

Wisconsin LocalGov Hub Briefing

April 27 to May 3, 2026

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Budgets and Finance

Beaver Dam gives several staff members raises following its wage study

The Beaver Dam Common Council approved a \$48,000 salary and benefit adjustment at its March 21, 2026 meeting to align underpaid city positions with market minimums identified through a wage study conducted by MGT. City Administrator Larry Bielke stated the adjustments bring affected positions to the market minimum among 15 comparable communities, including Cedarburg, Hartland, Portage, DeForest, Middleton, Stoughton, Fort Atkinson, Oconomowoc, Sussex, Germantown, Oregon, Watertown, Hartford, Platteville, and Wisconsin Rapids. The \$48,000 cost will be drawn from the city's fund balance in the current fiscal year and incorporated into the 2027 budget going forward. Mayor Bobbi Marck noted a wages subcommittee formed in 2023 had flagged the underpayment. Bielke indicated the city intends to engage a consultant to develop a formal wage grid as the next procedural step.

Source: Beaver Dam Daily Citizen (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/community/bdc/article_96e509ec-3a97-4b76-9cab-f5082f1720fd.html

2025 surplus helps keep Baraboo's public pool open this year

Baraboo's Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department disclosed at the April 14, 2026 Common Council meeting that a 2025 operating surplus of more than \$10,000, remaining from community fundraising that totaled over \$32,000 to keep Campbell Park Pool open in 2024, has reduced the department's 2026 funding gap to approximately \$9,000, down from an initial target of \$20,000. Department Director John Celley reported the figures to the council, with District 9 Alderman Brett Topham acknowledging the community fundraising effort. The pool is scheduled to open June 13 and close in late August. Individual season passes increase from \$55 to \$60 for residents and from \$75 to \$80 for non-residents; family passes rise from \$115 to \$120 and \$145 to \$160 respectively. District 4 Alderman Jason Kent indicated further council discussion of the pool's long-term future is expected during summer 2026.

Source: Baraboo News Republic (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/local/article_b5cd6a91-e048-4f44-b7f3-ff5da4f661b6.html

Fuel costs impacting Polk County budget

At the April 2026 Public Safety/Public Works Committee meeting, Polk County Highway Commissioner Josh Kelch reported to supervisors that the county's most recently adopted annual fuel budget of approximately \$450,000 faces a projected shortfall of roughly \$100,000 due to a 25 percent increase in diesel costs and an anticipated increase of more than one dollar per gallon for unleaded gasoline. Board Chairman Jay Luke calculated the 25 percent increase against the \$450,000 budget figure aloud during the meeting. County Administrator Emil Norby noted the annual fuel budget has historically fluctuated between \$300,000 and \$450,000. The county purchases fuel at rack price upon order rather than through a contract, maintaining on-site storage of 8,000 gallons of unleaded and 7,500 gallons of diesel at the highway shop, which also supplies the sheriff's department and other municipal departments. The committee received the cost impact information as a briefing, with formal budget amendment action implied as costs are compiled.

Source: Amery Free Press (Western) | https://theameryfreepress.com/news/fuel-costs-impacting-polk-county-budget/article_6f6655d8-3795-45e4-bbb0-fa2e4f9a437d.html

City of Marshfield to consider accepting partial grant for police department relocation project

The Marshfield Common Council is scheduled to vote Tuesday, April 29, 2026, on whether to accept an \$800,000 partial grant award from the Wisconsin Department of Administration's Non-State grant program for the police department relocation project. The city had originally submitted a grant application in October requesting \$2 million to fund renovation of the Wildwood Plaza building into a new police department headquarters. The Wisconsin Department of Administration notified the city last week that only a partial award of \$800,000 may be available and requested confirmation that the project could proceed with that reduced amount. City staff reviewed the offer and determined the partial funding would be sufficient to allow the project to move forward. If the Common Council approves acceptance of the grant, the project will be placed on the agenda for the next State Building Commission meeting, anticipated in May 2026.

Source: WSAW CBS7 Wausau (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wsaw.com/2026/04/28/city-marshfield-consider-accepting-partial-grant-police-department-relocation-project/>

City of Milton exploring raises for mayor, council members

The Milton Common Council is considering a resolution to increase compensation for the mayor and council members, with a potential vote as early as Tuesday, May 6, 2026, at City Hall. City Administrator Paul Hensch submitted a memo noting no pay adjustment has occurred in 20 years; current annual pay is \$2,200 for Mayor Eric Stockman and \$1,200 for council members. A staff-compiled peer-city analysis based on 15 Wisconsin communities suggests per-resident pay rates averaging \$1.71 for mayor and \$0.94 for alder, which applied to Milton's population of 5,718 would yield approximately \$9,778 annually for the mayor and \$5,375 for council members. City staff proposes no specific dollar figure. Under state law, increases could not take effect for Stockman, Walker, Budlong, and Henze until April 2027, and for Smith, Reid, and Gallman until April 2028. The council may waive second and third readings or pursue a multi-reading process per Stockman's suggestion.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/city-of-milton-exploring-raises-for-mayor-council-members/article_aae35f14-755c-485c-a07f-8419d2e8aeb.html

County Board elects new chairs, votes against delaying AV installation

The Washburn County Board, at its April 21, 2026 reorganizational meeting in Shell Lake, voted 19-1 to reject a resolution that would have delayed installation of an upgraded audio-visual system in the County Board room until the 2027 budget year. The board had previously approved the AV upgrade from Audio Architects using 2026 Capital Projects funds; the installation cost is \$53,632.16, with a remaining balance of \$22,367.84 to be budgeted in 2027. An unforeseen Windows Server 2025 Data Center licensing cost of \$72,144, approved by the Information Technology Committee, had prompted the delay proposal. Supervisor Joe Hoy cast the sole affirmative vote; Supervisor Bob Olsgard was absent. The board also elected Lolita Olson as chair, Tim Kessler as first vice chair, and Hank Graber as second vice chair, and approved two rezones, including one for LLR Holdings LLC to build affordable apartments in Beaver Brook Township. AV installation will proceed in 2026.

Source: Spooner Advocate (Western) | https://apg-wi.com/spooner_advocate/news/local/county-board-elects-new-chairs-votes-against-delaying-av-installation/article_5404d4e9-516e-4aeb-890c-a9c02fd85ef4.html

Workforce and Labor

Wetzel named new city administrator

The Antigo City Council unanimously approved the appointment of Michael Wetzel as the City of Antigo's new city administrator, with Wetzel set to begin the role on May 26, 2026. Wetzel currently serves as village clerk and deputy administrator for the Village of Marshall in Dane County, where he oversees statutory clerk responsibilities, daily operations, budgeting, and capital planning. He holds a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. In his new capacity, Wetzel will serve as the city's chief administrative officer, responsible for day-to-day operations, implementing policies set by Mayor Tom Bauknecht and the city council, and providing leadership over city departments, including functions related to personnel management, economic development, and community engagement. Wetzel will relocate to the Antigo area with his family prior to his start date.

Source: Antigo Daily Journal (Central/Northern) | https://www.antigojournal.com/news/wetzel-named-new-city-administrator/article_074936f7-3310-4e1e-a94f-e58a97f47fac.html

Sun Prairie museum board requests short-term staff hire

The Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum Board voted unanimously at its April 15, 2026 meeting to recommend that the Sun Prairie City Council hire a part-time, limited-term employee to oversee museum operations through the remainder of 2026. The city's approved 2026 operating budget includes \$240,900 for museum staffing and operations, funds that remain unappropriated following the January resignations of the museum's two full-time employees, Katie Scanlan and Sunshine Anderson. City Administrator Aaron Oppenheimer identified volunteer safety and collection integrity risks as primary concerns with the facility remaining unstaffed. Board members, including Alder Mike Jacobs, agreed that a part-time position would be more realistic to fill than a full-time role, and the board stipulated that any candidate must be informed the position may not continue into 2027. Unspent 2026 funds could subsequently be reappropriated by the city council for future years. The Sun Prairie City Council will evaluate the staffing request at a future meeting.

