contracts
    - Restructure personnel to include an interim Village Administrator to have someone on staff responsible for managing all day to day aspects of Village operations and control workflow and costs
    - Reduce Village Board wages by $1,000 per Elected official

10. **What other alternatives will be considered to repair Village Finances**: The Village intends to continue to evaluate several options to save money and bring the budget into a realistic balance including:
    - Research and quote outsourced support for existing services
    - Research and quote partnering agreements with surrounding communities
    - Increase revenue options including PILOT (water) and Wheel Tax
    - Budget cuts and service reductions
    - Restructure Personnel to include a permanent Village Administrator to manage Village

    As part of the decision-making process, the Village is soliciting your feedback. SURVEY ATTACHED, PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN.

11. **Can the Village create a dedicated fund to ensure that the additional tax dollars will only be used for public safety or road maintenance?** The Village is exploring options to create a segregated fund for police services and road maintenance.

12. **What will it mean if a majority of voters vote YES?** The Village Board will be able to create a budget that will provide for a continuation of services and not require the Village to borrow more funds to pay budget shortfalls or to pay down debt. This increase would be used to maintain current service levels in Public Safety and Road Maintenance only. During the 5 years the Board intends to continue to work to restructure Village spending and find other income sources. If the referendum is approved, the annual property tax is anticipated to increase by ($1.63/$1,000 of assessed value) $163 per year for every $100,000 of property value starting with the bills issued in December 2018.
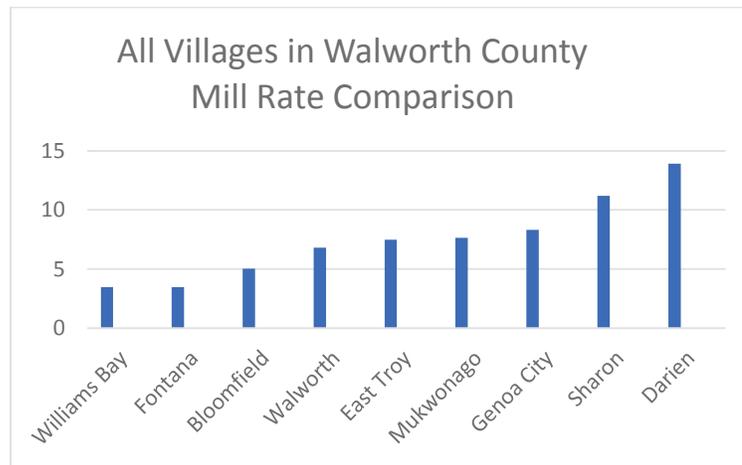
Public Safety and Road Maintenance Referendum ($600,000 cap, for 5 years)		
Assessed Property Value	**Estimated Tax Increase**	
	Per Year	**Per Month**
$100,000 of property value	$163.00	$13.59
$150,000 of property value	$244.50	$20.38
$200,000 of property value	$326.00	$27.16
$300,000 of property value	$489.00	$40.75
$400,000 of property value	$652.00	$54.33
$500,000 of property value	$815.00	$67.92

13. **What does it mean if a majority vote "no" and the referendum fails?** The Village will have to borrow to cover the projected 2019 budget shortfall, which will increase taxes temporarily to repay debt. Currently, the Village is paying over $54,000 per year in interest on general fund debt, this number will continue to grow and there will eventually be substantial cuts in current services including public service and road maintenance.

14. **How does the Village of Bloomfield's tax rate compare to surrounding communities?** The Village of Bloomfield has the lowest operational mill rate of all Villages in Walworth County at $3.00. To cover existing debt service there is a levy mill rate of $2.04 for a total of $5.04.

15. **How can I find out more?** Attend public informational meetings on Saturday, October 13, 2018 at 10 am or Thursday, October 18, 2018 at 6:30 pm. Both meetings will take place at Village Hall. You can also visit the Village website at: www.bloomfield-wi.us. There will be a page dedicated to the referendum.