



# NEWSLETTER

Connecting with Your Community

7511 12th Street, Somers, Wisconsin

Issue 8 December, 2018

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## Standard & Poors Reports Somers Strong Fiscal Strength

*Read details on page 2*

## No Increase in Somers 2018 Taxes for Somers Property Owners

*Read details on page 2*



Somers Fire Chief Carson Wilkinson  
and his wife, Jan



**Somers Village/Town Hall**  
**7511 12th Street (Highway E)**  
**Saturday, December 15, 2018**  
**8:00 am—12 noon**

Santa, Mrs. Claus, and their merry elves invite you to a breakfast of pancakes, sausage, and all the trimmings. Breakfast is prepared and served by members of the Somers Fire & Rescue Association and Somers Explorers Post #463. This fundraiser event donates net profits to the Somers Fire & Rescue Association. We also invite everyone to bring a non-perishable food item which will be donated to the Shalom Center. Parents with children, remember to bring your camera!



**Village/Town of Somers Administrative offices closed**  
**November 22 & 23—Thanksgiving holiday**

## SOMERS: STATE OF THE VILLAGE AND TOWN

### No Increase in Somers Property Taxes

In their November 13, 2018 meeting, the Village Board of Trustees unanimously voted **no increase** in Somers 2018 property taxes for taxpayers. No increase is the result of holding operating expenses down, combined with a boost in the Village equalized assessed value due to an 8.19% in net new construction which generated additional revenue.

In their November 13, 2018 meeting, The Town Board of Supervisors and the electorate voted to adopt its 2019 budget also resulting in no increase in property taxes.

### New Stormwater Utility District Fee for 2019

Somers adopted a new stormwater ordinance on January 23, 2018. As a result, your Somers tax bill will include a new stormwater utility fee. This fee will fund projects that will help mitigate flooding and the devastating impact on our citizens caused from large rainfall to isolated drainage problem areas, Pike River and its tributaries, and designated flood plain areas. The Village Board budgeted \$250,000 for 2019 projects. Each year after, projects will be defined and budgeted.

### S&P Global Rating Report Somers Strong Fiscal Strength

The S&P upgrade on November 2, 2018 from baa1 to AA- came as the Village sought to refinance its 2018 taxable general obligation refunding bonds. The S&P upgrade is directly attributable to the Village's effort to provide fiscal controls and planning to ensure long-term sustainability of the Village.

#### 1. General Obligation Bond Rating Improvement from baa1 rating to AA-

"With a board and management team that have recently instituted a number of fiscal planning practices and policy changes, the Village of Somers has seen solid financial performance over the past three fiscal years after recovering from a period of negative reserves and weak budgetary performance. We expect the Village to sustain a structurally balanced budget with very strong reserves going forward. Given the Village's proximity to the Foxconn site, we expect to see substantial new development in the medium term, which will likely translate to a healthy tax base and employment growth in the Village", as reported by S&P Global Ratings on November 2, 2018.

#### 2. Budgetary Performance Strong

The S&P Global Ratings report dated November 2, 2018 states "Somers' budgetary performance is strong, in our opinion. Before fiscal 2015, the general fund had a negative fund balance, but a new management and board team has adopted a number of financial management policies and practices and have given priority to tight fiscal management and building a strong operating reserve, which it has accomplished through the past several fiscal years."

#### 3. Very Strong Budgetary Flexibility

"Given that the Village's operating budget is relatively small, predictable, and structurally balanced, we see little risk of large, unplanned draws on reserves stemming from operations, but we do note that demand for new infrastructure investment to facilitate the rapid growth that the community is expecting could pressure reserves. Still, we expect reserves to remain very strong and likely at or around the 25% minimum that the Board is targeting," reports S&P Global Ratings report on November 2, 2018.

### Law Enforcement

The Village of Somers contracts with the Kenosha County Sheriff's Department for law enforcement services. This successful collaboration provides Village residents with comprehensive and affordable law enforcement services.