Source: Sun Prairie Star (South Central) | https://hngnews.com/the_star/local_news/sun-prairie-museum-board-requests-short-term-staff-hire/article_c40ee2ed-36e3-4f3c-8d2f-e06f167d3644.html

Eau Claire City Manager Stephanie Hirsch resigns

Eau Claire City Manager Stephanie Hirsch's resignation became effective at 4 p.m. on April 29, 2026, vacating the city's top administrative position she had held since April 2022. Deputy City Manager Dave Solberg was designated Acting City Manager pending further action by the City Council. Council President Jeremy Gragert and other council members confirmed that the Human Resources Department will present options for filling the position to the full council at its next legislative meeting on May 11, 2026, when the council is expected to consider appointing an interim city manager and initiating a formal recruitment process for a permanent replacement. No vote count or ordinance identifier was reported in connection with the departure. The previous city manager recruitment, following Dale Peters' 2021 retirement, required three searches over approximately two years before a candidate was selected.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/eau-claire-officials-react-to-city-manager-resignation-detail-next-steps/article_c56acb0a-1680-45a1-b62e-9a87bc01f95b.html

Eau Claire City Council appoints Joyce Orth to fill seat vacancy

The Eau Claire City Council voted 7-3 on April 28, 2026, to appoint Joyce Orth to fill the vacant District 2 council seat previously held by Emily Anderson, who had resigned. Orth was selected

from three applicants; Brian Trowbridge and Shelley Janke were the other candidates. Trowbridge was eliminated in the first round of voting at the April 20 meeting, at which the council failed three times to achieve the required six-vote majority between Orth and Janke, delaying the decision. At the April 28 meeting, council members Joshua Miller, Larry Mboga, and Charlie Johnson cast the dissenting votes in favor of Janke. Council President Jeremy Gragert stated that Orth's official duties commence at the May 11 council meeting, with the swearing-in ceremony potentially occurring before that date.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/eau-claire-city-council-appoints-joyce-orth-to-fill-seat-vacancy/article_7c4e79ed-94c2-44f9-a5de-1fdcc8c5d04d.html

Janesville city leaders approve Lahner severance, eliminate deputy city manager position

The Janesville City Council voted unanimously in closed session on April 28, 2026, to approve a four-month severance package for City Manager Kevin Lahner, after which the city and Lahner mutually agreed to part ways, according to a city statement. Lahner's last day is May 29, 2026; he had held the city manager role since 2023. Concurrent with Lahner's departure, the council eliminated the deputy city manager position previously held by Ryan McCue, whose role had encompassed internal operations, budgeting, tax incremental financing, economic development, and grant procurement. Assistant to the City Manager Nick Faust stated day-to-day operations will continue uninterrupted. The city has not disclosed specific severance dollar figures for either Lahner or McCue, citing personnel-matter policy; the Janesville Gazette has filed a formal open records request seeking those details. Faust indicated specific updates on interim leadership and a permanent recruitment would be announced within approximately two weeks.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/janesville-city-leaders-are-calling-city-manager-kevin-lahners-resignation-an-opportunity-to-move-forward/article_3f695d9b-d3aa-4004-9282-79add38388f3.html

Klein to retire as City of Pewaukee administrator

City of Pewaukee Mayor Steve Bierce announced the retirement of City Administrator Scott Klein in an email to city employees on Thursday, May 1, 2026. Klein, who previously served as mayor before transitioning to the administrator role, will remain in his position during a transition period to complete several major projects and assist with onboarding his successor. No vote count or separation terms were reported. The Pewaukee Common Council is scheduled to meet at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, May 4, 2026, at which point it will consider hiring a search firm to conduct recruitment for a new city administrator, representing the next formal procedural step in filling the vacancy.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/scott-klein-retires-pewaukee/article_0939269d-3fac-51a7-8aff-db51925b84bb.html

CF School Board approves staffing cuts due to dwindling enrollment

The Chippewa Falls School Board voted 6-1 on April 28, 2026, to eliminate eight full-time teaching positions and three part-time teaching positions, along with additional staffing reductions, for gross cuts totaling \$862,414 offset by \$215,452 in additions, yielding net savings of \$646,962. Eliminated positions include four elementary teaching positions at Halmstad Elementary, three at Hillcrest Elementary, a full-time middle school business teacher, a full-time high school social worker reduced to half-time, food service and coaching positions, and a part-time administrative assistant.

Superintendent Jeff Holmes presented the plan citing a 170-student enrollment decline district-wide to 4,516 students and reduced state aid. Board member David Martineau cast the sole dissenting vote. The current cuts address the present budget, but a preliminary 2027 budget projects a \$1.7 million deficit, with a potential \$3.49 million deficit in 2028 if the district's \$2.5 million annual three-year referendum is not renewed.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/daily-updates/cf-school-board-approves-staffing-cuts-due-to-dwindling-enrollment/article_e6d1501e-9417-4cbe-8775-3aa648c16427.html

Marinette principal faces criminal charges

The Marinette School Board approved the hire of Justin Bardowski as Marinette High School principal by a 7-1 vote, with board member Cindy Verschaw voting against and Martin Shaw excused, following Bardowski's tenure as Menominee High School principal for two years. Bardowski, 41, of Menominee, was subsequently placed on administrative leave in January 2026 while the Marinette County Sheriff's Office investigated an alleged domestic violence incident from October 2022 at the Four Seasons Resort in Pembine. Bardowski now faces misdemeanor charges of battery, a Class A misdemeanor carrying up to nine months confinement and a \$10,000 fine, and disorderly conduct, a Class B misdemeanor carrying up to 90 days confinement and a \$1,000 fine. The Marinette School District notified families by letter that it is conducting an internal review pursuant to district policies. Bardowski remains on administrative leave. No court date has been set.

Source: EagleHerald (Northeastern) | https://www.ehextra.com/news/marinette-principal-faces-criminal-charges/article_6487bf0d-e406-4038-a4ad-f4dda530bbf3.html

Barron County committee approves jail lieutenant position, ATV access on Highway AA

At its April 16, 2026 meeting, the Barron County Board Law Enforcement and Emergency Management Committee agreed to create a new lieutenant's position at the County Jail to oversee and mentor staff, adding between \$10,000 and \$20,000 to the payroll. The committee also approved opening a three-mile segment of County Highway AA in the Town of Dovre to all-terrain and utility-terrain vehicles to allow access across the U.S. Highway 53 bridge. Additionally, the committee approved replacement of three exterior jail doors using savings from the \$2.2 million county jail sally port project, which finished under budget; that facility is scheduled for state inspection on May 8, 2026. Committee Chair Pete Olson presided. County Administrator Jeff French will present a job description and salary data for a proposed dedicated records position, estimated at \$100,000 to the levy, to the County Board Executive Committee next month.

Source: Chetek Alert (Western) | https://chetekalert.com/news/top_stories/article_0538b026-aaaa-4b3c-a57b-3f3d5d8ea0c7.html

Infrastructure and Utilities

Pleasant Prairie awards \$4.79M south Kenosha water main project contract

The Village of Pleasant Prairie Village Board awarded a contract valued at \$4.79 million for a south Kenosha area water main relay and road rehabilitation project. The action approved the procurement award for the major infrastructure project covering water main replacement and associated road rehabilitation work in the south Kenosha area. The article does not provide

supporting details on contractor name, vote count, or ordinance identifier, and no next procedural step was specified in the reported content.

Source: Lake Geneva Regional News (Southeastern) | https://lakegenevanews.net/news/local/collection_ad2a5351-40dd-5a14-8eba-54f4b0157eb1.html

Panel accepts \$23.5M Kenosha Innovation Center as completed

The City of Kenosha Common Council's Public Works Committee formally accepted the Kenosha Innovation Center as satisfactorily completed by Miron Construction of Neenah at a final contract amount of \$23.57 million. The acceptance action was taken by the Public Works Committee in its oversight capacity over municipal construction contracts; no dissenting vote count was reported. Separately, the Kenosha Common Council denied the Uptown Library roof replacement contract at a Wednesday Common Council meeting, with members of the Public Works Committee and Historic Preservation Commission citing concerns; the denial directs city staff to seek a new bid for the roof replacement project. Both actions were taken by formal governing bodies of the City of Kenosha exercising their respective procurement and contract oversight authorities.

