

Wisconsin Towns Association

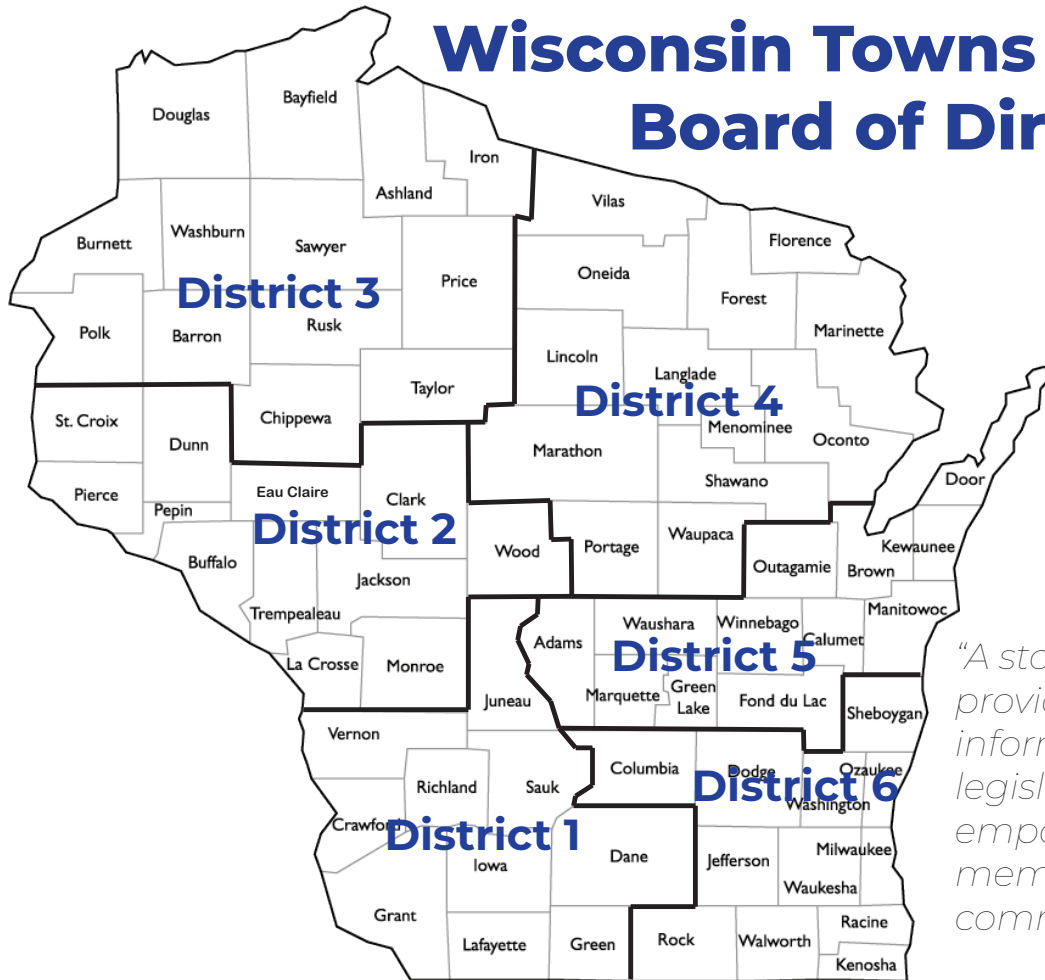
May 2025



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Shawano, WI 54166

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Wisconsin Towns Association Board of Directors



"A statewide association providing education, legal information and grassroots legislative advocacy to empower and inspire our members to lead in their communities."



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Volume 447

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The publication *Wisconsin Towns* is published by the Wisconsin Towns Association at W7686 Co. Rd. MMM, Shawano WI 54166 715.526.3157 Third Class Postage Paid at Shawano, WI

Wisconsin Towns

May 2025

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Empowering Town Officials

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



By
Mike Koles

Apply Now to Increase your Cybersecurity

Unlike many of today's workforce, but like many of you reading this article, I remember when the internet was created. I was a junior in college when I sent my first email, unsurprisingly in DOS. As a cost-conscious student, I relished the idea of communicating almost as quickly as a long-distance phone call without needing to wait until after 9:00 p.m. to get the "cheap" rate of only \$0.15 per minute.

When the new-fangled internet expanded to AOL and Myspace, it was as if we had all landed inside a Star Wars movie. If that is a fair comparison, then it's also accurate to conclude that our cyber world is now filled with the dark side of the Force and is infiltrated by the Emperor and Darth Vader.



Cyber attacks are on the increase, and small communities like yours are increasingly the target. Yes, a large city or business has much more money that can be demanded in ransom, but their security measures are much better and more difficult to penetrate. Furthermore, their response strategies are more likely practiced, polished, and honed to near perfection. While the amount of money to be stolen from an individual town is comparatively small, it's much easier to steal \$100,000 from ten towns than it is to steal \$1,000,000 million from a multinational company.

This reality was recognized by a recent Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau research paper entitled, "Ransomware Attacks: Lessons for Wisconsin State and Local Government." The report stated:

"Public institutions often have computer systems that are easy to attack. Governments and schools with limited budgets tend not to keep up with all of the latest, often safer, technology trends. As a result, these institutions might be running older computers and software that do not have built-in protection for newer and more sophisticated malware threats. Rigorous security processes could mitigate much of the risk of the older systems, but public entities often spend less than the commercial sector on the IT staff that would implement those processes..."

If this describes you, then I strongly encourage you to take advantage of the second application period for the **State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP)**. The SLCGP is a federal grant administered by Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) and the Division of Enterprise Technology (DET). County, municipal, and tribal units of government are eligible to apply. Applications are due **May 30, 2025**.

There are four allowable project types:

Multifactor Authentication (MFA) – MFA is a service that requires users to provide two or more credentials to verify their identity. This ensures that users are who they say they are when they access town devices.

Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR) – EDR continuously monitors endpoint devices (such as a town issued laptop) for malicious activity. It's used to detect, investigate, and respond to threats, such as ransomware and malware.

Managed Detection and Response (MDR) – This service helps local governments respond to cyber incidents by disrupting and containing them.

Extended Detection and Response (XDR) – This service helps combine the town's cybersecurity data. It provides a holistic look at the activity on the town's system and allows users to quickly detect threats.

There are no cost share or local match requirements for the SLCGP. Interested local governments must submit an application through the state's eGrants system. One strategy that local governments can use when applying is working with other communities to create a multi-entity application. This can help communities that may not have access to grant writing services or technical expertise needed to complete a competitive application.

For more information, please visit WEM's SLCGP webpage here: <https://wem.wi.gov/available-grants/>. This website has past webinar materials, program documents, and eGrants access. WEM will be hosting two "office hours" sessions during which potential applicants can receive technical assistance. They are scheduled for: May 14, 9-11 a.m. and May 29, 1-3 p.m.

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Frequently Asked Questions Regarding The Board Of Review (BOR)

Q. Who makes up the voting members of the board of review?

A. By statutory default, a town board of review is made up of the town board members and the town clerk, if he or she is *elected* to the office of town clerk. Wis. Stat. § 70.46(1). A clerk appointed to serve the remainder of an elected clerk's term due to a vacancy also serves as a voting member of the board of review. However, a clerk *appointed* under Wis. Stat. § 60.30(1e), is **not** automatically a voting member of the board of review. § 70.46(1m). This is because § 70.46(1m) prohibits an appointed town clerk, appointed town treasurer, or appointed town clerk-treasurer from serving on the board of review since appointed officials do not have to be town residents. That said, towns with appointed clerks or treasurers who *are* town residents have the option of adopting an ordinance to appoint the official(s) as a citizen member of the board of review or appointing the official(s) as an alternate member of the board of review. See § 70.46(1m)(b). If you have an appointed town clerk who is a non-resident, that creates a vacancy on the town board of review and the town board would need to appoint a resident to fill that seat. § 70.46(1m)(b). Bear in mind that your local assessor may not serve on the board of review. § 70.46(1).

Whether a voting member or not, all town clerks still have BOR duties which include providing the BOR related public notices, swearing in witnesses at the hearings, keeping minutes during the BOR meetings, recording the hearings, and completing all of the required BOR paperwork. See § 70.47.

In villages, the village president and village clerk (whether elected or appointed) are automatic voting members of the board of review and the village board appoints additional officers to the BOR by ordinance. § 70.46(1). Village clerks would also be responsible for serving as the clerk of the BOR and need to provide the public notices, keep minutes, record the objection hearings, etc.

Q. What sort of notice must be provided prior to the open book and board of review?

A. The clerk is required to provide a class 1 notice under ch. 985, Wis. Stats. at least 15 days prior to the open book. Wis. Stat. § 70.45. Towns and villages without a designated official newspaper may either a) post the open book notice in at least 3 physical posting locations, b) post in at least 1 physical location *and* on the town or village's official website, or c) pay to publish the notice in a newspaper likely to give notice in the area. The BOR clerk must provide BOR meeting notices at least 15 days in advance in a maintenance year, or at least 30 days in advance if the town is conducting a revaluation. See § 70.47(2). BOR notices are also class 1 notices under ch. 985, meaning that towns without official newspapers have the same options for posting or publishing listed above. The notice for the BOR's full 2-hour meeting must contain all of the information required by § 70.47(7)(aa), (ac), (ad), (ae), and (af).

Q. Our assessor says that the assessment roll will not be complete until later this summer. Do we still need to call the BOR to order this spring?

A. Yes. State law requires all towns and villages to call the BOR to order during the 45-day period beginning on the 4th Monday in April. This year that period runs from April 28th through June 11th. If your BOR will need to hold a meeting to call the BOR to order and then adjourn this spring because the assessment roll is not yet complete, you may use an abbreviated notice that indicates you are only meeting for the purpose of adjourning to a later date. You would still have to provide the “long” BOR notice at least 15 or 30 days prior to your full 2-hour BOR meeting later in the year. Sample open book and BOR notices are available in the Information Library on the WTA website under Board of Review.

Q. What forms of testimony are permitted at a BOR hearing?

A. In most cases, only in-person sworn oral testimony is permitted at BOR hearings. An exception must be made for people with an illness or disability who submit a letter from their health professional confirming their illness or disability. Such people must be allowed to testify over the phone. Other landowners and their authorized representatives may *request* to testify under oath over the phone or to submit sworn written testimony at the board of review, but the BOR is not required to grant such requests.

Q. One of our board of review members will be visiting relatives in a neighboring state during the BOR. Can she attend the BOR virtually or over the phone?

A. State law does not provide for remote attendance for BOR members. Since property owners can be forced to appear in person, I highly doubt that the courts would have a favorable view of remote attendance by BOR members. A better solution would be for the town or village board to adopt an ordinance naming a few alternate board of review members. In that case, an alternate could replace the absent member. There is a sample ordinance for appointing alternates to the BOR on the WTA website.

Q. How many members of the board of review must meet the mandatory training requirement?

A. Only one voting member of the BOR must meet the training requirement specified under Wis. Stat. § 70.46(4). This year, that means that at least one member must have taken 2025 Wisconsin Department of Revenue approved BOR Training before you have your 2025 board of review. If the town or village has only one certified person and the one certified member must abstain from participating in a particular objection because of a conflict of interest or because a property owner has requested their removal, he or she may stay in the room to answer procedural questions that may arise while the objection is heard. Removal or recusal of the certified member does not affect the validity of the hearing.