The 2019 budget funds \$309,582.00 (excluding overtime) to provide one full time uniformed deputy per shift (2 shifts) in a marked car fully equipped, including radar, who patrols the Village seven days per week for sixteen hours each day. Additionally, Kenosha County Sheriff's Department supplements resources as needed to provide 24/7 seamless protection to Somers residents. Deputies enforce local ordinances in addition to county ordinances, state and federal law.

**TRI CITY BANK—WASHINGTON AVE & HWY 31**

**ACCEPTS SOMERS 2018 TAX PAYMENTS**

**8:00 am—6:00 pm Monday through Friday**

**8:00 am—12 noon Saturday**

**Pay conveniently during your lunch hour, on your home from work, or running errands.**

## SOMERS: STATE OF THE VILLAGE AND TOWN

### Public Works

We maintain public infrastructure to meet our community's needs and are diligent in budgeting every year to improve or replace deteriorated water and sewer pipes with extensive break history, as well as damaged Village and Town roads and streets.

In 2018, we relined or replaced sewer laterals along our Sheridan Road corridor that were installed in the 1950's. Slated for 2019 is 15th Street. \$200,000 is included in the 2019 Somers utility district #1 budget to fund this improvement project.

In 2016, the Trustees adopted a ten-year lift station replacement plan. Lift stations are used to pump wastewater or sewage from lower to high elevations to be processed. The 2016 Carthage College project has been completed. Our next project will be the 11th Place lift station (built in the 1960's) which services the west side of Sheridan Road from 11th place north to Highway A (Berryville Road). The Somers utility district #1 2019 budget includes \$84,800 for engineering costs.

Our 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue bridge over the Pike River, built in 1936, has severe concrete deck deterioration. It has a sufficiency rating of 32.1 out of a possible score of 100 which represents a bridge with no deficiencies. Plans are in process for a 2020 construction. \$30,000 in engineering costs are included in the 2019 capital improvement fund budget.

Beginning in 2015, the Village began allocating \$500,000 per year to address road and street replacement or repair. In 2019, the capital improvement fund budgets \$500,000 plus an extra \$250,000 which was carried forward from 2018 due to saving money from previous competitive bidding.

The Village of Somers was the recipient of a 2018 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Urban Forestry 50/50 matching grant in the amount of \$20,210.50 for ash tree removal and reforestation. Over 65 dead ash trees were removed from Village and Town parks and right-of-way's during 2018. A 2019 grant application has been submitted to continue the project.



### Winter Safety

**If you live near a fire hydrant, ask your neighbors to join you in "adopting a hydrant" for the season. Keep snow 3 feet away. THANK YOU!!**

### Fire and Rescue

Somers Fire & Rescue, operating out of two stations, provides 24-hour emergency service to protect the lives and property of our taxpayers. As of October 31, 2018, the Department responded to 937 emergency calls for service, a 3% increase over the same period in 2017. Emergency medical calls represents 65% of all calls. Calls are defined as crash/fire/rescue, emergency medical treatment and transportation, emergency preparedness planning, fire suppression, fire prevention, fire investigation, fire inspection, hazard mitigation, high angle rescue, public safety education, water rescue and recover, public safety education programs and training.

The Department is led by Chief Carson Wilkinson, 1 paid-on-call assistant chief, 3 lieutenants, 3 captains, 1 paid-on-call captain, 1 captain of fire inspectors, 1 firefighter/paramedic, 1 captain of training, and 44 paid-on-call personnel.

The 2019 capital improvement fund budget allocates \$440,000 to purchase a fire engine with upgrade features that include a larger pump that pumps more-gallons per minute and LED lights for both emergency and on scene lighting. The new truck will replace a twenty-eight year old (purchased in 1990) engine at Station 2. \$40,000 is budgeted for extraction tools such as "Jaws of Life", and hydraulic cutters and \$30,000 for SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) which is required to be replaced every 15 years per the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

### Office Technology

\$21,000.00 – The current office telephone system, which is beyond its life expectancy, will be updated in 2019. The Village is no longer able to upload software or purchase new parts. Features in the new system improve more menu options resulting in improved caller experience.

\$26,000.00 – Automating election voter registration and election reports in 2019 will result in saving many labor hours and copy paper expense.