Source: Lake Geneva Regional News (Southeastern) | https://lakegenevanews.net/news/local/government-politics/collection_ddd6c774-4568-5272-8686-9dfb732741d8.html

Committee backs equipment purchases, flags costly water tower repairs

At its April 20, 2026 meeting, the Ladysmith Public Works Committee took four formal procurement and referral actions. The committee unanimously approved spending up to \$35,000 from the city's equipment fund to replace a 2003 Freightliner bucket truck, with any costs exceeding the \$70,000 fund balance to be borrowed from the general fund and repaid in the 2027 budget. The committee also unanimously approved approximately \$15,000 for a 12-foot moldboard trip reversible plow and pin-and-loop hitch system through Monroe Truck Equipment, compatible with a plow truck already on order. A third action referred a water tower maintenance proposal with South Dakota firm Maguire to the full city council, with Public Works Director Kurt Gorseger warning the project will require a water rate increase and noting a June deadline for approving painting work. The committee awarded the 2026 sidewalk, curb and gutter replacement contract to low bidder Thornapple Excavating LLC at \$22,356, over a competing bid of \$23,750 from DC Crete.

Source: Ladysmith News (Western) | https://ladysmithnews.com/news/article_a1a8680a-31bd-434b-914a-c9284c70be21.html

County board approves zoning ordinance modifications

The Rusk County Board of Supervisors, meeting April 21, 2026, with 17 members present, approved modifications to the county's zoning ordinances related to land use, including provisions for solar energy systems. The board also unanimously approved jail plumbing renovations totaling \$320,570, awarded to Badger State following an RFP issued at the November 12 board meeting; funding will draw \$217,682.56 from surplus sheriff's department radio project funds and \$102,877.44 from the county general fund, covering replacement of all sinks and toilets with stainless steel fixtures. The board unanimously appointed Justin Livingston as permanent Highway Commissioner, converting his interim role held since August 13, 2024. A resolution adjusting exempt employee salaries to a 40-hour work-week basis, estimated at \$27,737 for the remainder of the year funded from contingency, passed by unanimous voice vote. Newly sworn members included write-in District Seven Supervisor Bill Stewart and District Nine Supervisor Lisa Podgornik; Ron Freeman was elected board chair.

Source: Ladysmith News (Western) | https://ladysmithnews.com/news/article_317dabf2-567d-4afe-b7ff-5787ef3efe8a.html

County digs into Saukville nature preserve project

Ozaukee County supervisors authorized a grant application for a \$1 million National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant earlier this month to fund development of the Milwaukee River Oxbow Nature Preserve, a 67-acre park along Highway W in Saukville. The project, overseen by county Planning and Parks Director Andrew Struck, has secured nearly \$4 million in combined state and federal grants and involves reconstruction of Highway W by the county Highway Department, including raising the roadway, shifting it east, and installing two culverts to restore the historic river oxbow and reduce chronic flooding. The Wisconsin Historical Society was contracted to conduct cultural and historical research, resulting in discovery of four pre-contact Native American artifact sites. Artifact findings necessitated moving the Milwaukee River channel farther east, expanding the preserve by approximately 13 acres and increasing wetlands from roughly two acres to six. Highway construction work is scheduled to begin later this summer.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | <https://ozaukeepress.com/content/county-digs-saukville-nature-preserve-project>

Spring to bring improvements at county park

Ozaukee County supervisors approved a contract awarding architectural design and engineering services for campground bathroom facilities at Hawthorne Hills County Park to Kueny Architects for \$43,166, selected over two other competing firms. Supervisors also approved plans for a 750-square-foot storage shed to support Sugar Maple Nature School operations and a 2,000-square-foot natural playground at the same park. The campground, which will feature 32 campsites predominantly suitable for recreational vehicles, is a separate development from the school improvements. Kueny Architects has previously performed work for the county on bathroom pavilions at Lion's Den Gorge Nature Preserve County Park and Covered Bridge Park, as well as a multi-purpose maintenance building at Hawthorne Hills. The architectural and engineering contract for the campground bathrooms represents the next procedural step toward construction of the planned 32-site campground.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | <https://ozaukeepress.com/content/spring-bring-improvements-county-park>

New general aviation terminal construction begins at Central Wisconsin Airport in Mosinee

Construction began April 29, 2026, on a \$6.6 million general aviation terminal at Central Wisconsin Airport in Mosinee, funded primarily through the federal Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act. CWA Director Brian Grefe and fixed-base operator Ovation's Director Josh Harris are the principal actors overseeing the project. The new terminal will replace a 1970s-era facility that the airport and Ovation determined has been outgrown by current general aviation demand, which encompasses business, corporate, recreational, and medical flights. Design features include a butterfly ceiling for improved airflow and daylight-optimized construction for energy efficiency. The article does not report a specific governing body vote, contract award recipient, or ordinance identifier associated with the project. Construction is anticipated to be completed in December 2026 or early 2027.

Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/new-general-aviation-terminal-construction-begins-at-central-wisconsin-airport-in-mosinee/article_baf9ce6a-e304-4027-a718-762f15660fa7.html

Lakeland Airport Commission approves purchase of land along runway despite community concerns

The Lakeland Airport Commission voted at a special meeting on April 30, 2026, at Arbor Vitae Town Hall to purchase approximately five acres of land along North Farming Road and Hall Road adjacent to the airport's runway for \$155,000. Representatives from all four co-owning townships, Arbor Vitae, Minocqua, Woodruff, and Lac du Flambeau, approved the acquisition, which is intended to establish a clear zone and improve runway safety. Arbor Vitae Town Chairman Frank Bauers, speaking on behalf of the commission, stated the purchase price is expected to be offset by separating and reselling a two-acre parcel containing an existing residential structure. Becher Hoppe President and engineer Karl Kemper of Wausau attended the meeting to address technical safety justifications and public questions. No construction is currently planned for the acquired acreage. Proceeds from the resale of the residential parcel are anticipated to recover the full \$155,000 acquisition cost.

Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Central/Northern) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/lakeland-airport-commission-approves-purchase-of-land-along-runway-despite-community-concerns/article_3ea7810c-32f1-4a84-ad9c-af84c98494e9.html

Public Safety

Food truck owners push for delay of Water Street curfew after meeting with mayor's office

Milwaukee's Common Council voted unanimously to pass an ordinance requiring downtown food trucks to cease operations by 10 p.m., effective May 9, 2026, cutting three hours from the current closing time of 1 a.m. The measure was authored by Alderman Robert Bauman and was approved by the full council last week. The ordinance targets Water Street vendors as part of an effort to address violence in the area. Food truck operators met with the office of Mayor Cavalier Johnson on April 24; a mayoral spokesperson indicated the concerns raised would be relayed to Milwaukee alders. Bauman, in a written statement to TMJ4, confirmed that any amendment to the ordinance would require introduction of a new legislative file, full committee review, and a subsequent vote before the full Common Council, making modification before the May 9 effective date procedurally impossible. Vendors are seeking a follow-up meeting with city officials before the curfew takes effect.