Q. As a board of review member, where can I find more information about how the board of review is to be conducted?

A. The Department of Revenue has a comprehensive Guide for Board of Review Members at the following link: <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/DOR%20Publications/pb056.pdf>



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2025 SPRING NEW & CONTINUING OFFICIALS WORKSHOPS

Newly elected/appointed and continuing officials are invited to learn about the structure and responsibilities of local government, finance basics, road management, plan commissions, open meetings, public records, ethics, and more!

Join us in person May 13 – 22 or via webinar June 2 – 5. See the following pages for a detailed schedule and program description.

Register on the WTA website, www.wisctowns.com, or by mail.



Local
Government
Education



Center for Land Use Education
College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

2025 Spring New & Continuing Officials Workshops

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Powers and Duties of Town Officials

Wisconsin Towns Association Staff

Learn about the fundamentals of town government, town board structure, and the unique powers of town electors. We'll discuss the statutory responsibilities of the town board, chair, clerk, and treasurer, as well as discretionary duties that a board may exercise. This session is a must for those new to town government!

Public Records Law

Local Government Education Staff

This session reviews Wisconsin's public records law, including how to create a public records policy, when a record is considered public, how to comply with record requests, and how to manage public records in compliance with Wisconsin's municipal record retention requirements.

Local Government Finance Basics

Local Government Education Staff

Preparing the annual budget is one of local government officials' most important duties. This session teaches basic municipal budget adoption and administration requirements, including budget amendment procedures.

Fundamentals of Town Road Operations

Wisconsin's Local Technical Assistance Program Staff

This presentation will review town officials' road-related responsibilities, road standards and terminology, and fundamental infrastructure management and roadway safety considerations for town roads.

Open Meetings Law 101

Wisconsin Towns Association Staff

This session offers an overview of Wisconsin's open meetings law and outlines how the law affects the work of all local government officials. We will review definitions, quorums, notice requirements, and more.

Open Meetings Law 201

Wisconsin Towns Association Staff

This presentation will build on the basics from the 101 session and provide a deeper dive into the open meetings law, addressing closed session protocol, electronic meetings, meeting accessibility, and more.

Town Role in Planning and Zoning

Becky Roberts, Center for Land Use Education

In this session, we'll explore options for county and town zoning administration and the specific role of the plan commission, zoning board, and town board in making land use decisions. Feel free to bring advanced questions related to planning, zoning, subdivisions, or land use decision-making.

What's Your Sign?

Wisconsin's Local Technical Assistance Program Staff

This session presents standards for traffic signs and pavement markings and discusses sign management, work zone traffic control, and updates from the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

Ethics for Public Officials

Local Government Education Staff

This session provides an intro to Wisconsin's ethics and conflicts of interest laws for local government officials. Learn how to spot and avoid conflicts between personal interests and public responsibilities, make fair decisions, improve standards of public service, and strengthen the community's trust in public officials and employees.

Managing Board/Clerk Relationships

Local Government Education Staff

Get to know the responsibilities of the town or village clerk and navigate how boards and clerks can best support one another in their roles. Learn tips for managing conflict and building effective working relationships.

Solar Development Regulation

Local Government Education Staff

Large and small-scale solar energy arrays continue to be planned and constructed across Wisconsin and can generate local land use, health, and safety concerns. This presentation focuses on the current state of solar development regulation and features a model solar ordinance developed by UW-Madison Extension for potential use by towns and other local units of government.

IN-PERSON WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

New Officials		Continuing Officials	
8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	Registration	8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	Registration
8:30 - 10:30 a.m.	Powers and Duties of Town Officials	8:30 - 9:30 a.m.	Open Meetings Law 201
10:30 - 10:45 a.m.	Break	9:30 - 10:30 a.m.	Planning and Zoning
10:45 - 11:30 a.m.	Public Records Law	10:30 - 10:45 a.m.	Break
11:30 - 12:15 p.m.	Local Government Finance Basics	10:45 - 12:00 p.m.	Road Management
12:15 - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch	12:00 - 12:45 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 - 2:15 p.m.	Fundamentals of Town Road Operations	12:45 - 1:45 p.m.	Ethics for Public Officials
2:15 - 2:30 p.m.	Break	1:45 - 2:30 p.m.	Board/Clerk Relationships
2:30 - 3:30 p.m.	Open Meetings Law 101	2:30 - 2:45 p.m.	Break
		2:45 - 3:30 p.m.	Solar Regulation

LIVE WEBINAR/TELECONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Monday, 6/2	1:00 - 3:00 p.m.	Powers and Duties of Town Officials
	3:15 - 4:15 p.m.	Open Meetings Law 101
Tuesday, 6/3	8:30 - 9:15 a.m.	Public Records Law
	9:30 - 10:30 a.m.	Town Role in Planning and Zoning
	10:45 - Noon	Fundamentals of Town Road Operations
Wednesday, 6/4	1:00 - 1:45 p.m.	Local Government Finance Basics
	2:00 - 2:45 p.m.	Board/Clerk Relationships
	3:00 - 4:15 p.m.	Road Management
Thursday, 6/5	8:30 - 9:30 a.m.	Open Meetings Law 201
	9:45 - 10:45 a.m.	Ethics for Public Officials
	11:00 - 11:45 a.m.	Solar Development Regulation

2025 SPRING WORKSHOPS REGISTRATION FORM

All registrants (attending in-person or virtual only) will be invited to join the webinar presentations, and all registrants will receive on-demand access to recorded videos of each presentation. **Limited printed materials will be provided; copies of PPT slides will only be provided online.** Registered attendees will receive an email (at the email address you provide below) with information about how to join the webinars, as well as how to access the recordings and materials. **AN EMAIL IS REQUIRED FOR REGISTRATION.** If you plan to attend the virtual presentations via telephone, the phone number from which you will be calling is also required.

