

UPDATES FROM THE VILLAGE

Where do the property tax dollars go?



John L. Swisher
Village President

As the Village Board spent the past few months preparing for the 2025 budget, staff and elected officials routinely heard from residents concerned with how high Village property taxes are. While we won't have more specific information about the upcoming tax levy until next month, we felt it was worthwhile to review the Village tax rate, comparing it to neighboring communities, and reviewing how much of the property tax bill you pay each year supports Village operations.

Certainly most people don't look forward to receiving their property tax bill, and nobody enjoys paying their property taxes. However, the property taxes we collect provide a variety of public safety, public service, recreational, and administrative functions.



Kyle Ellefson
Village Administrator

So, the first question might be, how much of your property tax bill does it take to provide services and maintain our infrastructure? For the taxes we collected to operate in 2024, our tax rate or "mill rate" was 4.825. If mill rate is not a familiar term, you can simply take the "Total Assessed Value" of your property from last year's tax bill and multiply it by .004825, and that should give you the amount of property taxes you paid toward Village operations for this year.

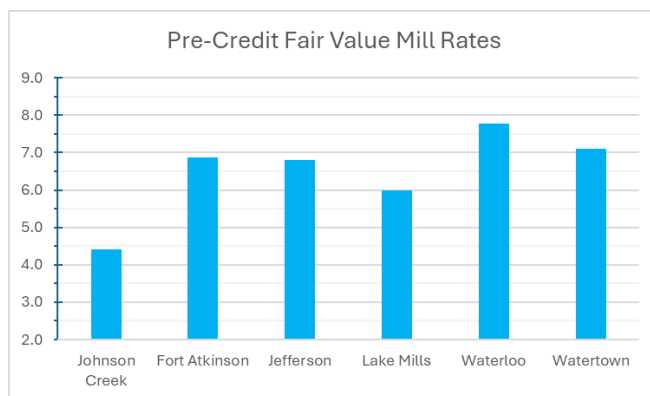
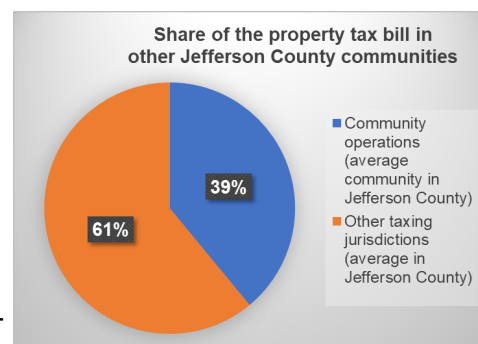
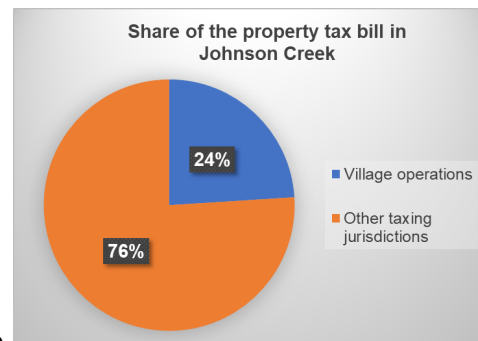
People also want to know how our tax rate and our overall share of the property tax burden stacks up against others. To determine the tax rate among communities in Jefferson County, I picked property tax bills from several residential properties across several communities. Since each community has a different assessment ratio, I used the "Total Estimated Fair Market" value, which is a value that accounts for the variation in assessments among communities, and how far away from full value they may be. I used the fair market value and the net tax for the city or village I was reviewing to determine the mill rate, and what I found tells a clear and definitive story.

The tax rate for the Village is the lowest among neighboring cities and villages; the next closest municipality has a tax rate more than 35% higher than ours! For tax rates, the Village of Johnson Creek appears to be a low tax community, not high tax.

In terms of how much of the overall tax bill is dedicated to fund Village operations, we wanted to evaluate if the Village has been taking more than a normal share of the property tax bill or placing a greater burden on our taxpayers than other communities. Again, there was a clear and convincing answer when I ran the numbers.

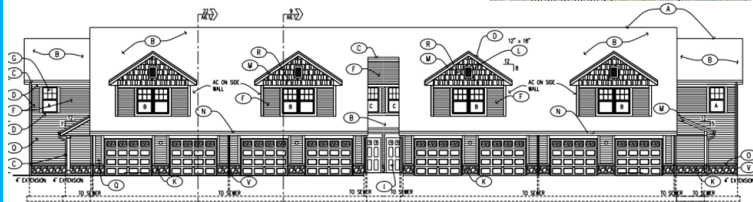
The Village of Johnson Creek takes up the smallest share of the property tax bill compared to the other communities also evaluated for tax rates. The Village collects about 24% of the entire tax bill for itself, sending nearly 76% to the other taxing jurisdictions for their operations. Each community evaluated had a share of the property tax bill that was at least 50% greater than ours, and the average portion of the property tax bill across the other communities was 39%. In addition to our low tax rate, the Village also makes up the smallest municipal portion of the property tax bill across comparable communities.