Source: WTMJ 4 NBC Milwaukee (Southeastern) | <https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/in-your-community/milwaukee-county/food-truck-owners-push-for-delay-of-water-street-curfew-after-meeting-with-mayors-office>

Wisconsin set to receive \$80 million from Purdue Pharma settlement

The Wisconsin Department of Justice announced on May 1, 2026, that the state will receive more than \$80 million from a now-active \$7.4 billion settlement with Purdue Pharma and the Sackler family, resolving multistate litigation over opioid marketing practices. Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul, exercising the DOJ's enforcement authority, stated the funds will support addiction treatment, prevention, and recovery efforts. The settlement, the product of nearly a decade of coordination among state attorneys general, prohibits the Sackler family from selling opioids in the United States and distributes funding nationally over the next 15 years. This disbursement brings Wisconsin's cumulative opioid settlement receipts to more than \$874 million in total. No specific vote or legislative appropriation action for allocation of the incoming funds was reported; the next

procedural step regarding distribution to programs or political subdivisions was not specified in the announcement.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (Statewide) | <https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/05/01/wisconsin-set-receive-80-million-purdue-pharma-settlement/>

Wisconsin flags to fly at half-staff Sunday for fallen firefighters

Governor Tony Evers signed Executive Order 290 directing flags of the United States and the State of Wisconsin to be flown at half-staff on three separate dates in 2026 in honor of fallen firefighters. The order covers sunrise to sunset on Sunday, May 3, 2026, in conjunction with the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service; Saturday, September 26, 2026, coinciding with the Final Alarm Ceremony at the Wisconsin Fire and EMS Memorial in Wisconsin Rapids; and Saturday, October 10, 2026, in observance of Wisconsin Firefighters Memorial Day during Fire Prevention Week, a designation established under state law. Evers also formally proclaimed May 2 to 3, 2026, as National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend. The Wisconsin Fire and EMS Memorial in Wisconsin Rapids is scheduled to hold its Final Alarm Ceremony on September 26, 2026, honoring Wisconsin fire service members who died in the line of duty.

Source: WTAQ 1360 AM / 97.5 FM Green Bay (Statewide) | <https://wtaq.com/2026/05/01/wisconsin-flags-to-fly-at-half-staff-sunday-for-fallen-firefighters/>

Racine County decommissions 100-Mile Bike Trail due to safety concerns

The Racine County Board voted unanimously at its April 14, 2026 meeting to decommission the 100-Mile Bike Trail, a countywide cycling route that officially opened in July 1970. The unanimous vote means Racine County will no longer maintain signage for or actively promote the route, according to Racine County Parks Manager Ben Haas. The trail runs approximately 100 miles through all nine towns in the county, combining off-road trails and rural roads; the City of Racine added 18 miles in December 1967 to connect to the original 80-mile county route. County staff were in the process of identifying signage locations along the route but had not yet begun removal as of the report date. Haas stated that upgrading the route to current standards with separated bike lanes is not feasible at this time, and that the county is prioritizing investment in off-road trail facilities including the Lake Michigan Pathway Trail, MRK Trail, and Pike River Pathway.

Source: Kenosha News (Southeastern) | https://www.kenoshanews.com/news/local/article_bdea0734-0fda-5e7f-af3d-d7f06a3f31e6.html

Center for addiction, mental illness progresses

Ozaukee County has hired psychiatrist Michael T. Churchwell as director of a planned day treatment center for mental health and substance abuse, with a start date of July 1, 2026, as reported by Human Services Department Director Kimberly Falkner. The County Board previously approved committing \$600,000 in opioid settlement funds in March 2026 to cover start-up costs for the facility, which will be located in the county Administration Center in downtown Port Washington. Projected annual staff salaries total \$661,168 for a seven-member team. The county holds \$1.7 million in opioid settlement funds currently available, with a total allocation of \$3.7 million expected through 2038, restricted to opioid harm reduction and treatment expansion. The facility is designed to serve up to 16 clients per day, potentially reaching 300 individuals annually. Falkner stated the county will next pursue state certification, with full operations anticipated by the end of 2026.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | <https://ozaukeeexpress.com/content/center-addiction-mental-illness-progresses>

Kenosha Unified reports smooth rollout of metal detectors at high schools

The Kenosha Unified School District School Board voted on February 24, 2026, to approve the purchase of 18 walk-through metal detectors and 15 handheld metal detection wands for deployment across the district's six high school campuses, at a total cost of approximately \$473,000 to be drawn from general fund reserves. The devices were rolled out at Bradford High School on April 15, Hillcrest School on April 16, Indian Trail High School and Academy on April 22, LakeView Technology Academy on April 23, Tremper High School on April 29, and Harborside Academy and Reuther Central High School on April 30, 2026. The vote followed multiple gun-related incidents involving KUSD students during February. Superintendent Jeff Weiss confirmed the rollout was operational across all campuses by April 30, with Tremper Principal Steve Knecht reporting minimal disruption to arrival schedules.

Source: Kenosha News (Southeastern) | https://www.kenoshanews.com/news/local/education/article_d6a9c3eb-8256-4e02-90fb-7246bedd6a3c.html

Land Use and Development

Mt. Pleasant approves contract for sanitary sewer replacement, 15 Microsoft data center site plans

The Mount Pleasant Village Board approved a contract for sanitary sewer replacement work covering approximately 1,300 feet of sewer line downstream of Summerset Drive. The board also awarded a work contract for the village's 2026 roadway paving program, with construction expected to begin during summer 2026 across several Mount Pleasant subdivisions, and approved an ordinance revision clarifying village regulations for attached homes governing townhouses and duplexes. The same meeting authorized site plans for 15 new Microsoft data centers within the village, representing a major expansion of Microsoft's existing campus where construction is finishing on the first facility and the second is scheduled to break ground in 2026. The board also approved division of a Luanne Drive parcel into four lots, each measuring 29,676 square feet with 150 feet of frontage. The article does not report dollar figures, vote counts, or ordinance identifiers for these actions.

Source: Kenosha News (Southeastern) | https://www.kenoshanews.com/news/local/government-politics/collection_7003882d-b8c2-57c9-8bd8-0c8a0a17c015.html

Simple Food Group presents plans for multi-use campus

The Lake Geneva Plan Commission received a concept plan presentation from Simple Food Group on April 20, 2026, for a proposed multi-use development on 11 acres on Sheridan Springs Road near the Geneva Square shopping center. The project, brought by Simple Food Group officials including former Mayor Tom Hartz, Young Cho, and Lori Hartz, would include a bakery production facility, cafe and coffee shop, event space, catering kitchen, food laboratory, and a 30-unit apartment building, along with parking lots and connections to bicycle and pedestrian trails. The Lake Geneva City Council previously approved selling the property to Simple Food Group for approximately \$750,000 on January 26, 2026. Plan Commission member Alderman Joel Hoiland expressed reservations that the proposal may include too many amenities for the site. The project still requires formal approval from the Plan Commission and the Lake Geneva City Council before proceeding.

Source: Lake Geneva Regional News (Southeastern) | https://lakegenevanews.net/news/local/business/article_f4987108-e355-41f7-88e9-1e437a4bdd8e.html

City of Eau Claire gets approval to enter development agreement with ABFI, Ohly

The Eau Claire City Council voted unanimously on April 28, 2026, to authorize the City Manager to enter a development agreement with ABF Ingredients North America for a proposed \$270 million manufacturing facility dedicated to Ohly, a yeast-products specialty ingredients business. The agreement, advanced after a postponement motion by Council Member Larry Mboga failed to gain support, includes infrastructure extensions and \$5.6 million in direct city assistance funded through tax incremental district capital improvement funds rather than the general fund, with \$1.4 million allocated to Phase 1 and the remainder structured as pay-as-you-go contingent on project progression. The three-phase facility on the city's north side begins with a 22,000-square-foot building expandable to 144,000 square feet, projects employment of 90 to 100 workers at \$24 to \$60 per hour, and carries a guaranteed taxable value of \$56 million. The project is projected to use 200,000 gallons of water per day, within existing capacity. The next procedural step is execution of the land purchase agreement, with construction targeted to begin in 2026.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/city-of-eau-claire-gets-approval-to-enter-development-agreement-with-abfi-ohly/article_a7a3fa88-26f7-4ce7-8182-2a30c330b188.html

Eau Claire's historic David Drummond House determined beyond repair

The City of Eau Claire's Landmarks Commission voted at its April 20, 2026 monthly meeting to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness authorizing demolition of the historic David Drummond House at 1310 State Street in Eau Claire's Third Ward neighborhood. Property owner EDJ Rentals sought the COA following a September 2025 lightning-strike fire and subsequent water damage that left the 19th-century structure beyond repair. Associate Planner Peter Baumgartner confirmed the commission's approval and noted that state law mandates a 30-day documentation period during which EDJ Rentals must work with the Wisconsin Historical Society to record the structure's condition before a demolition permit can be issued. Co-owner Joe Garlick indicated demolition is scheduled to begin between July and August 2026. Any future construction on the site will require a separate Landmarks Commission review for compliance with local historic district and Third Ward residential overlay standards; Baumgartner estimated new development could be as late as 2030.

