

UPDATES FROM THE VILLAGE

Balancing the budget for 2025



John L. Swisher
Village President



Kyle Ellefson
Village Administrator

The Village Board wrapped up several months of work on the 2025 budget, adopting the final budget on November 11. While working within levy limits, the Village Board prioritized public safety, infrastructure, and staff retention, while also dedicating funds to maintain and improve community facilities and amenities. It is difficult to balance the competing budget priorities throughout the village when allocating the limited resources we have, but it ultimately comes down to the “needs” and mandatory expenses coming first and then using remaining funds to cover as many priorities as possible.

At the Police Department, the Village Board built on 2024’s investment in a third full-time police officer by adding funding for more than 100 hours of additional patrol in 2025. In fact, 2025 will make the third consecutive year that the Village Board has ei-

ther added a full-time police officer to the force or increased the number of patrol hours by more than 100 hours! The Police Department will also receive capital funds to acquire additional equipment for our officers and vehicles, and we will be adding to the inventory of electronic speed boards to improve driver and pedestrian safety throughout the village.

In the 2025 budget, compensation for our paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMT) was prioritized to focus on staff retention and recruitment and to improve our competitiveness in the marketplace. These substantial wage bumps come on the heels of the 2024 wage increases for both firefighters and emergency medical services (EMS) staff, and this continues the Village Board’s commitment to providing high-quality fire and medical services to the village and surrounding towns. Our Fire and EMS Department also received many important resources during 2024, including a new engine, a refurbished engine, and replacement of the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBAs). While these investments occurred in 2024, the funding obtained through borrowing funds will impact future budgets as the debt service comes due over the course of multiple years.

The Village Board also continued its reinvestment in utility and other infrastructure projects throughout the village. In 2025 we will be milling and repaving several streets to improve the pavement surface and extend the useful life of the road before a full reconstruction is necessary. We will also explore a project at Centennial Park to expand and improve visitor parking, which should enhance the experience for visitors and neighbors alike. The Public Works Department will also be working in the parks to add engineered woodchips around play equipment and will install a vehicle maintenance lift to increase the amount of work we can do in-house.

Some of the most significant infrastructure projects will be in the water and wastewater utilities, where some projects are ready to start within months and others are still in the early planning phases. Well #4 is in the preliminary stages of design, and there are several lift stations in the village that will be upgraded in 2025 as well. The most significant utility project in 2025 will be the sludge dewatering project, which will be a nearly complete replacement of the current sludge handling system. The Village Board had worked diligently to integrate the new system into the existing building and sludge storage facility, eliminating the need for a new building, an addition, or demolition of the existing facility. Additionally, the Village Board has adopted a phased approach to the capacity for this system so it will be able to manage today’s capacity with room for anticipated growth. If growth exceeds those projections, or we have the opportunity for a large utility user to locate here, we will have the flexibility to add a second sludge handling line within the existing footprint. This planning and forethought can save ratepayers a substantial amount of money by avoiding the cost and inefficiency of an oversized plant while also avoiding the cost to construct a new plant if growth exceeds expectations.

Budgeting is never an easy task, and the Village Board gets one opportunity to allocate the bulk of available resources to meet our public safety needs, maintain infrastructure, and provide public amenities for our residents. There are almost always items that would be nice to fund, or purchases we would like to make, but ultimately, the Village Board serves the residents and taxpayers, and those interests must be balanced with the various needs, wants, and obligations. In this budget, the Village Board addressed several public safety and infrastructure items, and we continue to support our amenities as well. In fact, in 2025’s budget, the Village Board is providing the largest funding increase the library has ever received! The Village Board worked these priorities into a budget that focused on getting as much as they could out of what they had while also respecting the taxpayers, so you can expect the mill (tax) rate to remain virtually unchanged. That means if the assessed value of your home has not changed since last year, your property tax paid for the Village of Johnson Creek should not increase!

POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS

Snow Removal and Winter Parking

Before the first snowstorm of the season, we would like to remind residents about our local snow removal ordinance. Within 48 hours of each snowfall or accumulation of ice, property owners are responsible for removing snow and ice from all sidewalks in front of or adjoining their house, business, or lot. Violations may result in the village removing the ice or snow at the property owner's expense.

If there is a snow accumulation of one inch or more, vehicles cannot be parked, stopped, or left on any village street or alley from 2:30 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. the following day or until the street or alley has been completely cleared.

Beware of Scams

Our Police Department has been notified that people are receiving calls from individuals pretending to be from our police department and claiming to be holding a fundraiser. The callers are asking for donations and requesting credit card or debit card information. These calls are part of a scam. The Johnson Creek Police Department would not contact anyone by phone asking for this type of information.

DETAILS FROM DPW

Wisconsin winter weather can cause water pipes to freeze and burst, resulting in costly repairs for homeowners. Review these tips to prevent frozen pipes. More information can be found at bit.ly/JCfrozenpipes.

- Locate the main shut-off valve in your home prior to freezing weather to make sure it operates freely.
- Drain outside faucets by shutting off the valve inside and allowing remaining water to drain out the outside faucet.
- Basements or crawl spaces must be heated enough to protect plumbing. Any opening to the outside must be closed and properly insulated.
- If your meter or interior plumbing are located near outside walls or the foundation of the home, insulation should be installed. You may also want to leave cabinets open during cold spells to allow heat to reach plumbing under sinks near outside walls. If you decide to wrap any pipes in heat tape or use heat cables, use only UL listed products and carefully follow manufacturers instructions.
- If you have had problems with a frozen service or frozen pipes in the past, it may help to leave a small amount of water running during periods of extreme cold.
- If you will be away from your home for a night or two, keep the thermostat at a reasonable temperature to make sure areas with pipes are kept above freezing.
- If you will be away for several weeks or months, shut off the water and drain the entire system. Call a plumber for proper procedures. If you believe interior pipes have frozen:
 - Turn off the water at the main valve for your home and contact a plumber.
 - You may want to try a hair dryer or portable heater to attempt to thaw the pipe. This is not recommended if standing water is present.
- Never thaw a pipe with a torch or open flame.

THE CLERK'S CORNER

Local Offices up for Election in 2025

The offices of Village President and three Village Trustees are up for election next spring. The term of office for all positions is two years and will run from the third Tuesday in April 2025 through the third Tuesday in April 2027. The Spring Election date is April 1, 2025, and if a primary is necessary, it will be held on February 18, 2025.

All necessary forms to run for office are available on the Village website www.johnsoncreek-wi.us or can be picked up at Village Hall. The first day to circulate nomination papers is December 1, 2024, and they must be returned to the Village Clerk by January 7, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. Contact the Village Clerk at elissaf@vi.johnsoncreek.wi.gov or 920-699-2296, ext. 102 with any questions.

Dog Tags for 2025 Available December 9

Dogs over 5 months of age must be licensed annually. To license a dog, provide a rabies vaccination copy, proof of spay/neuter (if applicable), and the license fee, which is \$10 for a spayed or neutered dog and \$15 for an unaltered dog. License forms are available on the Village website. Village ordinances limit the number of dogs per household to two. To exceed this limit, a multiple dog statement is required (forms available at Village Hall) and a fee of \$25 per dog is added to the license fee.

Tax Bills and Payments

Property tax bills will be mailed no later than the third Monday in December, though we hope to have them out a bit before then. The entire tax bill or first installment is due by January 31, 2025, to avoid interest and penalties. Payments by check are accepted at Village Hall in person, by mail, or in the drop box. *Tax payments must be on a separate check from any other Village payment (such as a dog license or utility bill), and no post-dated checks are accepted.* If you wish to pay by credit card, visit www.allpaid.com and use code a000tp. An additional processing fee of at least 2.95% applies to card payments.