We understand property tax bills aren't going to become popular anytime soon. But, it is worth recognizing the diligence of the Village President and Village Board in executing strategic financial plans across multiple years and maintaining fiscal discipline, while also funding infrastructure, public safety, and other important initiatives. All of this takes a team, and the Village Board, along with devoted staff and great department heads have been a recipe for success!



MORE VILLAGE UPDATES

We've received a few questions (and heard a few guesses) about the project at Highway 26 and County Road B. This is the National Management Project that was approved in 2023, and it will bring 128 market-rate units in several apartment buildings across the 20-acre site. They have been installing underground utilities this fall, and with permits issued, we hope to see some buildings soon.



At the October Committee of the Whole meeting, we recognized Jake and Kayla Johnson with a Village Challenge Coin for their efforts in planning a successful 2024 Nickel Night. Pictured are Jake and Kayla Johnson, Village President John Swisher, and Village Trustee Rooney Freimund.



THE CLERK'S CORNER

Voter Registration

Anyone who has moved or changed their name since they last voted or has not voted in the last four years likely needs to register. Check to see if your registration is up-to-date at myvote.wi.gov. Although the deadline has passed to register online or by mail, you can register in the Clerk's office at Village Hall now through November 1! Election Day registration is available, but we encourage you to register before then to avoid a long wait on November 5.

In-Person Absentee Voting

In-person absentee voting began October 22 at the Village Hall (125 Depot Street). Hours for in-person absentee voting are October 22 to October 25 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday, October 26 from 8 a.m. to noon; October 28 to 31 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and November 1 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Election Day

Village of Johnson Creek residents vote at the Johnson Creek Community Center (417 Union Street) on Election Day. The polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. We anticipate high turnout, so please bring your patience and be prepared for lines to be longer than during other elections.

If you have any questions, please email the Village Clerk at elissaf@vi.johnsoncreek.wi.gov or call 920-699-2296.

POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS

Halloween and Trick or Treat Safety

Soon little ghosts and goblins will be roaming the neighborhoods looking for treats. Johnson Creek Trick or Treat will take place on Thursday, October 31 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Please follow the tips below to ensure everyone has a fun and safe Halloween.

- Children under the age of 12 should not trick-or-treat alone. Children over the age of 12 should walk in groups or with a trusted adult.
- Trick-or-treaters should only go to well-lit homes and never accept rides from strangers.
- Children and adults should hold a flashlight or a light stick and have reflective tape on costumes and bags to help drivers better see them.
- Before eating any Halloween candy, an adult should examine all treats to check for tampering and choking hazards. Avoid eating any homemade treats made by strangers.
- Make sure costumes are flame resistant. Stay away from long trailing fabric to prevent falls and wear well-fitting masks to avoid blocked vision.
- **If you are driving that night**, watch for trick-or-treaters walking on roadways, medians, and curbs.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It is a time to acknowledge survivors and be a voice for its victims. Domestic violence is prevalent in every community and affects all people regardless of age, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, or nationality.

Signs of domestic abuse often begin subtly and worsen over time. While not all-inclusive, the following list may indicate potential signs of domestic violence.

- **Isolation** – Permission is needed before making plans or speaking to friends and family members. Victims may be forced to quit their jobs or drop out of school.
- **Low Self-Esteem** – Feeling deserving of the abuser's violence, accepting fault for, and making excuses for their partner's behavior.
- **Unexplained Injuries** – Bruises, cuts, scrapes, or even broken bones that are blamed on clumsiness or are in multiple stages of healing.
- **Depression or Anxiety** – Persistent feelings of hopelessness, fear of angering their partner, and fear of repercussions for seeking help.

If you or someone you know needs help, one option is to call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).

Fees for Vehicle Registration and Services

Did you know that the Police Department offers some DMV services during regular office hours? There is a processing fee of \$16.25 for renewals and \$38.00 for all other services, including title application processing, license plate renewals, license plates, and license plate stickers. *These prices went into effect as of October 1, 2024.*

REMARKS FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

During October Fire Prevention Month, our local fire-fighters and EMTs have been out in the community promoting fire safety at the elementary school, the library, and during the Johnson Creek Fire Department Open House.

A fun addition to the fire station is a Little Library filled with information about fire safety, fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, and more. All materials are free to the public, and the Little Library will remain open until winter weather arrives. Be sure to take a look when you walk or drive by!



TOURISM TOPICS

Mark your calendar!