Source: Volume One (Western) | <https://volumeone.org/articles/2026/05/02/388037-eau-claires-historic-david-drummond-house-determined-beyond-repair>

Cambridge village board rezones land east of Kwik Trip for potential housing

The Cambridge Village Board voted unanimously on April 28, 2026, to approve both a future land use map amendment and a rezoning of undeveloped land at the end of Westgate Court, adjacent to the new Kwik Trip on US 12/18, from its prior designation to Neighborhood Mixed Use. Applicant Mike Herl submitted the rezoning request with a concept plan suggesting approximately 135 to 155 residential units, including a three-story mixed-use building, three three-story multi-family buildings, and 15 two-story duplexes. Village President Paula Hollenbeck participated in discussion and clarified the approval authorizes no specific development. The Cambridge Plan Commission had voted April 27 to recommend approval of both actions following a public hearing at which several residents spoke. Planner and Zoning Administrator Steve Tremlett characterized the parcel as suitable for mixed-use development under the village's comprehensive plan. Any future development proposal must return to the Plan Commission and Village Board for separate project-specific approval.

Source: Cambridge Enterprise Sentinel (South Central) |

https://hngnews.com/leader_independent/news/local/cambridge-village-board-rezoning-land-east-of-kwik-trip-for-potential-housing/article_8d10f08a-d13f-4b72-a85f-d182ce33b73a.html

New Mexico company wants to move fast on Town of Beloit hospital project

The Town of Beloit Board of Supervisors approved the sale of 6.51 acres of municipally owned land at 1800 East Inman Parkway to Dallas-based MedCore Partners for \$100,100, enabling New Mexico-based ClearSky Health to construct a 36-bed medical rehabilitation hospital estimated at \$30 million. The land transaction constitutes a formal procurement and property disposition action by the Board of Supervisors. Town Administrator John Malizio identified a target construction start date of July 1, 2026, contingent on remaining approvals. Community Development Director Tim Kienbaum noted the property's existing zoning already permits hospital use. Before construction may begin, MedCore and ClearSky must submit site plans for approval by the Town of Beloit Plan Commission and complete planning for township sanitary sewer connections. The completed facility is projected to employ approximately 100 people and will be the largest construction project in the Town of Beloit this decade.

Source: Beloit Daily News (South Central) | https://www.beloitdailynews.com/news/business-news/new-mexico-company-wants-to-move-fast-on-town-of-beloit-hospital-project/article_3a4790a6-c13f-4739-b9c5-e28629968219.html

https://www.beloitdailynews.com/news/business-news/new-mexico-company-wants-to-move-fast-on-town-of-beloit-hospital-project/article_3a4790a6-c13f-4739-b9c5-e28629968219.html

Town of Rock committee again tables liquified natural gas plant plan

The Town of Rock Planning and Zoning Committee voted on April 28, 2026, to table for a second consecutive month a conditional use permit application submitted by Wisconsin Power and Light to construct a \$512 million liquified natural gas plant near its West Riverside Energy Center. Committee Chairman Tony Dubanowich convened the meeting before approximately 25 attendees, intending to review Alliant Energy's written responses to questions raised during the March public hearing; the session expanded into an extended discussion before the committee voted to delay a decision. WP&L first filed its application with the Public Service Commission on February 24, 2025, and subsequently purchased 129.3 acres on South Duggan Road for \$5.43 million. The proposed facility would store 2 billion cubic feet of liquified natural gas and permanently employ 200 to 350 workers. The Planning and Zoning Committee is next scheduled to meet on May 25, 2026, and PSC approval remains separately required before construction can begin.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/apgstate/town-of-rock-committee-again-tables-liquified-natural-gas-plant-plan/article_9c37160a-54a7-5421-81ce-d01365b00f71.html

Big Bend Village Board approves first phase of Breck Athletic Complex

The Big Bend Village Board granted a Conditional Use Permit for Phase 1 of the Breck Athletic Complex at a special meeting Thursday, April 23, 2026, advancing the first stage of a \$175 million multi-phase development on approximately 150 acres south of Townline Road and east of Highway 164. Phase 1 includes four full-size synthetic turf fields for youth soccer and lacrosse, a 176-space parking lot, field lighting, landscaping, berms, temporary storage containers, and a trash enclosure. The Milwaukee office of Kraus-Anderson was announced as the project's builder following the board's approval. Developer Eric Weishaar has also requested a rezoning of the site, currently zoned 75 percent commercial and 25 percent residential, to consolidate the property under a single development designation. Phase 1 construction is tentatively scheduled to begin summer 2026, with soccer fields targeted for play by early fall 2026. Opposition group End Breck stated it is preparing a legal challenge.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/breck-athletic-complex-approved/article_2e11404d-4478-4673-bc5b-3af419d975ac.html

Judge dismisses lawsuit over proposed New Berlin recovery facility

A Waukesha County judge on April 29, 2026, dismissed in full a lawsuit filed March 6 by DeMoCat LLC, Moorland Hospitality Group LLC, and the Milwaukee Rescue Mission seeking a writ of mandamus compelling the City of New Berlin to issue a zoning permit for the proposed New Journey residential addiction recovery facility at 5295 South Moorland Road. The court granted the city's motion to quash the writ of mandamus and simultaneously granted a motion by New Berlin Citizens United to intervene on the city's behalf before terminating the case. The underlying dispute concerns a New Berlin Plan Commission determination that a chapel element qualifies the facility as a church, making it a permitted use under M-1 Industrial zoning without a public hearing. The dismissal returns the matter to the city's administrative process, where the New Berlin Board of Appeals is expected to hear a pending residents' challenge to the Plan Commission's zoning classification.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/new-berlin-recovery-facility-lawsuit-dismissed/article_d49e69de-0e79-4ca8-8074-c21b8cf6d1ee.html

McFarland Village Board votes for more restrictions on short-term rentals

The McFarland Village Board voted unanimously on April 28, 2026, to refer proposed amendments to the Village's tourist rooming house ordinance to the Plan Commission for a required public hearing. The motion, made by Village President Stephanie Brassington, would extend the existing seven-day minimum stay requirement to all TRH owners rather than only out-of-town owners and limit short-term rentals to a single 180-day block within any consecutive 365-day period; current permit holders would be exempt from both changes. Additional proposed amendments include mandatory quarterly reporting on the number of stays and strengthened owner accountability for renter violations. The Board's direction overrode the Public Safety Committee's recommendations. Deputy Village Administrator and Clerk Cassandra Suettinger noted the changes must proceed as zoning amendments due to an active Wisconsin court case. Following the Plan Commission public hearing, the matter is expected to return to the Village Board for a final vote on approximately May 26, 2026.

Source: Cambridge Enterprise Sentinel (South Central) | https://hngnews.com/leader_independent/news/local/mcfarland-village-board-votes-for-more-restrictions-on-short-term-rentals/article_a61d8639-17c1-4e9a-abbf-8f54f704d914.html

Generator permit latest front in data center fight

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources held a public hearing on April 14, 2026, on an air permit application submitted by Vantage Data Centers for 45 diesel backup generators at its Lighthouse Campus in Port Washington. The DNR issued a preliminary determination that the application meets its requirements and the permit may be approved; it is the last DNR approval required for the \$15 billion, 672-acre campus. Residents and the group Great Lakes Neighbors United urged the DNR to conduct a full environmental impact study before acting, citing health and pollution concerns. Separately, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin approved a We Energies special rate structure for data centers and is accepting public comments through June 1, 2026 on a draft environmental impact statement for transmission line routing. American Transmission Co. has applied to route new power lines through either the Town of Fredonia or

Town of Saukville, with affected municipalities opposing both routes and advocating for alignment along existing corridors.