\$40,000 – 2019 continues the transition from a paper system to automated Global Imaging System (GIS) for utilities, streets, maps, drawings, and documents.

## SOMERS: STATE OF THE VILLAGE AND TOWN

### Recreation



A new \$3,500 softball scoreboard will be installed in Spring, 2019. It is designed with LED lights and indicators for

long-life and economical power consumption. This new scoreboard adds “BIG LEAGUE” excitement to our softball program. 217 youth (ages 4-13 years old) played in the 2018 season. The new 4’ x 9’ board replaces an old weather-worn board at Somers Memorial Park where all Somers softball league games are played.

The Somers winter basketball program was held at Somers Elementary School one day a week from January through April. 65 youth (ages 5-12 years old) participated in the 2018 program.

The golf clinic continues to be popular with youth wanting to learn the basics of golf. The instructor, Dan Plens, is head golf pro at Bristol Oaks as well as a certified US Kids golf coach. Clinics are held at Somers Village/Town Hall. A total of 46 youth (ages 6-14) participated in the clinics.

Red Star Soccer Club, a non-profit organization, is coached by Troy Fabiano. The Club’s 275 youth (ages 6-14) use the Somers soccer fields three evenings a week during the season for practice.

Dairyland Disc Dog Club, organized and led by Dean Shavit, is a winter K9 toss and fetch league that is held on Wednesday nights for five week at Somers Memorial Park.

### Human Resource

Somers operates with a lean staff across all departments. Headcount, including all departments, is 23 full time equivalents. One our biggest strengths is the loyalty, longevity, and knowledge of our staff. One of our biggest challenges starting in 2019 will be replacing key positions due to anticipated retirements in all departments. Our goal is to cross-train to assure continuity of knowledge and expected service levels. As retirements occur, we will evaluate workloads, job structures, and apply technology to preserve budget dollars. Succession plans will be defined and we will continue to consider alternative methods for jobs and tasks when appropriate.

To keep human resource costs down, the Village has utilized contracted assistance in areas such as IT support, financial, website and communications, law enforcement, garbage and recycling, and zoning. This use of contracted assistance provides the Village flexibility when it comes to staffing levels.

### 2019 Budget

The goal of Administration and Trustees is to have a responsible budget while minimizing taxation. This budget meets this goal without sacrificing service levels.

The general fund budget of \$5,148,271 million supports the following day-to-day operations of the Village and Town.

\$2,239,335 – **Public Safety** includes fire, rescue, law enforcement, building inspection, and dog catcher

\$1,147,973 – **General Government** includes boards, court, staff, clerk/treasurer, elections, assessor, audit, legal, engineering, membership dues, advertising, publications, IT, communications, buildings, property and liability insurance, and debt payments

\$620,843 – **Solid Waste** includes garbage and recycling

\$569,909 – **Public Works** includes roads, streets, storm sewer, street lighting, drainage systems, lift stations, maintenance of municipal buildings, grounds, trees, landscaping, and parks

\$118,394 **Planning and Development** includes zoning, plan commission, and boards of appeal

\$27,358 – **Parks and Recreation** includes youth softball, basketball, soccer programs, golf, and parks committee

\$424,459 – **Restore Funds Transferred** from utility district to the general fund

## SOMERS: STATE OF THE VILLAGE AND TOWN

### Village Construction Value Increased 8.19%

The Village of Somers net new construction value grew by \$63,106,300, an increase of 8.19% in 2017. This increase came from new multi-family apartments, commercial and retail buildings, new single-family housing and residential remodeling. This growth added new tax revenue to the Village.

The Town of Somers net new construction value grew by \$60,100, an increase of 0.06% in 2017.

### Somers Welcomes Verizon



Recommended for approval by the Somers Plan Commission on September 10th, with final approval being contingent upon execution of a developer's agreement, the Somers Village Board approved on September 24, 2018, a request for a Planned Unit Development Overlay amendment on Lot 12 of Somers Market Center and lot line adjust between Lots 12 and 13. The new development will bring a Verizon retail store to the Somers Market Center area located on the corners of Highways 31 and S.