Village Hall Holiday Closures

The Village Hall will be closed the following days during the holiday season:

November 28 and 29, 2024

December 24 and 25, 2024

December 31, 2024– Closing at noon

January 1, 2025

When It Snows In Johnson Creek

Miles to plow: 21.2

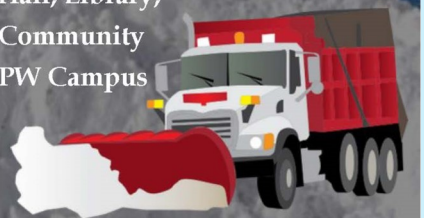
Tons of salt used per outing: 8

Hours to clear streets curb to curb: 6

Number of DPW vehicles plowing: 3

Parking lots plowed: Village Hall, Library, Police Station, Fire Department, Community Center, Park & Ride, Well #3, & DPW Campus

Many thanks to our DPW staff who are out at all times of day and night during a snow event to keep the roads clear and everyone safe!



TOURISM TOPICS

A weekend filled with holiday activities will kick off the Christmas season in Johnson Creek!

Christmas in the Village hosted by the Johnson Creek Historical Society will take place November 29 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and November 30 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will be holiday games, visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus, and horse-drawn wagon rides. Available for purchase will be Christmas trees, wreaths, holiday gifts, and more.

Location: 110 Aztalan Street

The Friends of the Johnson Creek Public Library Holiday Fair will be held on November 30 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Nearly 60 vendors will be selling an array of products, and there is no fee to attend. *Location: 455 Aztalan Street (This is the school campus— use the west or north parking lots.)*

The eighth annual **Village of Johnson Creek Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony** will take place on December 1 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Veterans Park. Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive via fire truck at 3 p.m. and will be available to visit with children. Snacks, warm beverages, and horse-drawn wagon rides will be provided, and the high school and middle school choirs will be singing Christmas carols starting around 4:30 p.m. That will be followed by a short ceremony and the tree lighting at 5:00 p.m. Generous support from local businesses and individuals help make this a great event for our community. We hope to see many residents there! *Location: Veterans Park (121 Lincoln Street)*



Other Upcoming Holiday Events

November 29 and 30: Black Friday Rummage Sale at The Crossroads Church

December 8: Breakfast with Santa at Milford Hills

December 14: Santa at Badger Bank

December 14: Grandma's Bakery Sale at the Johnson Creek Historical Society

For more details and a full list of local holiday activities, check out our website: visitjohnsoncreek.org/events

REMARKS FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

Team members attended numerous events at local schools and churches during Fire Prevention Month. We also hosted our annual open house at the fire station and had a tremendous turnout. This was a great opportunity for community members to talk one-on-one with firefighters and EMTs and learn about daily operations of the department.

The Johnson Creek School Board graciously permitted us the use of the old elementary school for training purposes. You will see us at this location for different training exercises. This is a beneficial experience for our members to train in different environments.

We welcomed one full-time member into the department as well as two new part-time employees. Fire inspections are a priority and will continue through the end of the year.

As in the past few months, our call volume has increased and will likely continue to do so. We have begun planning for next year and are excited to see what 2025 will bring.

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Jason Palumbo thinks Johnson Creek has a bright future. That is one of the reasons he decided to make the village his personal and business home when he moved here 15 years ago.

Originally from Wauwatosa, Jason's full-time job is working as a Senior Generator Field Service Manager in Power Generation Service for Toshiba. He first worked as a field engineer for the company, traveling extensively throughout North America. He's been as far north as North Pole, Alaska (It's a real place!) and as far south as the Caribbean. Ten years ago, the opportunity arose to take on a management role with the department, and part of what he does today is to train young engineers for a successful future.

