

**CITY OF PORT WASHINGTON, WISCONSIN
RESOLUTION 2023-16**

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A REFERENDUM FOR THE CITY OF PORT WASHINGTON
TO ALLOW THE CITY TO EXCEED THE STATE IMPOSED LEVY LIMIT FOR HIRING
ADDITIONAL FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL BEGINNING WITH THE 2024 LEVY
(COLLECTED IN 2025) AND ON AN ONGOING BASIS**

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has imposed limits on town, village, city and county property tax levies under Wis. Stat. §66.0602; and

WHEREAS, Wis. Stat. §66.0602 limits the increase in 2024 to the local property tax levy to no more than the greater of (a) 0% of last year's actual levy or (b) a percentage equal to the percentage change in equalized value due to new construction less improvements removed plus other exceptions like new debt service; and

WHEREAS, the City of Port Washington is presently served by five (5) full-time fire and rescue personnel; and

WHEREAS, three (3) of the current five (5) full-time fire and rescue personnel have only been temporarily funded through 2024 by City and County ARPA grants; and

WHEREAS, six (6) additional full-time personnel are required to maintain existing levels of fire and emergency medical services and/or enhance future services; and

WHEREAS, the increased costs necessary to maintain the existing personnel and add the additional required personnel to support the City's present and future fire protection and emergency medical services needs would exceed the City's maximum allowable levy; and

WHEREAS, over Seventy percent (70%) of the cost of City services are funded by sources other than local property taxes, the impact of these increased costs would have to be funded entirely by local property taxes, and

WHEREAS, the Common Council of the City of Port Washington, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin believes it is in the City's best interest to exceed the state levy limit as described above by a greater percentage than allowed by statute in order to increase the number of fire and rescue personnel.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Common Council of the City of Port Washington, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin, do hereby support an increase in the City tax levy for 2024 (collected in 2025) to exceed the state levy limit. The City of Port Washington intends that the levy increase be applied on an ongoing basis thereafter by including it in the base used to calculate the limit going forward.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Port Washington directs that the question of increasing the City tax levy limit for 2024 (to be collected in 2025) by 14.323%, which would increase the City levy by approximately \$1,175,000 over the past year's levy, for a City tax levy of \$9,378,430 shall be submitted to the electors in a referendum election to be held on April 2, 2024, in the following form:

Referendum Question:

"Under state law, the increase in the levy of the City of Port Washington for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year, 2025, is limited to 1.215%, which results in a levy of \$8,203,430. Shall the City of Port Washington be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year, 2025, for the purpose of hiring and retaining additional fire and emergency medical services personnel for the City of Port Washington Fire Department, by a total of 14.323%, which results in a levy of \$9,378,430, and on an ongoing basis, include the increase of \$1,175,000 for each fiscal year going forward?"

The results of the referendum shall be binding upon the City of Port Washington and certified to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, as required by Wis. Stat. §66.0602(4)(d); and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Port Washington direct that the following Explanatory Statement of the vote be use where required:

Explanatory Statement and Effect of Vote

The City of Port Washington is currently served by five (5) full-time fire and emergency medical services personnel. In order to maintain the existing levels of fire protection and emergency medical services and/or to add additional full-time staff and to enhance future fire protection and emergency medical services provided by the Port Washington Fire Department, the City's costs would exceed the maximum allowable state-imposed levy.


A "yes" vote allows the Common Council to exceed the state-imposed levy limits to provide additional funding to pay for six (6) additional fire and emergency medical service personnel and maintain three (3) existing fire and emergency medical service personnel currently funded through ARPA grants which will be exhausted in 2024. The increased levy would apply on an ongoing basis thereafter by including it in the base used to calculate the limit going forward.

A "no" vote does not allow the Common Council to exceed the state-imposed levy limits to provide additional funding for six (6) additional fire and emergency medical services personnel and maintain three (3) existing fire and emergency medical service personnel currently funded through ARPA grants which will be exhausted in 2024. The Port Washington Fire Department would have to reduce staffing back to 2021 levels.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Clerk shall provide the County Clerk with a certified copy of this Resolution to ensure that the referendum question can be placed on the April 2, 2024, election ballot for all wards within the City of Port Washington.

Passed and adopted this 19th day of December 2023.

ATTEST:


Susan L. Westerbeke, City Clerk


Theodore Neitzke IV, Mayor