### Foxconn: Highways

Somers officials attend all Wisconsin Department of Transportation meetings held at the Mt. Pleasant Village Hall to monitor and provide input relating to stormwater, roads, truck traffic, and public safety. Our Fire Chief, rescue staff, and law enforcement deputies receive regular updates on access locations for emergency and law enforcement in our construction areas, especially I-94. Public safety is the Trustees number one concern.

A public informational meeting was held on October 3 at the Village/Town Hall regarding Highway KR proposed improvements from I-94 east Old Green Bay Road up to the Campbell Woods subdivision located in Mt. Pleasant. Hundreds of Somers citizens attended the event that was sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation who has jurisdiction of Highway KR during the Foxconn project. Citizens reviewed displayed maps, asked questions, and expressed opinions about adding lanes to KR and proposed railroad overpasses. A future public meeting will be held to display revisions.

### Development Work-in-Progress

We continue to see high demand for economic growth as evidenced by the significant increase in the number of telephone calls and weekly meetings with potential developers. The areas of primary interest relate to areas near Highways 31 and I-94 near our existing tax incremental districts as well as the Highway KR corridor near the new Foxconn campus. Projects in the proposal and discussion stage represent an attractive balance of quality market rate housing, industrial warehousing and manufacturing as well as new retail business. Expanding and balancing our tax base is essential to the fiscal sustainability of our community. High standards for building quality, architecture design, and landscape plans continue to be a requirement for any new construction in Somers.

### Land Use: Amendment to Comprehensive Plan

In May 2018, over 130 people attended a public informational meeting on proposed new land use around properties along I-94 from Highway S north to Highway KR. The new land use plan was formally adopted by the Village Board on June 12, 2018. Somers comprehensive plans are a guideline for expanding our tax base and transitioning land use from agriculture to other uses. These guidelines are used by the Somers Plan Commission as well as the Village Board of Trustees when considering a development's appropriateness to the community.

### Community Profile—Marketing

A "Discover Somers" demographic and community profile digital marketing package was created in 2018 in conjunction with KABA (Kenosha Area Business Alliance) to provide potential developers, financial institutions, and contractors throughout the United States information about our community. Included are maps, statistics, site locations, and TIF districts available for development. This marketing package has been instrumental in prompting several developers to meet and learn more about opportunities in Somers.

## STAYING UP-TO-DATE WITH TRENDS, LAWS, AND CERTIFICATIONS

Somers elected officials and key staff have taken steps to stay on the leading edge of maintaining our ability to adapt to change due to the development pace in Somers and surrounding communities, the change in legislation, maintaining State licenses, and technology advancements.

**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST.** State Representatives presented highlights of passed and pending legislation for 2018.

**ISSC RECON ANNUAL CONVENTION.** Officials from Somers, Bristol, Pleasant Prairie, County and City of Kenosha, Kenosha Area Business Alliance joined together to meet face-to-face with prospects who were interested in investing in our communities. The convention is the world's largest global gathering of real estate professionals. Somers compiled a list of prospects and made follow-up contacts which resulted in several face to face meetings.

**SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN HOUSING SUMMIT.** Presentation topics included local economic development, infrastructure, and housing focusing on surrounding municipalities near Foxconn met. Somers sponsored a table where we displayed maps, community profile and areas of primary development opportunity.

**Trends in Housing Market-Economic Factors in Southeast Wisconsin Forum.** Topics included housing trends, costs and demand, community and developer expectations, and income vs. affordability.

**Annual League of Municipalities Conference.** Workshops and mini classes were offered relating to legislation, housing, public works initiatives, legal updates, and round table discussions where municipalities shared challenges and successes experienced throughout the year.

**State of Wisconsin building inspector certifications.** Our inspector attended three continuing education sessions in 2018. 24 hours of continuing education every four years is a requirement to maintain Russ Nolen's five licensed building inspector certifications.

**Wisconsin Municipal Clerks Conference.** Our clerk/treasurer attended the annual conference as well as district update meetings which feature updates relating to licensing, state reporting, tax districts and elections.