Source: Ozaukee Press (Southeastern) | <https://ozaukee.com/content/generator-permit-latest-front-data-center-fight>

CF approves final permit for health center

The Chippewa Falls City Council granted final approval of a conditional use permit for Rogers Behavioral Health to construct a full-service behavioral health campus on an 18-acre parcel east of Highway 178 near the intersection of Highway I in Chippewa Falls. The Chippewa Falls Plan Commission had unanimously recommended approval of the CUP, which authorizes a three-service-level treatment facility encompassing crisis stabilization, residential treatment, and outpatient services. The Council subsequently approved the Plan Commission's minutes without additional comment or separate vote, constituting final permit approval. The site will remain zoned for public and institutional purposes. The permit followed two public hearings before the Plan Commission, the first held in November 2025 and the second at the Plan Commission meeting preceding Council action. Mayor Jason Hiess presided. In August 2024, the Chippewa County Board approved the sale of property in the Lake Wissota Business Park to Rogers Memorial Hospital. A groundbreaking ceremony was scheduled for Thursday, April 28, 2026.

Source: Leader-Telegram (Western) | https://www.leadertelegram.com/news/daily-updates/cf-approves-final-permit-for-health-center/article_6ff53ab8-5a3b-4734-9199-b2d0cd1c8a9f.html

Historic Wilson Street office building poised to become Madison Amtrak station

The Wisconsin Department of Administration filed with the State Building Commission proposing to accept a \$10 million purchase offer from Madison-based Landmark Development for the State Office Building at 1 West Wilson Street in downtown Madison. The 11-story Art Deco-style building, listed on both the state and national registers of historic places, was placed for sale by the Department of Administration as part of the state's effort to reduce its downtown Madison physical footprint and deferred maintenance costs, which were estimated at over \$200 million three years ago. Landmark Development, led by president Bob Dunn, proposes to repurpose the building as a mixed-use transit hub including housing, retail, dining, entertainment, office or coworking space, and an Amtrak station. Amtrak announced plans to bring service to Madison by 2030. The State Building Commission filing is the next formal procedural step before any sale is finalized.

Source: Wisconsin State Journal (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/state-regional/wisconsin/article_4b4aca0e-4198-5d08-a82c-2b62b519f004.html

Janesville city council approves backyard ducks

The Janesville City Council voted unanimously Monday, April 27, 2026, to approve an ordinance amendment permitting residents to keep domestic ducks under the same regulations and licensing process governing backyard chickens. The ordinance retains the existing maximum of four birds per property and requires a minimum coop size of four square feet per duck with a maximum height of six feet. The amendment explicitly prohibits commingling ducks and chickens in a shared coop, a restriction informed by guidance from Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Assistant State Veterinarian Elisabeth Patton, who cited ongoing Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza risks since 2022. The plan commission additionally recommended animal-proofing all feed, waste, and compost containers and requiring owners to report unusual

illness or death to DATCP within 24 hours. Council Vice President Michael Cass spoke in support of the staff research underlying the measure.

Source: Janesville Gazette (South Central) | https://www.gazettextra.com/news/local/janesville-city-council-approves-backyard-ducks/article_a46e092e-c2c6-40cd-8ee6-7b655a530bd3.html

Governance and Elections

Wisconsin elections agency overrules Madison counting 23 spring ballots

The Wisconsin Elections Commission voted 5-1 on May 1, 2026, to order the City of Madison and Dane County to exclude 23 absentee ballots counted during the Wisconsin Supreme Court election after poll workers accepted the ballots at four polling places after the 8 p.m. statutory deadline established under Wisconsin Statute 6.87. The commission separately voted 6-0 to order Mequon and Ozaukee County to include five absentee ballots that Mequon City Clerk Caroline Fochs had rejected using a nonstandard witness-address verification method, and voted 6-0 to open investigations into both clerks' offices. Commissioner Mark Thomsen cast the sole dissenting vote on the Madison exclusion order. Commission Chair Ann Jacobs presided. Madison City Clerk Lydia McComas defended the decision to count the ballots, while Dane County Clerk Scott McDonnell stated he is considering legal action to challenge the exclusion order. The state deadline for certifying the election is May 15, 2026.

Source: Capital Times (South Central) | https://captimes.com/news/elections/wisconsin-elections-agency-overrules-madison-counting-23-spring-ballots/article_e52138a8-969b-480d-b4eb-328429f02f22.html

Merrill school board looks to fill vacant seat after write-in candidate declines position

The Merrill Area Board of Education will pursue an appointment process to fill a vacant school board seat after write-in candidate Lin Kautza formally declined the position in a letter to Superintendent Shannon Murray. The vacancy arose from the April 2026 spring election, in which only two candidates appeared on the ballot for three open seats; under that structure, the seat was to be awarded to the top write-in vote recipient. Kautza had received 25 write-in votes, edging Ron Liberty at 22, Brady Loos at 6, and other write-in candidates with five or fewer among 132 combined ballots. Incumbents Kevin Blake and Norbert Ashbeck were reelected unopposed. Kautza's declination triggers the board's authority under Wisconsin state law to fill the vacancy by appointment rather than election; the appointed member would serve through April 2029. The Merrill Area Board of Education is scheduled to meet on May 6, 2026, to establish the formal appointment process.

Source: WSAW CBS7 Wausau (Central/Northern) | <https://www.wsaw.com/2026/04/28/merrill-school-board-looks-fill-vacant-seat-after-write-in-candidate-declines-position/>

Waushara County Board of supervisors sworn in, John Jarvis re-elected chair

The Waushara County Board of Supervisors convened an organizational meeting at the Waushara County seat, during which newly elected and returning supervisors were sworn into office by Circuit Court Judge Guy Dutcher. Following the swearing-in ceremony, the board conducted a vote to elect John Jarvis to the position of Chair, marking his re-election to that leadership role. Jarvis, as Chair, holds formal authority to preside over board meetings and guide county governance proceedings. The article does not report the specific vote count for Jarvis's re-election or additional

officer elections, and full details of the meeting, including any further organizational votes or action items, are restricted to subscribers of the Waushara Argus.

Source: Waushara Argus (Northeastern) | <https://wausharaargus.com/stories/waushara-county-board-of-supervisors-sworn-in-john-jarvis-re-elected-chair,332728>

Sheboygan County board re-elects leadership

The Sheboygan County Board of Supervisors voted at its April 21, 2026 meeting to re-elect Keith Abler of Elkhart Lake and Curt Brauer of Sheboygan to second two-year terms as chair and vice chair, respectively, of the board. The re-elections maintain the same leadership structure the board has operated under for the prior two years. Abler and Brauer hold the highest formal leadership positions within the County Board of Supervisors, which serves as the governing body for Sheboygan County. No vote counts, dissenting votes, or additional procedural steps were reported in the available article text.

Source: Plymouth Review (Southeastern) | <https://www.plymouth-review.com/articles/county-board-re-elects-leadership/>

Waukesha County district attorney won't prosecute retired municipal judge

Waukesha County District Attorney Lesli Boese announced on April 29, 2026, that she is declining prosecution of a referral for one count of Misconduct in Public Office against former Lake Country Municipal Court Judge Timothy Kay, 66. Oconomowoc Police Chief James Pfister submitted the referral to Boese on April 7, 2026, following a March 2 complaint filed by Oconomowoc Assistant City Attorney Jeffrey Ek with the Lake Country Municipal Court Administrative Committee. The underlying allegations involved Kay's handling of a November 2024 speeding citation against Matthew Kolb, including doubling Kolb's fine from \$124 to \$248, reverting a reduced charge to the original four-point violation, and finding Kolb in contempt of court after Kolb posted a one-star Google review of Kay's private law firm. Kay retired from the Lake Country Municipal Court on April 24, 2026, after serving as judge since 2012. Boese provided no rationale for declining prosecution. The Wisconsin Judicial Commission referral remains separately pending.