Wisconsin's First Train Wreck Commemoration

Wisconsin's first train wreck occurred in Johnson Creek. A train heading south hit an ox standing on the tracks not far from where Pioneer Park sits today. Fourteen people were killed and at least 30 were injured.

To recognize the lives lost on the 165th anniversary of this accident, a special event is being planned. On November 1, a ceremony revealing the location of a historical marker will take place at 10:00 a.m. by the Community Center. A reception will follow. Then, on November 2, a day-long event will feature train history, vintage transportation displays, vintage bridal wear, guns of the time, and more. Lunch will be served, horse and wagon rides will be available, and the First Brigade Band will play at 1:00 p.m. Wisconsin's First Train Wreck Commemoration will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. that day at the Community Center.

Upcoming Holiday Events

- November 29 and 30:** Christmas in the Village (Johnson Creek Historical Society and Museum)
- November 30:** Johnson Creek Friends of the Library Holiday Fair (Johnson Creek School Campus)
- December 1:** Tree Lighting Ceremony (Veterans Park)



New Business:

We celebrated the grand opening of Jersey Mike's Subs with a ribbon cutting ceremony on October 2. Welcome to Johnson Creek!

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

When she was in sixth grade, Dawn Maier already knew she wanted to pursue a career as a hair stylist. After attending the Advanced Institute of Hair Design, she worked at Oasis Creations. When that salon relocated to Watertown, she started her own business in Johnson Creek by renting a small room in a friend's tanning salon. Eventually the opportunity to move next door arose, and that's where Admaier Yourself planted its roots at 142 Union Street.

Dawn, her husband Troy, and their daughters, Lexi and Gabby, are all proud graduates of Johnson Creek High School. Gabby found her calling as a caregiver at ResCare. In this role, she earned the 2021 Direct Support Professional of the Year award given by the American Network of Community Options and Resources.

Meanwhile, Lexi followed in her mother's footsteps. From a young age, she also knew that she wanted to be a hair stylist, and the salon was her after school hangout for years. After attending Waukesha County Technical College and establishing herself at a salon in Lake Mills, she approached her mom about adding a chair to her salon. Dawn said the mother-daughter duo get along great, but they did not originally plan on working together. However, Lexi was ready to start her own business, and in January 2023, Lex Salon opened.

For Dawn, there was no question she wanted to open her salon in Johnson Creek because of the people and its hometown feeling. It's also easily accessible to their clients, who come from as far east as Milwaukee and as far west as Dodgeville. Dawn even had a client who moved to Ireland but would make an appointment when she was back in the area!

The best part of this job is definitely the people, Dawn said. "I love the creativity, but you get to work with people who are your friends and like family to you," she explained.

Lexi agreed that the people she works with are a big benefit, but she also enjoys the versatility of the job. Both Dawn and Lexi work continuously to perfect their craft. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, most trainings were in person. Now, so many opportunities to learn can be found online. Dawn said there is hardly a day that goes by when they aren't watching a video or taking a class online to learn new techniques.

Congratulations to Dawn and Lexi for their successful businesses in the village!





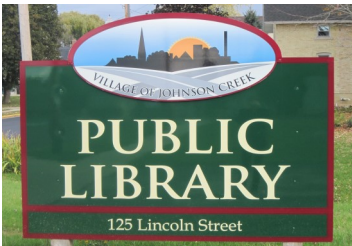
Village of Johnson Creek

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LIBRARY HAPPENINGS



Open Craft Night for Adults: November 14 from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Homeschool Craft Buffet: November 25 from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Red Cross Blood Drive: November 20 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Sign-up at www.redcross.org.

A Novel Bunch Book Club: November 21 from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
November's book is The Four Winds by Kristen Hannah and can be picked up at the library.

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

***Trick or Treat at the library on October 31 for a book, bookmark, or pencil!**

Family fun at the library:

Second Saturday of the month at 10 a.m.
November 9– Dinosaur Party

Legos: Third Monday of the month from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
November 18– Dinosaurs

Spin a Yarn: November 21 and December 19 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Storytime: Thursdays at 10:00 a.m.

Johnson Creek Recreation Department

If you are looking to keep active when temperatures start to fall, remember that the Community Fitness Center is open Monday through Friday from 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. and Monday through Thursday from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. No membership required!

As for youth programs, sign-up information is sent to parents though Skyward. If there are any questions, contact jcrec@johnsoncreekschools.org.

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: November 11 @ 5 p.m.

Committee of the Whole: November 11 @ 5:30 p.m.

Board Meeting: November 25 @ 5:30 p.m.

Johnson Creek Public Library

920-699-3741

125 Lincoln Street

www.johnsoncreeklibrary.org

Friends of the Library: Nov. 12 @ 4 p.m.

Library Board Meeting: Nov. 19 @ 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. (Closed Sunday)

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.