Name _____ Office _____
Town _____ County _____
Mailing Address _____
City/State _____ ZIP _____
Telephone (**REQUIRED for teleconference access**) _____
Email (**REQUIRED**) _____

I plan to attend the following workshop (please check one):

- ☐ Tuesday, May 13: Barneveld, WI – Deer Valley Lodge
- ☐ Wednesday, May 14: Fond du Lac, WI – Prairie Theater and Event Center
- ☐ Thursday, May 15: Green Bay, WI – Rock Garden
- ☐ Friday, May 16: Stevens Point, WI – Holiday Inn
- ☐ Tuesday, May 20: Minocqua, WI – Pointe Hotel
- ☐ Wednesday, May 21: Cable, WI – Lakewoods Resort
- ☐ Thursday, May 22: Eau Claire, WI – Florian Gardens
- ☐ Virtual Programming Only (Live Webinars June 2 - 5 + On-Demand Access to Recorded Presentations)

FEE: \$70 – Early registration (**payment must be received at least 10 days in advance of the workshop date**)
\$85 – Late registrations and walk-in registrations

Cancellations received 10 days or more in advance of the workshop date will receive a full refund less a \$15.00 administrative fee. Cancellations received less than 10 days in advance will be charged a \$15.00 administrative fee plus the cost of the meal. Refund requests submitted 30 or more days after the event will not be processed.

If you are or have recently felt ill or have been in contact with someone that is ill, please stay home! Contact the WTA office to either cancel your registration as explained above or change your registration to “Virtual Programming Only.”

This form should be copied for multiple registrations. Make checks payable to the Wisconsin Towns Association and mail along with registration forms to:

Wisconsin Towns Association; W7686 County Road MMM; Shawano, WI 54166.

IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING ONLY, please return registration forms and checks to the WTA office by Friday, May 23, 2025! Registrations received after that date may not receive materials and connection information prior to the live webinar/teleconference sessions.

Registration and payment may also be submitted online on the WTA website, www.wisctowns.com. Total charges will include a \$2.65 credit card processing convenience fee for payments made via credit card.

Questions? Please email wtowns@wisctowns.com or call (715) 526-3157.



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Maintenance of Effort Reporting for Emergency Services

All municipalities must annually certify to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) that they have maintained a level of fire and EMS services that is at least equivalent to that provided in the previous year. Municipalities with populations of 20,000 or less are not subject to law enforcement certification requirements. See Wis. Stat. § 66.0608(2m)(a).

For fire and EMS, local governments must certify that any two of the following have been maintained at a level at least equivalent to the previous year. You need not certify the same two every year.

1. Expenditures for fire and EMS services, not including capital expenditures or expenditures of grant moneys received from the state or federal government.
2. The number of full-time equivalent fire and EMS personnel employed by or assigned to the local government, not including fire fighters and emergency medical services personnel whose positions are funded by grants received from the state or federal government. Note that volunteer personnel who responded to at least 40 percent of calls to which volunteers responded may be counted as full-time for these purposes.
3. The level of training and maintenance of licensure for fire and EMS personnel.
4. Response times for fire and EMS services, adjusted for call location.

WTA suggests that towns and villages maintain records for all four of these options, even those not used for certification, in preparation for future certification that may use alternate criteria. As these are self-certifications, interpretation of these criteria is ultimately up to each community with guidance provided by DOR (see below).

Reporting – Step One: Fill Out Appropriate Form(s)

The person(s) in charge of providing fire protective services and EMS services (i.e. the fire chief, EMS director, etc.) are required to fill out the appropriate certification form(s) indicating which criteria were maintained in 2024 at levels at least equivalent to 2023 (certification in 2025 compares calendar year 2024 to calendar year 2023). Completed forms must be signed by the person in charge of providing the relevant service(s) and returned to the municipal clerk by June 15th each year. A deputy or interim official should complete the certification form in departments with a vacant fire chief/EMS director position. DOR has indicated that the person in charge of providing a service is statutorily required to provide these certifications, regardless of whether they work for a municipal or private department.

- SL-306 – Law Enforcement Certification (if population exceeds 20,000)
- SL-307 – Combined Fire/EMS Certification
- SL-308 – Fire Services Certification
- SL-309 – EMS Certification

Form SL-307 may be used instead of separate Forms SL-308 and SL-309 in towns and villages served by a combined fire and EMS provider – use the form(s) that make sense for your situation. Provide copies of relevant forms and work with providers as soon as possible to ensure adequate time for filing.

Reporting – Step Two: Clerk Files Certification on MyDORGov.

All municipal clerks are required to submit a maintenance of effort report (Form SL-305) online to DOR by July 1st each year through MyDORGov. This submission will require the clerk to answer a few questions and upload the appropriate forms that have been signed by the person in charge of providing relevant services (see above). Note that Section A of the maintenance of effort report on MyDORGov, relating to law enforcement, should only be filled out by towns and villages with populations greater than 20,000. All towns and villages, regardless of population, must fill out the remainder of the report. Failure to successfully certify maintenance of effort by July 1st will result in a one-time penalty of 15% of the local government's total shared revenue (15% of regular and supplemental county and municipal aid). Importantly, while shared revenue may be spent on fire or EMS, towns and villages are not required to do so even though shared revenue is tied to this maintenance of effort requirement as a penalty.

The maintenance of effort report allows for certification of certain exceptions in lieu of normal certification. These exceptions only apply in the year following a change in how service is provided, with regular certification required again in subsequent years. See Wis. Stat. § 66.0608(2m)(c). Specifically, local governments may certify that one of the following occurred in lieu of the normal certification:

1. The local government consolidated fire and/or EMS service with another municipality, municipalities, or county.
2. The local government entered into a contract for fire or EMS service with a private entity.
3. The local government established or joined a newly established fire protection or EMS agency.

Consider, for example, a town with the same EMS service provider year-over-year that joined a newly created fire department in 2024. That town would need to certify maintenance of effort for EMS but not fire. Rather, that town would certify that it joined a new fire department in lieu of certifying maintenance of effort for fire protection. Both certifications occur on the same Form SL-305 filed on MyDORGov.