A physics class in high school is what set Jason's sights on an engineering career, and the rest is history. He pursued a degree in electrical engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He followed that up with a Master of Business Administration (MBA) and some other certifications from Cornell University. "I like learning," Jason explained, and when a topic interests him, he commits to learning as much as he can.

He initially built a house and planted his roots in Johnson Creek to get away from some of the bustle of Milwaukee, and he is glad he did. "I love it here," he stated.

With less travel required for work in his manager role, Jason decided to establish a business named JPAL LLC and became a local commercial property owner. He thought about building a strip mall but instead took the opportunity to purchase the two existing strip malls on Village Walk Lane in 2014. He jumped into learning about mall management and defining his role as the property owner.

He enjoys the opportunity to contribute to the community indirectly by supporting businesses that provide services and goods people want. Jason said he is selective in what businesses fill the spaces, as he wants products and services that complement each other and tenants that work well together. "Each business in there is important to me," he noted. "I want them all to succeed."

When talking with Jason, you quickly learn he has a positive outlook for the village and about life in general. "You can look at things as half full or half empty. If you look at things half full, they tend to remain half full," he said. From his optimistic viewpoint, he sees a lot of potential here, and as the area around Johnson Creek grows and develops, it will attract more people. By bringing in the right businesses, the village will flourish.

"I want this to be a good community, because it's my home, too," he said. Thank you for being part of the Johnson Creek community, Jason and JPAL LLC!





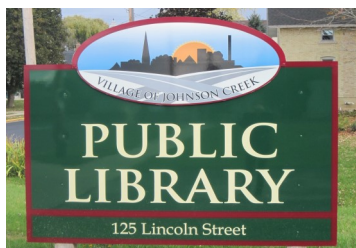
Village of Johnson Creek

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LIBRARY HAPPENINGS



A Novel Bunch Book Club:

November 21 from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.
November's book is The Four Winds by Kristen Hannah and can be picked up at the library.

Crafting with Kayte: December 5 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. **Register on the library website or by calling 920-699-3741.*

VA S.A.V.E. Training: December 7 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. **Learn ways to help a veteran in crisis or having suicidal thoughts. Although this program is geared toward veterans, it is open to everyone.*

Memory Café– Ethnic Holiday Traditions: December 17 from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Learn about different ethnic holiday traditions and create a holiday-themed painting with Memories in the Making! **A Memory Café is an informal social gathering for those living with early-stage memory loss and their care partner. Call the library for more information.*

The Johnson Creek Public Library will close at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, November 27 and will be closed Thursday through Saturday, November 28 to 30.

Family Fun at the Library:

Second Saturday of the month at 10 a.m.
December 14– Elf Academy

Legos: Third Monday of the month from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
December 16– Christmas scene

Spin a Yarn: December 19 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. **This group provides guidance for those learning how to knit or crochet and camaraderie for experienced "fiber artists" while they work on projects!*

Storytime: Thursdays at 10 a.m.

Homeschool Craft Buffet:

November 25 from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Interactive Movie for Youth: November 27 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Johnson Creek Village Hall

Monday to Friday: 8 a.m. — 4 p.m.
920-699-2296

125 Depot Street

www.johnsoncreek-wi.us

Plan Commission: December 9 @ 5 p.m.
Committee of the Whole: December 9 @ 5:30 p.m.

Board Meeting: December 16 @ 5:30 p.m.

Johnson Creek Public Library

920-699-3741

125 Lincoln Street

www.johnsoncreeklibrary.org

Library Board Meeting: Dec. 17 @ 4 p.m.

LIBRARY HOURS:

Monday to Wednesday: 10 a.m. — 5 p.m.

Thursday: 10 a.m. — 7 p.m.

Friday: 10 a.m. — 5 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m. — 12 p.m.

Sunday: CLOSED

JC FOOD PANTRY

129 N. Watertown Street
920-699-2471

stjohnsjc@gmail.com

Open Monday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and every fourth Thursday of the month from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.



Happy Thanksgiving!