Source: Waukesha Freeman (Southeastern) | https://www.gmtoday.com/the_freeman/news/judge-tim-kay-no-prosecution/article_d0ff4c40-d8b5-5140-946b-36f29eae1fb0.html

Human Services

10 local organizations receive funding awards for food grant programs

Dane County Executive Melissa Agard announced \$35,200 in procurement awards to 10 local organizations through the 2026 Tamara D. Grigsby Dane County Civil Rights Department Partners in Community Food Grant Program, as reported April 29, 2026. The awarded organizations span Dane County and include Bikes for Kids Wisconsin, Community Action Coalition South Central WI, Downtown Middleton Farmers Market, Good Shepherd Lutheran Allied Food Pantry, Madison Area Food Pantry Gardens, McFarland Community Garden, Monona Grove School District Nutrition Department, People Food Community Farm LLC, Reach Dane, and Urban Triage. The County Executive directed funds toward projects addressing food access, regional agriculture support, food waste reduction, and community engagement in local food systems, including refrigerated van upgrades, cold storage expansion, school-based pantries, community gardens, and farm-to-family partnerships. Urban Triage's award supports distribution of more than 5,000 pounds of locally grown produce annually. No vote count or ordinance identifier was reported.

Source: WMTV NBC15 Madison (South Central) | <https://www.wmtv15news.com/2026/04/30/10-local-organizations-receive-funding-awards-food-grant-programs/>

School Districts

Why Baraboo's elementary school referendums keep falling short with voters

Baraboo School District voters on April 7, 2026, rejected a \$46 million capital referendum for projects at four of five district elementary schools by a margin of 53 percent to 47 percent. This was the third consecutive failed elementary school referendum: an \$85.7 million measure failed in November 2024 by 57 to 43 percent, and a \$69.9 million measure failed in April 2025 by 54 to 46 percent. The proposed projects would have funded classroom space, cafeterias, specialized learning areas, and replacement of boilers, electrical systems, windows, and doors at East, Al Behrman, Gordon L. Wilson, and North Freedom elementary schools. Superintendent Steve Considine stated the district will continue operating existing elementary schools while unaddressed infrastructure needs become more costly over time. Considine indicated the district's next step is working with the School Board and community to determine a path forward.

Source: Baraboo News Republic (South Central) | https://wiscnews.com/news/local/education/article_4a1cab61-052c-45b9-93d6-06fc46f0b8.html

Portage Community School Board votes to close two rural elementary schools after referendum failure

The Portage Community School Board voted during a special board meeting Monday, April 28, 2026, to close two rural elementary schools in the district, following the failure of an April 7, 2026 operating referendum that would have provided additional revenue. Without the additional funding, the district faces a revenue shortfall for the coming school year, with the closure decision identified as a fiscal consequence of the failed referendum. The article does not report the specific vote count, the names of the two schools being closed, the effective closure dates, the dollar amount of the revenue shortfall, or the disposition of affected students and staff. The next procedural steps, including student reassignment plans and facility disposition decisions, were not specified in the available reporting.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (South Central) | <https://www.channel3000.com/news/education/>

Failed spring 2026 school referendums around Wisconsin trigger cuts, closures and new funding pushes

Voters rejected referendums in 26 Wisconsin school districts in the April 7, 2026 spring election, triggering formal governance actions across multiple districts. The Fond du Lac School District, following defeat of its \$30 million operational referendum, announced closure of two schools and elimination of 30 staff positions. The Ellsworth Community School District is implementing \$1.9 million in budget reductions for 2026-27, including cutting approximately 15 staff and restructuring its 4K program, after its \$8.7 million referendum failed. Monroe School District cut 22 positions; Southern Door County School District eliminated 16 jobs and froze pay; Dodgeville School District laid off 13 employees. Augusta Area School District, following defeat of a \$750,000 referendum, issued staff non-renewal notices and will announce academic and extracurricular program reductions in spring 2027. Hustisford School District in Dodge County, after its \$3.75 million referendum failed, notified families it lacks sufficient funding to continue operations beyond the current school year. Several districts are preparing additional referendums for future elections.

Source: PBS Wisconsin WHA21 (Statewide) | <https://pbswisconsin.org/news-item/failed-spring-2026-school-referendums-around-wisconsin-trigger-scuts-closures-and-new-funding-pushes/>

Shiocton district prepares DPI waiver request after April flood-canceled school days

The Shiocton School Board scheduled a formal public hearing for 5:15 p.m. Monday, May 4, 2026, in the Library Media Center to consider a proposed waiver request to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction seeking relief from the state's minimum instructional minutes requirements. The district lost eight school days due to historic flooding and a mandatory village evacuation that occurred April 15 to 24, 2026. Under state procedure, the district must conduct a public hearing before submitting the waiver application to DPI. The District Administrator will present the rationale for the waiver, citing the mandatory evacuation and catastrophic flooding. No vote has yet been recorded; the public hearing is the required procedural prerequisite before the School Board can authorize submission of the formal waiver request to DPI for state-level review and determination.

Source: WLUK FOX11 Green Bay (Northeastern) | <https://fox11online.com/news/local/shiocton-district-prepares-dpi-waiver-request-after-april-flood-canceled-school-days-weather-flooding-department-instruction-wisconsin-evacuation>

Shell Lake School Board talks next year's budget

At its April 20, 2026 meeting, the Shell Lake School Board received a preliminary update on the 2026-27 district budget from Superintendent Todd Felhofer, who confirmed that the recently approved four-year non-recurring operational referendum, authorizing the district to exceed its revenue limit by \$650,000 annually, will be incorporated into the forthcoming budget framework. Felhofer indicated final figures remain pending state aid announcements, with a follow-up budget update expected in May. The board also revised the Capital Improvement Plan to accommodate potential funding for a solar energy project presented by CESA 10 and Solar Connection. Additional formal actions included accepting the resignations of head football coach Joe Johnson and senior class advisor Katie Johnson, approving the hiring of four assistant track coaches, accepting the retirements of special education teacher Janet Weiberg and bus driver Robert Solum, and renewing health and dental insurance at a lower-than-anticipated premium increase.

Source: Spooner Advocate (Western) | https://apg-wi.com/spooner_advocate/news/local/school-board-talks-next-years-budget/article_5337fd57-7725-4738-a3f1-bd42924a6835.html

RUSD buys virtual reality resource

The Racine Unified School District Board, acting as the governing body for the district, approved the purchase of a zSpace virtual reality educational resource during its Monday, April 27, 2026 business meeting at a maximum cost of \$199,969 over two years. The procurement constitutes a formal contract award by the Board under its purchasing authority. The zSpace product is described as supporting virtual reality and hands-on learning applications across the district. No vote count was reported in the available article text, and no specific vendor contract terms beyond the two-year maximum cost figure were disclosed. No subsequent procedural step was reported in connection with this procurement action.

Source: Kenosha News (Southeastern) | https://www.kenoshanews.com/news/local/education/collection_205a71ba-0a5c-5699-89e7-0d2abc2450c8.html

School district central office moves east

The Barron Area School District has approved a \$687,200 renovation project at its current central office to convert the space into an Early Learning Center serving approximately 68 children ages 4

and under. The project is financed through the district's Community Service Fund, with Director of Finance Andrew Sloan stating that program revenues will repay all renovation costs, characterizing it as a net-zero cost proposition to taxpayers. The three-phase facilities plan was made possible by a building donation from the Felber family at 1443 East Division Avenue, which will house the relocated Golden Bear Wellness Clinic and the district's central office. Construction is underway with Berghammer Builders as the contractor. Superintendent Diane Tremblay is overseeing implementation. The Early Learning Center will be named Coco Nana's Early Learning Center in recognition of the Felber family's contribution. All three construction phases are expected to be completed by fall 2026.