Additional Resources

Certification forms and additional resources, including answers to common questions, are available on DOR's MOE Reporting Webpage: <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/Form/moe-reporting.aspx>. You will note from DOR guidance that these are self-certifications based on local decision making. DOR provides examples of how to navigate MOE requirements, but those examples are not the only reasonable means of determining certification (there is a lot of flexibility in self-certification).

WTA will be hosting an informational webinar walking through the MOE reporting process step by step. Information about that webinar will be emailed and posted on the WTA website as it becomes available. Additional questions about the MOE certification, forms, and online reporting should be directed to DOR at lgs@wisconsin.gov.

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Clerk's Corner



By: Melissa Kono, UW Ext./WTA Clerk Specialist

Last month I wrote briefly about the education programs I will be developing in my role as Clerk Specialist for the WTA and UW-Madison Division of Extension and now want to share more detail on several other trainings I hope you will consider engaging in.

New Clerk Bootcamp

I am partnering with County Clerks and Town Clerks across Wisconsin to host regional, one-day **New Clerk Bootcamps** in June. There are many new town clerks, especially after the recent election, and these workshops are designed to give them an overview of the roles and responsibilities of being a clerk, teach reporting and deadlines, and offer a chance to meet other clerks, and ask questions. A complete list of dates and locations, as well as a full agenda and registration information are included in this month's magazine. New clerks, and clerks with less than three years of experience are encouraged to attend.

Upcoming Lunch and Learn on Maintenance of Effort Reporting

A one-hour Lunch and Learn Webinar on May 28th from 12:00-1:00pm will cover the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) report that is due July 1st and is required for all municipalities. Since MOE reporting first began last year, I have heard from many clerks that they would like more information specific to completing the MOE report. This webinar will cover the background of MOE, strategies for communicating with Fire and EMS partners, and step-by-step instructions on how to complete the MOE form. Register for this free webinar at: <https://uwmadison.zoom.us/join/register/yMl4mMEwQii4xLicqGif1w>

Clerk College

I have saved the best for last and am pleased to announce the official details and schedule for our new Clerk College program. Clerk College is a comprehensive, year-long professional development certificate program designed specifically for new and continuing town clerks. Beginning in July, courses are held in-person and via Zoom over a 12-month period, concluding with a graduation ceremony in June. Clerk College includes 50 instructional hours taught by WTA staff, UW-Madison faculty, and other experts with relevant content and hands-on expertise. Courses cover the foundations - like clerk roles and responsibilities, as well as more complex subjects, such as employment law, open meetings compliance, budgeting, public records management, and reporting responsibilities.

Clerk College leverages other excellent educational opportunities offered by WTA, including the Fall Financial Workshops, WTA Convention, and District Meetings. After Graduation, clerks are able to maintain their certification by attending regularly offered educational sessions such as these. The inaugural year of Clerk College is being offered at a reduced price of \$599--half off the full program cost of \$1,199. Tuition includes all instruction, meals, hard copy materials, and registration for Fall Financial Workshops and District Meetings. Convention registration is not included as some participants might opt for the one-day registration. In order to cover complex content, cultivate relationships, and build leadership skills, we will be meeting in-person several times at the Stevens Point Holiday Inn. An overnight stay may be required for those who do not live within close driving distance. While hotel costs are not covered in the cost of Clerk College tuition, rooms are reserved at the state rate for those who wish to stay overnight. A schedule of courses, additional details, and the registration form for 2025-2026 Clerk College can be found in this month's magazine.

Wisconsin Towns Association

Clerk Bootcamp

Workshop Agenda

June 2025 Cohort



A one-day session designed for new town clerks to learn the duties and functions of the clerk role.

8:00AM Registration

8:30AM Welcome & Introductions

8:45 – 10:00AM Overview of Clerk Role

10:00 – 10:15AM Break

10:15 – 11:45AM Meetings are more than Minutes

11:45 – 12:00PM Break & Get Lunch (provided)

12:00 – 12:45PM Working Lunch

12:45 – 1:00PM Break – Transition to afternoon session

1:00 – 2:30PM Reports

2:30 – 2:45PM Break

2:45 – 4:00PM Financial

4:00 – 4:30PM Additional resources, wrap-up, evaluation

Wisconsin Towns Association Clerk Bootcamp

Registration

I plan to attend the following workshop (please check one):

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Monday, June 9 | Clark Co. Courthouse | 517 Court St., Neillsville |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Tues., June 10 | UW Barron Co. Campus | 1800 College Dr., Rice Lake |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Friday, June 13 | Town of Grover Hall | W5161 Town Hall Rd., Peshtigo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Tues., June 17 | Dodge Co. Courthouse | 210 West Center St., Juneau |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Thurs., June 19 | Town of Holland Hall | W7937 Co. Rd. MH, Holman |

\$50 – Early registration (registration includes lunch and materials)

(payment must be received at least 10 days in advance of the workshop date)

\$65 – Late registrations and walk-in registrations

Name

Town

County

Mailing Address

City/State

Zip

Telephone

Email

Make check payable to the Wisconsin Towns Association and mail along with registration form to:

Wisconsin Towns Association; W7686 County Road MMM; Shawano, WI 54166.