**Annual 2018 Public Finance Seminar** sponsored by Ehlers Financial Group was attended by our Assistant Administrator and Accounting Manager and Deputy

Clerk/Treasurer which focused on municipal financial management, best practices, planning, credit ratings, and debt management.

**CLERK, TREASURER & FINANCIAL OFFICER INSTITUTE.** Our Accounting Manager attended this conference on a scholarship awarded by Ehlers Financial Group. Topics focused on legislation, reporting, and TIF planning.

**ANNUAL WISCONSIN FIRE INSPECTOR CONFERENCE.** Two fire inspectors attended continuing education classes which are required to maintain State Certified Fire Inspector licenses.

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONDERS** attended over 40 hours of **recertification** training to maintain State licenses. Classes were held at Froedert South in Pleasant Prairie.

Ten paid-on-call firefighters completed 90 hours (per person) of **FIREFIGHTER I** classes held at Gateway Technical College to remain **STATE CERTIFIED**.

### Somers Receives \$901,494.00 One Time Fee in 2019

Wisconsin communities in which high-voltage transmission lines at 345 kV or greater are constructed will receive both a one-time payment and annual payments from fees paid by the utility. The Public Service Commission is responsible for approving the cost of the project and the base cost from which the fees are calculated and the Department of Administration will distribute the money to local communities and counties through which the transmission line is built.

The Somers transmission line is located east of 72nd Avenue (County Highway EA). It spans from Highway KR on our north border, through both the Village and Town, continuing past our southern border.

The Village expects to receive a one-time fee of \$750,055 and the Town \$151,439 totaling \$901,494.00 in fiscal 2019. The Village Board of Trustees approved to use 100% of the funds to reduce current and future debt. \$424,459 will restore funds transferred from the utility district to the general fund. The remaining balance of \$477,035 will be used to fund cash for some projects in the 2019 capital improvement fund thereby reducing 2019 CIP borrowing need from \$1,036,000 to \$558,965.



### Free Smoke Detector Program

All Village and Town of Somers residents are eligible. It's easy. Contact Adam Pisula or Joe Scruggs, members of the Somers Fire and Rescue Department, and they will schedule a time to come to your home and check existing smoke alarms, install free new alarms if needed, and provide a home fire safety check. Don't be shy! It may save a life! Please contact us.

**Adam Pisula at [apisula@somers.org](mailto:apisula@somers.org)**

**Joe Scruggs at [jscruggs@somers.org](mailto:jscruggs@somers.org)**

or

**call Joe or Adam at 262-620-3285**

### Safe Medicine Disposal Program

#### Just a reminder...

Do not flush unused pharmaceuticals. Drop unused/expired medications in the disposal box located in the Somers Fire & Rescue Dept reception area during regular office hours. THANK YOU!!!

### Avoid Frozen Water Pipes

#### Just a reminder...

Residents in our water utility district can help keep our water system functioning by trickling water in drains during **subzero weather**. A pencil lead size trickle is all that is needed.

### Winter Pot Holes

#### Just a reminder...

Residents can help determine where we need to focus our efforts during our winter road maintenance work by reporting potholes. We want to repair them promptly.

Call Village/Town Hall at 262-859-2822

### 2018 Appointments and Re-Appointments to Boards and Commissions

Thank you to those listed below who said yes to share their time, talents, and enthusiasm for a better Somers. When you serve your community, you vote every day about the kind of community with which you want to live.

**VILLAGE BOARD OF APPEALS** – Tom Larsen appointed February 27; Marianne Kraus appointed February 27; Terry Maack appointed February 27; David Barnes (president) appointed April 10; Nick Infusino appointed July 24; Peggy Kormylo (alternate) appointed July 24

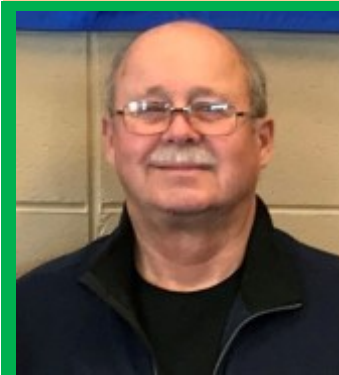
**VILLAGE FIRE COMMISSION** – Vince Montemurro appointed August 15