Source: Barron News-Shield (Western) | https://news-shield.com/news/top_stories/article_ae8a3e45-1e22-4a7c-87b2-8d65e01c7b2d.html

Correction and update to Merrill election results

The Merrill Area Public Schools Board of Education election produced three certified winners following canvassing of write-in votes for one contested open seat. Incumbents Kevin Blake and Norbert Ashbeck, both running unopposed, were reelected to the MAPS Board of Education. With three open seats and only two candidates on the printed ballot, the Board of Canvassers determined that Lin Kautza won the third seat by receiving 25 write-in votes, edging Ron Liberty at 22 votes, Brady Loos at 6 votes, and other write-in candidates who each received five or fewer votes among a combined 132 ballots. In the Town of Merrill, Scott Oberg and Timothy Mueske were both reelected as Town Supervisors, correcting a prior erroneous report of a contested outcome. Kautza, Blake, and Ashbeck must take their official oath of office by April 27, 2026; failure to do so by April 28 will trigger the Board of Education's formal vacancy-filling process.

Source: Merrill Foto News (Central/Northern) | <https://merrillfotonews.com/stories/correction-and-update-to-election-results,331944>

State-Local Interface

Evers asks FEMA to assess April storm damage

Governor Tony Evers on April 29, 2026, directed Wisconsin Emergency Management to formally request a federal preliminary damage assessment from FEMA following severe storms and flooding earlier in April 2026. The governor's office cited WEM initial damage assessments concluding that the state requires federal assistance to recover from the storms, which included an EF3 tornado in Ringle and flooding that prompted evacuations in Columbia County and damaged an elementary school in Janesville. The formal request to FEMA initiates a preliminary assessment process that is a procedural prerequisite before Evers can submit an official disaster declaration request to President Donald Trump. No dollar figure for total April storm damages was reported. A prior disaster aid request submitted by Evers to the Trump Administration following southeast Wisconsin flooding that caused more than \$27 million in damages last summer was denied. Federal approval of the current request is not guaranteed.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (Statewide) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/evers-asks-fema-to-assess-april-storm-damage/article_94c2ef07-66b7-48f6-8c3e-6160fc9ee82d.html

Wisconsin sues Lac du Flambeau over fishing restrictions; federal court issues TRO

The State of Wisconsin, through the Wisconsin Department of Justice, filed a federal lawsuit on April 30, 2026, in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin against the Lac du

Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, challenging fishing restrictions the Band had placed on 19 reservation lakes prohibiting non-tribal members from harvesting Walleye and Muskellunge. On May 1, 2026, the Western District court issued a temporary restraining order blocking enforcement of those restrictions and additional Band resolutions prohibiting forward trolling and forward-facing sonar on all reservation lakes. The Band passed initial closure resolutions on March 30, 2026, covering Flambeau Lake, White Sand Lake, and the Sugarbush chain, and expanded closures on April 16, 2026, to ten additional lakes including Fence Lake and Long Lake. The Band cited critically low population levels for both species and declared a State of Emergency on April 30. The TRO restores access for Wisconsin-licensed anglers pending further federal court proceedings, with a full hearing scheduled for later in May 2026.

Source: WJFW NBC12 Rhinelander (Statewide) | https://www.wjfw.com/news/local/breaking-anglers-can-fish-as-normal-on-ldf-lakes-after-restraining-order-issued/article_d430498a-152d-45d9-8ebb-afd779ee207c.html

Wisconsin DOJ must release statewide list of 16,000 cops, judge rules

Dane County Circuit Court Judge Rhonda Lanford issued a ruling on April 28, 2026, ordering the Wisconsin Department of Justice to release names, birth year or birthday, zip codes, and work histories for approximately 16,000 certified law enforcement officers statewide. The court found the DOJ's 2023 partial denial of an open records request filed by The Badger Project and the Invisible Institute to be unlawful, citing established precedent that law enforcement officers relinquish certain privacy rights by virtue of public trust placed in them. The DOJ had rejected the request, citing safety concerns for undercover officers and identity-theft risks. The lawsuit, initiated in 2024 following the 2023 denial, was argued by attorney Tom Kamenick of the Wisconsin Transparency Project and Lena Shapiro of the University of Illinois College of Law's First Amendment Clinic. The Wisconsin DOJ did not confirm to The Badger Project whether it would appeal the ruling.

Source: The Badger Project (Statewide) | <https://thebadgerproject.org/2026/04/28/wisconsin-doj-must-release-statewide-list-of-16000-cops-judge-rules/>

New chief judge, deputy chief judge appointed for Wisconsin Court of Appeals

The Wisconsin Supreme Court on Tuesday, April 28, 2026, appointed District One Court of Appeals Judge M. Joseph Donald as chief judge of the Wisconsin Court of Appeals, succeeding retired Chief Judge Maxine A. White. Donald, who previously served as the court's deputy chief judge and has been on the Court of Appeals since 2019, assumes administrative responsibility over the four-district, 16-judge appellate court, including coordination with the Wisconsin Supreme Court and court administrators. Concurrent with Donald's elevation, District Four Court of Appeals Judge Rachel A. Graham was appointed deputy chief judge. Graham has served on the Court of Appeals since 2019, currently presides in District Four, and chairs the Wisconsin Judicial Council's Appellate Procedure Committee. No vote count was reported for the Supreme Court's appointment action.

Source: WISC CBS3 Madison (Statewide) | https://www.channel3000.com/news/new-chief-judge-deputy-chief-judge-appointed-for-wisconsin-court-of-appeals/article_da9cf0b5-725b-4316-854a-7c854b715ac8.html

Data center ruling sends big message on who pays for energy use

The Wisconsin Public Service Commission, a three-member regulatory body, voted following a more than six-hour deliberative session on April 25, 2026, to approve We Energies' application to establish a new very large customer tariff with several modifications from the original proposal. The commission lowered the energy-use threshold triggering the tariff from 500 megawatts to 100

megawatts, raised the cost-recovery requirement for data center developers from the proposed 75 percent to 100 percent of energy generation costs, extended the tariff term from 10 to 15 years, and added a reporting requirement to monitor tariff performance. Commissioner Kristy Nieto stated existing Wisconsin ratepayers must be held harmless from any subsidization of data center costs. The tariff applies to all qualifying large-scale customers within the We Energies service territory. The commission is expected to take up a separate Alliant Energy application concerning Meta's Beaver Dam data center in May 2026, with observers anticipating significant revisions in light of this precedent.

Source: Capital Times (Statewide) | https://captimes.com/news/government/data-center-ruling-sends-big-message-on-who-pays-for-energy-use/article_b46bddd-6f4f-4616-af25-d803fd4a4c4c.html

Wisconsin data center tax break to cost state more than \$2 billion

The Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau has projected that a sales tax exemption for hyperscale data centers, enacted in the 2023-25 state budget signed by Governor Tony Evers and passed by the Republican-controlled Legislature, will result in \$1.5 billion in forgone state sales tax revenue during construction phases, plus \$369 million annually once facilities are operational. The exemption, which eliminates the 5 percent state sales tax and applicable local sales taxes on construction and equipment purchases, applies to projects including a \$1 billion facility in Beaver Dam, a \$20 billion complex in Mount Pleasant, and a \$15 billion facility in Port Washington, as well as a smaller Epic Systems project in Verona. The legislation was introduced in 2023 by Senator Romaine Quinn and Representative Shannon Zimmerman. State Senator Jodi Habush Sinykin, who requested the fiscal bureau estimate, has called for an extraordinary legislative session to consider conditioning or modifying the exemption before the next regular session in January 2027.

Source: Capital Times (Statewide) | https://captimes.com/news/government/wisconsin-data-center-tax-break-to-cost-state-more-than-2-billion/article_7277c362-7490-4d9d-bd04-0163ca036db0.html

This edition of the Wisconsin LocalGov Hub Briefing has been lightly reviewed for accuracy, but errors in source reporting or in the curation process may occur. If you notice an inaccuracy or a story of statewide governance significance that was missed, please let me know. Some Wisconsin news outlets restrict automated access to their content, which can limit coverage in any given edition. Each edition is a refinement of a workflow I have spent considerable time designing, and I expect the product to keep improving. Your feedback is essential to that process. I welcome hearing from you about this briefing, about how it was built, or about any other way BoldPath Consulting can support your work in Wisconsin local government. Reach me directly at patrick@boldpathconsulting.com or (920) 522-2413.