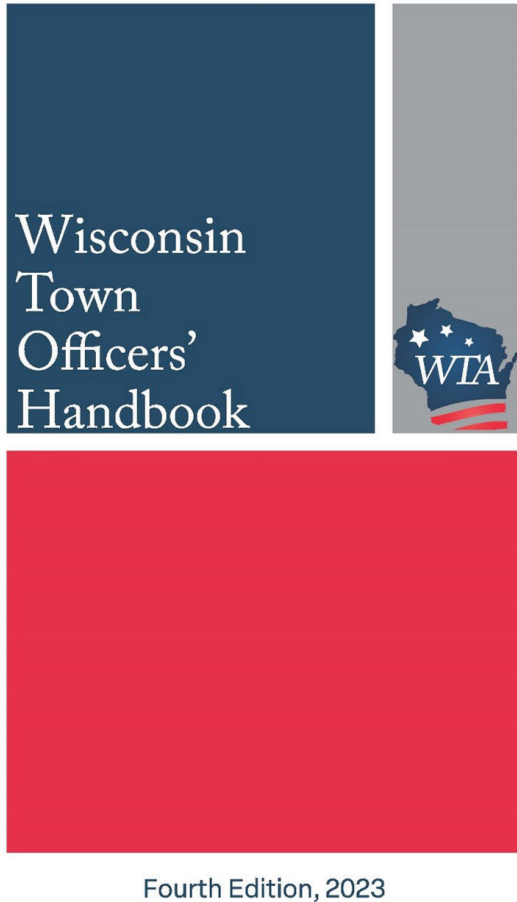
Registration and payment may also be submitted online on the WTA website, www.wisctowns.com.

Total charges will include a \$2.65 credit card processing convenience fee for payments made via credit card.

If you have any questions, please email wtowns@wisctowns.com or call (715) 526-3157.

Cancellations received 10 days or more in advance of the workshop date will receive a full refund less a \$15.00 administrative fee. Cancellations received less than 10 days in advance will be charged a \$15.00 administrative fee plus the cost of food. Refund requests submitted 30 or more days after the event will not be processed.

Fourth Edition Town Officers' Handbook



The 2023 version of the Wisconsin Town Officers' Handbook is now available! This newly revised Fourth Edition incorporates recent law changes through the end of the 2021-2022 Wisconsin Legislative Session.

Topics discussed include ethics, open meetings, public records, town highways, bidding for public contracts, and zoning and related land use regulation, just to name a few. This is the “go-to” reference book for seasoned town officers and new officials who want to understand their role, powers, and duties and do things “by the book”.

\$50
+\$9 shipping

Town Officers' Handbook Order Form

Please complete and return this form with payment to:

Wisconsin Towns Association, W7686 County Road MMM, Shawano, WI 54166

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Mailing Address _____

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Inaugural Wisconsin Towns Association Clerk College



Come and learn from WTA staff, UW-Madison faculty, and other experts on a variety of TOWN CLERK specific topics at this comprehensive, year-long program. Designed for new AND continuing clerks.

Date	Topic	Format
7/10/25	Introduction to Clerk College Webinar	Via Zoom
7/31/25	Introduction to Clerk Roles and Responsibilities	Holiday Inn, Stevens Point
8/1/25	Human Resources Management for Towns	Holiday Inn, Stevens Point
8/28/25	Open Meetings and Public Records	Via Zoom
9/9/25-9/18/25	Fall Financial Workshops	In-Person & Virtual
10/12/25-10/14/25	WTA Convention	Kalahari, Wisconsin Dells
11/6/25	Municipal Core Training (or credit for prior learning)	In-Person & Virtual
12/4/25	Town Boards and Town Meetings	Via Zoom
1/20/26	Working with Different Personalities	Holiday Inn, Stevens Point
1/21/26	Reports, Reports, Reports	Holiday Inn, Stevens Point
Jan-March 2026	District Meetings: Legislative updates and BOR	In-Person & Virtual
3/19/26	Form CT	Via Zoom
4/9/26	Annual Meeting	Via Zoom
6/25/26	Intergovernmental and Conflict Management	Holiday Inn, Stevens Point
6/26/26	Graduation	Holiday Inn, Stevens Point

Wisconsin Towns Association

Clerk College

REGISTRATION

Reduced price of \$599

Tuition includes all instruction, meals, hard copy materials, and registration for Fall Financial Workshops and District Meetings.



50 instructional hours!

Clerk College is a comprehensive, year-long professional development certificate program designed specifically for new and continuing town clerks.

Deadline to register: June 30, 2025.

Name

Town

County

Mailing Address

City/State

Zip

Telephone

Email

Make check payable to the Wisconsin Towns Association and mail along with registration form to:
Wisconsin Towns Association; W7686 County Road MMM; Shawano, WI 54166.

Full refund available until July 10, 2025. After this date, no refunds will be made.

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CYBERSECURITY:

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- DISCOVER HOW TO CONNECT WITH THE PUBLIC IN TODAY'S DIGITAL LANDSCAPE
- LEARN ABOUT THE PROS, CONS, AND DEMOGRAPHICS OF VARIOUS SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS
- FIND COST-EFFECTIVE WAYS TO ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY WITHOUT BURDENING LOCAL BUDGETS
- GAIN INSIGHTS INTO BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNICATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



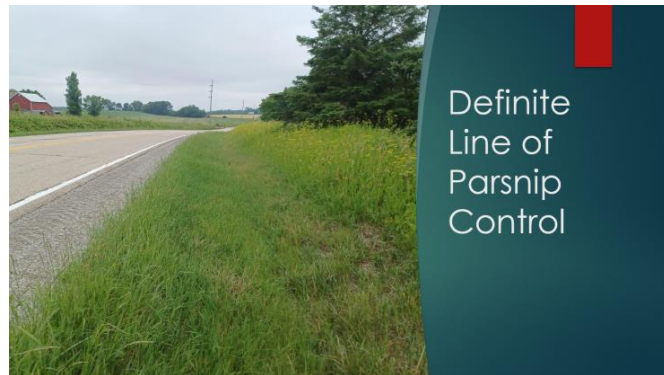
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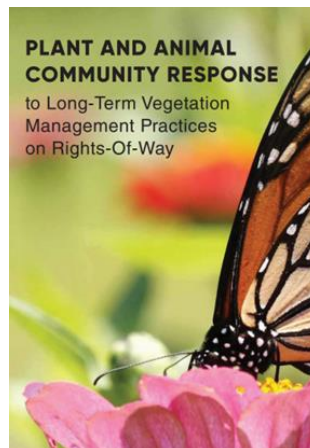
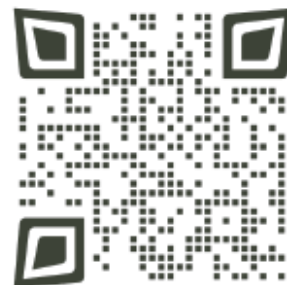
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Ch. 985 Legal Notices

Q. I'm new to town/village government, and I keep hearing about ch. 985 legal notices that must be provided for certain things. Can you explain them?