**VILLAGE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT COMMISSION** – George Stoner appointed August 14; David Geertsen appointed August 14; Karl Ostby appointed August 14

**VILLAGE PLAN COMMISSION** – Paul Aiello appointed August 28; Bob Lee appointed August 28; Ron Grimes appointed June 26; Robin Wamboldt appointed August 28

**TOWN BOARD OF REVIEW** – Mark Molinaro appointed April 10

**VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES** – Jacqueline Klapproth Nelson appointed June 12



### Thank You Jim Smith Over 35 Years of Service

In 1978, Jim Smith said "yes" when asked to serve his community. He was one of 11 original charter members to form the Somers Rescue Squad, a volunteer organization that began providing emergency medical services January 1, 1978.

Demonstrating his passion for public safety, Jim also served on the Somers Volunteer Fire Department for 14 years. In 1979, he was elected Supervisor #2 of the Town of Somers, serving nine consecutive terms (1979-1997) for a period of 18 years. In 2007, and again in 2009, he was elected Chairman of the Board of Supervisors for the Town of Somers which was followed by his appointment to the Village of Somers Plan Commission until his retirement in 2018.

Jim, we sincerely appreciate all your hard work and efforts over the years and congratulate you on your well deserved retirement from public service. THANK YOU!!!!



## Somers Participates in UW-Parkside Founders Day 50-Year Celebration

Thursday, September 13, 2018, Chancellor Deborah Ford served the first piece of cake during a celebration that marked UW-Parkside's 50th anniversary and the kick-off to a yearlong celebration of events.

Attending were students, faculty, alumni, staff and local officials, including Village of Somers President George Stoner, who read a Proclamation of UW-Parkside Founder's Day that was unanimously approved by the Village Board of Trustees on September 11, 2018.

UW-Parkside, located in the Village of Somers, was created in 1965 by an act of the state legislature. Ground breaking for the new campus occurred in November, 1967. UW-Parkside makes a significant economic and cultural contribution to the Village of Somers and southeastern Wisconsin.

Congratulations UW-Parkside!!

The Village and Town of Somers "Connecting With Your Community" newsletter is published by the Village/Town of Somers for public education and informational purposes. This newsletter is distributed to the residents via the U.S. Postal Service.

William Morris, Village/Town Administrator, Managing Editor

Jacqueline Klapproth Nelson, News and Creative Editor

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## HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!!



### A MESSAGE FROM GEORGE STONER YOUR VILLAGE PRESIDENT

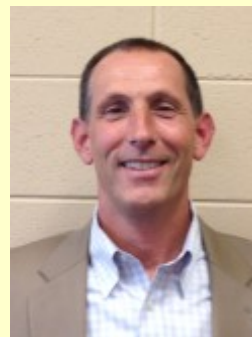
I am very excited to share all of the good news reported in this year's December 2018 newsletter. It is my privilege this holiday season to share all of the 2018 successes achieved by the staff and trustees on behalf of you, the taxpayers of Somers.

Top on the list is achieving outstanding fiscal strength. It serves as the foundation of achieving our goals:

- Continue to improve efficiency and effectiveness of our municipal services
- Expand use of technology
- Promote quality and sustainable economic and community development
- Ensure quality of life through our public safety services

Happy New Year!

George Stoner, President



### A MESSAGE FROM MARK MOLINARO YOUR TOWN CHAIRMAN

As 2018 wraps up, we can reflect on how far Somers has come since the successful incorporation. As the Village continues to see more development, the

Town must remain diligent, engaged, and proactive in understanding how growth will impact our ever shrinking land mass.

We continue to maintain the Town infrastructure with additional dollars in the 2019 capital improvement budget to complete pavement and drainage problems in the neighborhood around 63rd and 62nd Avenue.

We have worked well with the Village to maintain our overall financial strength and appreciate the high level of services our taxpayers receive.

Best wishes to all for a healthy and prosperous new year!

Mark Molinaro, Chairman