

Sanitary Maintenance Special Charge Informational Session

Tuesday August 11th 2026

Highway Conference Room

Informational Session Purpose

1. Allow an additional opportunity for County Staff to share with the community information not shared in the Notice Letter or on the Department Website.
2. Allow an opportunity for the community to share their concerns.

Informational Session Outline

- 1) Staff Presentation
- 2) Public Comment
- 3) (Possible interruption) Public Hearings on other matters.

Information Session Protocol

Staff Presentation

- ▶ Staff will present additional information not already covered in the Fee Notice FAQ or on the Department Website.
- ▶ Estimated Time (~25 mins)

Public Comment

- ▶ Please ensure you are signed in to speak.
- ▶ You will have 3 minutes to share your concerns with the committee.
- ▶ After tonight's meeting you are encouraged to reach out to the Department with any questions.

Sanitary Maintenance Special Charge Presentation

Chris Arrowood- Director Land Records & Regulations Department

Presentation Outline

- ▶ Why regulate human waste?
- ▶ Why regulate maintenance?
- ▶ How did this suddenly result in the need to charge a fee?
- ▶ What is the fee and how does it work?

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Why regulate human waste?

History of Plumbing Codes

- ▶ 1913 - Wisconsin creates the nation's first plumbing code to protect:
 - ▶ Human Health
 - ▶ Waterborne Illnesses (~35,000 Nationally, ~178 in Wisconsin)
 - ▶ Our surface waters.
 - ▶ Algal blooms appearing in lakes.
 - ▶ Our ground waters.
 - ▶ Well Contamination becoming a regular occurrence.
- ▶ We want our people healthy, drinking clean water, and able to swim in the lakes.

State Timeline

- ▶ 1913-14 Minimum code
- ▶ 1965 First state sanitary permits
- ▶ 1969 3' vertical separation from limiting factors
- ▶ 1972 Required Uniform state-applied standard.
- ▶ 1974 Percolation Tests required
- ▶ 1980 Installation Inspections
- ▶ 1994 Soil Tests required
- ▶ 2000 “New” Code Implemented- Maintenance Required.

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Why regulate maintenance?

Maintenance Timeline

- ▶ 1965 First state sanitary permits
- ▶ 1968 Langlade County began issuing sanitary permits.
- ▶ 1972 Required Uniform state-applied standard
- ▶ 1990's Systems failing
- ▶ 2000 “New” Code Implemented
- ▶ 2017 Counties must have a complete inventory
- ▶ 2019 Counties require inspection/pumping

How did this suddenly result in the need to charge a fee?

Local Timeline

▶ Inventory

- ▶ 2009-2012 946 Discovered Systems
- ▶ 2013 Mission Accomplished!
- ▶ 2017 State Required Deadline

▶ Inspection/Pumping

- ▶ 2000 Records Begin (Phased Compliance)
- ▶ 2016 Phased Compliance Complete
- ▶ 2019 State Required Compliance

Recent History

▶ Software Changes

- ▶ Custom-built program is dying after 40 years (1985)
 - ▶ Hardware and software.
- ▶ New System Oversold & Under Performs
 - ▶ **Speed:** Seconds to minutes to hours.
 - ▶ **Data Integration:** You'd sure think (Maintenance especially reliant on integration)
 - ▶ **Utility:** It looks like it can!

▶ Data Migration

- ▶ 11,000 had to be verified 1 at a time.
- ▶ 6,700 pumping events had to be manually updated.

Surprises

- ▶ Delegated Authority in Elcho
 - ▶ Elcho Sanitary District wasn't delegated authority.
 - ▶ State directive that the county must fix immediately.
 - ▶ 3,000 permits to review
 - ▶ 1,700 pumping events to enter
- ▶ Inventory: Mission Accomplished?
 - ▶ Discovered Systems
 - ▶ 2009 to 2012 (946)
 - ▶ 2013 to 2024 (54)
 - ▶ 2025 to current (96+ and climbing rapidly)

Surprises

- ▶ County Deferrals: A Tool that doesn't exist. (Anymore)
 - ▶ Not using your system, give us a call and we will give you more time.
 - ▶ When maintenance was optional (pre-2019), we did have this option.
 - ▶ Only continued granting deferrals due to a misunderstanding.

What is the fee and how does it work?

POWTS Maintenance Fee

- ▶ Special Charge vs. Separate Fee
 - ▶ Faster & easier for the county. (Less Labor = Lower Cost)
 - ▶ More convenient for the landowner.
- ▶ Updated Code of Ordinances to clarify the process & set a limit.
- ▶ Why every year if we only get a notice once every 3 years?
 - ▶ RECORDKEEPING FEE not a notice fee.
 - ▶ Costs may not occur evenly.
 - ▶ More stable billing amount/easier to budget for.
 - ▶ Mailing notices is only a minor component of the cost.
 - ▶ Some people get pumped every year and would never receive a notice.
 - ▶ Could split it into many different, smaller components & bill + admin to track them.

What is the process?

- ▶ Mirrors tax bill process.
 - ▶ May cut off for installed/discovered systems
 - ▶ Post systems (future years)
 - ▶ Set Fee
 - ▶ Letters to first time charges
 - ▶ “Open Book” until September
 - ▶ October/November entry for tax bills.

How was the fee calculated?

- ▶ Program Cost/ # of Systems = Cost per system
- ▶ Program Cost:
 - ▶ 2026 Labor \$100,423.54 Abnormally high
 - ▶ 2026 Software \$3,958.83 Expect slight increases
 - ▶ 4,000 Maintenance Notices \$3,120.00 Expect slight increases
 - ▶ 7,782 Fee Notices \$6,069.96 Abnormally high
- ▶ Total Cost \$113,572.33 / 8,278 Active Systems = \$13.72
 - ▶ Set at \$13.75 anticipating many systems will be updated to abandoned.

Recap

- ▶ The state requires the county to ensure property owners are having their systems inspected to make sure they are working.
- ▶ There hasn't been a change to what is supposed to be done, but the resources have changed and what we have to do has been clarified.
- ▶ The job is bigger; more difficult (software & deferrals); and more expensive.
- ▶ The fee is not a cash grab, but a last resort to provide the resources needed to help keep our community and environment healthy and able to drink the water and swim in our lakes.
 - ▶ Reminder: Special Charges can only be used to recover costs to provide the service.