A. Towns/villages are required to inform the public about town/village matters by the publication or posting of legal notices. Ch. 985 legal notices are to be given in accordance with ch. 985 of state statutes.

Q. How do we know when we need to provide a ch. 985 legal notice?

A. State statutes will typically provide the “class”, content requirements, and timing requirements for each ch. 985 legal notice. As an example, in a maintenance year, the town is required to publish a class 1 notice under ch. 985 not less than 15 days before the 1st session of its Board of Review. A “class 1 notice” requires one “insertion”. In this case, this means that the notice must be published once at least 15 days prior to the first meeting of its Board of Review. As for content, the statutes provide that the notice must contain the time and place of the first meeting of the Board of Review as well as other required information. See Wis. Stat. § 70.47(2) for more details.

When making a legal notice, your town/village will need to calculate the length of time needed to ensure that the insertions are published within the required time frame. If a statute measures time in days, all calendar days should be counted (including Sundays and holidays). When counting days, you would exclude the day the item is published or posted, but would include the day on which the noticed event will take place. If the last day falls on a Sunday or legal holiday, then the time will extend to the next secular day. See Wis. Stat. § 985.09.

Q. Are there other “classes” of ch. 985 legal notices? How do they all work?

A. Generally speaking, here is a guide:

- Class 1 Notice – 1 insertion in a newspaper at least 1 week prior to the event.
- Class 2 Notice – 2 insertions in a newspaper with the first publication occurring 2 weeks prior to the event and the second published 1 week prior to the event.
- Class 3 Notice – 3 insertions in a newspaper with the first published 3 weeks prior to the event, the second published 2 weeks prior to the event, and the third published 1 week prior to the event.

If **posting** (see the next question), the notice must be posted no later than the time specified for the first newspaper publication. The posted notice must be up until the event has occurred. Please note that if a state statute provides a timing requirement for the insertion, then that specific timing requirement must be followed.

Q. We're concerned that publishing our ch. 985 legal notices is very costly. Do we have any options?

A. All towns and villages have the option to provide their legal notices by either publishing them in a newspaper or they may either:

- Post the notice in three physical locations within their town/village OR,
- Post in one physical location and on the town's/village's official website

The ability to "post in lieu of publish" ch. 985 legal notices is subject to some restrictions. Certain legal notices are required to be published in a qualified newspaper. As an example, if a town were to pass an ordinance that requires a forfeiture, state statutes prohibit the town from posting the required ch. 985 notice under Wis. Stat. § 60.80(1). See Wis. Stat. § 60.80(2). Towns/villages should review state statutes to ensure that they are providing proper legal notice.

Please note that towns/villages that have designated an official newspaper **MUST** provide their ch. 985 legal notices via publishing. They do not have the ability to post in lieu of publication. Whenever a newspaper publication is used, the clerk, or other person responsible for providing the publication, should file a clipping of the publication along with the newspaper's affidavit of publication. See Wis. Stat. § 985.12.

Q. How do we know whether our town/village has designated an official newspaper? Aren't we required to have one?

A. You would have to go back and review the town's/village's records to determine whether an official newspaper has been designated. Towns/villages are not required to designate an official newspaper. The governing body should, however, have a go-to newspaper for use when there are notices that are required to be published, but they do not have to go so far as to designate it as its official newspaper. See Wis. Stat. § 985.03(1) for newspaper requirements.

Q. Our town board has adopted a policy that we post all of our ch. 985 legal notices (unless required to publish under state statutes). The town is going to be bidding out a public works project, and is required to provide a class 2 notice under ch. 985. We're concerned that potential bidders may not see the posting in the town. What can we do?

A. The town could choose to provide additional supplemental notice in addition to completing their required postings. As an example, the town could choose to complete its posting requirements by posting the class 2 bid notice in 3 public places, and also publish a supplemental bid notice in the local paper. If the town chooses to provide supplemental notice, the town should indicate on each notice as to whether it is the town's official notice satisfying the ch. 985 legal notice requirements.

Q. Does the WTA have any resources to help us keep track of ch. 985 legal notice requirements?

A. Yes, the WTA maintains a public notices spreadsheet which is available on the WTA website. It is located under the "Clerk Resources" tab on this webpage: <https://www.wisctowns.com/resources/clerk-town-resources/>. The document is titled "Public Notice Requirements Spreadsheet – 2025".

2024 Scholarship Winner

Sponsored By:



"What strategies can be implemented by town officials in collaboration with citizens to maintain civility in local government?"

Written By: Isaac Abel, Central Wisconsin Christian School

The Wisconsin Towns Association, Rural Mutual Insurance Company, and Scott Construction, Inc. award \$7000 in scholarships to high school seniors graduating from either a public or private high school that enroll in a Wisconsin public or private college or university. The winners are determined by independent judging of an essay contest.

