



PUBLIC SAFETY REFERENDUM

On the ballot November 5, 2024!

Frequently Asked Questions

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What is the proposed Public Safety Referendum on the November 5, 2024 ballot?

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The Village of Lannon has identified a need to more fully fund its PUBLIC SAFETY (Fire and Police) budgets. The referendum on the November 5th ballot will ask voters to decide whether an increase in the Village's tax levy to cover the cost of equipping and retaining police officers, as well as the increasing costs associated with our contracted Fire and EMS services that are provided by the Village of Menomonee Falls.

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What will appear on the ballot?

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The formal question will appear as follows on the November 5 ballot: "Under state law, the increase in the levy of the Village of Lannon for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year, 2025, is limited to 13.680% which results in a levy of \$752,545. Shall the Village of Lannon be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year, 2025, for the purpose of providing funding for increased police services, and fire and emergency medical services provided by the Village of Menomonee Falls, by a total of 16.610%, which result in a levy of \$877,545, and on an ongoing basis, include the increase of \$125,000 for each fiscal year going forward?"

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Why is the referendum on the ballot now?

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The Federal elections typically have the highest turnout, and your Village Board members want input from residents.

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Why do we need a referendum to raise the tax levy limit?

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The State of Wisconsin limits the amount of property taxes a municipality can collect each year. In order to exceed the levy limit, the municipality needs voter approval through a Village-wide referendum.

The Village of Lannon provides essential services (e.g., public safety, utilities, snow removal, etc.) to residents. To pay for these services, the Village uses state aid, user fees, utility fees, fines, license and permit fees, but relies heavily on property taxes, as there are restrictions on other revenue sources the Village can implement.

In 2005, the State of Wisconsin adopted property tax levy restrictions that limited the ability of local governments to increase their property tax levies annually. Municipalities can only raise revenue if the area's net new construction values increase (but only up to that level). Because of the tax levy restrictions, municipalities, including the Village of Lannon, are strictly limited in the amount of money available to provide the services we all count on every day. As expectations of service expand, the Village is caught between what our budget provides and what community members need.

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What will it mean if a majority of voters vote "yes"?

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If the referendum is approved by a majority of voters on November 5, the Village of Lannon will be able to fund the salaries and equip police officers - ensuring that there will be public safety staff more available and equipped to respond to the increasing calls for service and provide proactive service throughout the Village.

Taxpayers will see the tax increase starting with the bills issued in December 2024.

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What will it mean if a majority of voters vote "no"?

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If the referendum is rejected by a majority of voters, the Village will be faced with difficult decisions about how to address the growing need for public safety services. A rejection of the referendum would have a negative impact on the public safety service.

The Village may need to borrow money to fund public safety needs, ultimately increasing the Village's costs because the Village will have to pay interest on the borrowed funds.

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What is the impact on taxpayers if the referendum passes?

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The referendum will ask Lannon voters whether or not they support a \$125,000 increase in the property tax levy going forward to add necessary funds to the Public Safety budget. This translates to a property tax increase of an estimated \$86 annually, or about \$1.66 per week, per \$100,000 in assessed property value. See the chart below for representative values and impacts.

LANNON PROPERTY TAX IMPACT		
Total Levy Increase: \$125,000		
Assessed Property Value	Estimated Increase Per Year	Estimated Increase per week
\$100,000	\$86.00	\$1.66
\$250,000	\$215.00	\$4.15
\$500,000	\$430.00	\$8.30

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What will the additional taxes fund?

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The Lannon Police Department is the lowest paid department in Waukesha County. When comparing Lannon to municipalities of similar size in adjacent counties, Lannon is below the average compensation.

Our current public safety budget does not include providing equipment to our police officers. Officers are expected to purchase their own firearm, gun belt, holster, baton, radio holder, vest, handcuffs, uniforms, etc. All other area municipalities provide their officers with weapons and basic safety equipment.

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How are fire services managed?

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The Village of Lannon has contracted with the Village of Menomonee Falls Fire Department. All administrative, fire, and medical emergencies are handled by the Menomonee Falls Fire Department. Currently, Lannon is obligated to pay 5% of their annual budget. These costs are rising and putting a tremendous strain on the Village to fund. The cost from the last 5 years are as follows and represent a large percentage of what the Village levies.

2020 – \$254,000	2022 - \$286,000	2024 - \$359,000
2021 - \$263,000	2023 - \$331,000	

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How was the \$125,000 dollar amount calculated?

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The Village Board received recommendations from the Police Chief and from Ehlers, our Village financial advisors. The Village Board then factored in other contributing increases to the tax levy and determined an amount that was deemed “reasonable”.

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What other alternatives were considered?

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The Village examined contracting with the Waukesha County Sheriff to provide police services as a replacement for the Lannon Police Department. The cost to contract out would double the budget costs for the Village and there would be a reduction in services. (no community outreach events like National Night Out or other)

The Village may need to borrow money to fund public safety needs, ultimately increasing the Village’s costs because the Village will have to pay interest on the borrowed funds

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Public safety referendums seem to be fairly common for communities in the area – how come?

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Lannon is not alone in experiencing public safety staffing challenges. According to a study from the Wisconsin Policy Forum (<https://wispolicyforum.org/research/a-record-year-for-referenda/>) many municipalities across the state are facing budgetary challenges that require more municipalities to seek funding for their public safety and other departments through referendums.

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When and where do I vote?

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In person absentee voting in the Clerk’s office during office hours begins Tuesday October 22, 2024, until Friday November 1, 2024, until 5:00 p.m.

Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the State of Wisconsin for all elections.

All voting is at Village Hall: 20399 W Main Street, Lannon