Towns. There are 1,250 towns in the state of Wisconsin. Each is governed by a town board, usually consisting of three to five elected members. These officials work through the logistics of the day-to-day provisions of services provided within each town ("Town Government"). If one does the math, that means between 3,750 to 6,250 men and women are serving the constituents of Wisconsin (close to six million people) in town government roles. Does this task seem daunting? Considering that citizens are people with opinions, ideas, and goals, it is worth appreciating the work of our town government. The Wisconsin Towns Association reminds us that our town government "provides fundamental services to 95% of Wisconsin's geography and about 30% of its population." In addition to knowing, understanding, and working on the necessary responsibilities, town officials need to be able to work hand in hand with town members. It seems important to consider strategies town officials could implement that would facilitate civility as officials represent and work with Wisconsin citizens. In being relatable, effective communicators, and side by side leaders town officials work to promote civility in local government.

Because the roles of town government officials directly affect Wisconsinites, there are some ways officials can create avenues for civility. Although the definition of civility in Merriam-Webster's



Dictionary involves the idea of politeness and courtesy, the Latin root reminds us that civility actually means relating to the citizen and being orderly in behavior. As our elected officials relate as citizens, they connect and see common concerns. They listen well. They go beyond simply being polite and courteous and find threads of commonality and indicate a willingness to listen well. A simple strategy for civility is our officials remembering they belong to and represent neighbors, friends, and other town members.

In addition, communication is key to promoting healthy relationships between town officials and community members. Indeed, an employment hub reminds readers that effective communication mitigates conflict, improves goal direction and productivity, and strengthens the team mentality ("10 Benefits of Effective Communication

in the Workplace”). If town members see there is a priority of relaying information and they are well informed on current issues, there is a sense of connectedness, inclusion, and respect. A current website, optional emails, direct mailings, paper postings, and face-to-face conversations provide ample methods for effective communication. When it comes to voting on town concerns, the community can work together with board members because each party is aware and knowledgeable on the issues which need addressing.

Lastly, as invested community members, town officials lead well working side by side for the population they serve. Having town officials present and engaged, working next to the population they serve is the new leadership strategy that has been proven to work (“Leading Side by Side; A Modern Approach to Leadership in Changing Times.”) Despite society’s fascination with charismatic leaders, the reality is that no single leader can lead an organization or town alone. Collaboration, incorporating different points of view, and team problem-solving approaches are vital for civility and progress. Leaders who work side by side demonstrate they are not afraid to be challenged; they take on hard conversations. These leaders encourage a healthy debate while being present and available. Side by side leaders provide an opportunity to foster new ideas and outcomes as they work alongside other capable individuals within the community.

It would be easy to place the burden of civility on the shoulders of the elected. However, each town board official is just that: elected. Citizens of Wisconsin would be wise to thoroughly educate themselves on the community members who are running to fill town government positions. Electing folks who show integrity, who listen well and are excellent communicators is critical; research tells us people with these qualities make ideal leaders (“The Top 10 Qualities of a Great Leader”). Additionally, leaders that look to work side by side in the community they serve are an asset. The communities that side by side leaders serve within will find civility as a byproduct. As wise citizens, we need to vote for men and women who strive to serve well because they care about their communities and the work which needs to be done in them.

Town government is very connected to its people where, “the people govern themselves and unleash the potential of democracy” through voting on specific issues right at town meetings (“Town Government”). This government, directed by the populous of Wisconsin, tends to roads, recycling, fire protection and ambulance service, and many other services. In an effort to provide excellent, pertinent services for our towns, it is critical that town officials and town dwellers understand one another, have clearly communicated goals and expectations, and purpose to appreciate each other as fellow citizens. Civility in local government is a team effort.

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Basic Financial Administration for Wisconsin Local Governments



April 2021

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Quantity of Handbooks _____ x \$9.00 shipping (for each book ordered) = \$ _____

Total Enclosed = \$ _____

*Will ship in 1-2 business days.

CLASSIFIEDS

Request for Proposals for Town Assessor

The Town of Birch, Lincoln County, is requesting proposals for Town Assessor for the 2025 - 2028 tax years. Birch has an estimated population of 530 with approximately 356 residential parcels. A town-wide revaluation will be done in 2026

The Town is seeking a firm that will provides assessment services - free from errors and defensible to Town officials and residents. Services will include maintenance of the assessment roll and individual property classifications within 10% of equalized value, Open Book, and Board of Review.

Please send your proposal, along with a copy of Wisconsin certification, proof of insurance, references and a resume, to the Town by 7 p.m. on 06/10/2025. Clearly mark "ASSESSOR REQUEST FOR PURPOSAL" envelope and mailed to PO Box 71 Irma WI 54435. Email birchtownclerk@gmail.com with questions. The Town Board reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.

\$25/month. Email wtowns@wisctowns.com for complete details.

2025 WISCONSIN TOWNS ASSOCIATION CONVENTION

Sunday, October 12 – Tuesday, October 14, 2025

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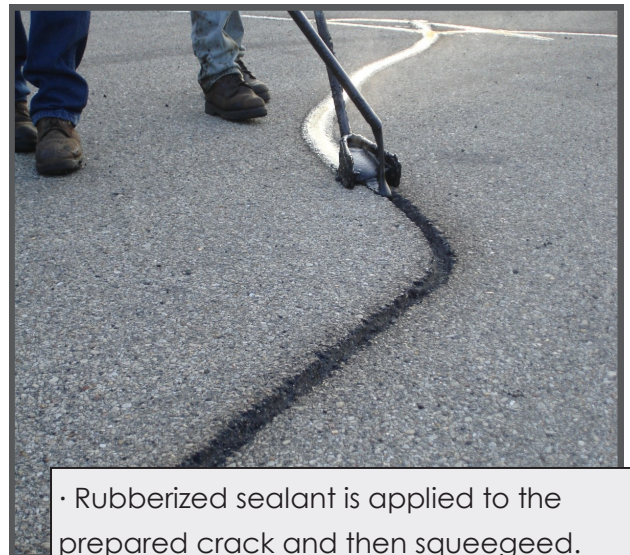
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- Rubberized sealant is applied to the prepared crack and then squeegeed.

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