



Office of the Administrator

April 16, 2021

For Immediate Release:

## Rhinelanders Seeks a Stronger State and Local Partnership

### *Joint Finance Budget-Writing Committee to Hold Hearing in Rhinelanders*

In a resolution passed unanimously by the Common Council, the City calls for an increase in shared revenue payments to maintain current service levels in public safety, parks, road maintenance and snowplowing. The resolution states “state aid provided a larger share of municipal revenues in Wisconsin than property taxes from 1975 to 1997. Today property taxes account for more than twice as much municipal revenue as state aid.” In 2003 Rhinelanders received \$1,035,032 in shared revenue compared with 2021 where the estimated shared revenue payment is \$976,433. Simply put, state aids haven’t kept pace with inflation.

*“Increased costs in doing business, stringent state-imposed levy limits and declining state shared revenue has created a situation where services will need to be cut to balance our budget, said City Administrator Zach Vruwink.*

As the Joint Finance Committee visits Rhinelanders for one of three budget hearings on April 21, 2021, Rhinelanders’s challenges become front and center. PFAS remains a problem the City cannot ignore. The City has requested Statements of Qualifications from firms and groups who are interested in solving the problem of treating two municipal drinking wells. The challenge persists: Wisconsin has not designated resources to partner with municipalities who are committed to overcoming this problem. In the Resolution, Rhinelanders asks the Joint Finance Committee to establish a municipal grant program to share in the cost of PFAS treatment.

*“We’re asking for our fair share of tax dollars along with the flexibility to use those dollars to meet our local needs”, said Mayor Chris Frederickson. “Rhinelanders has the perfect petri dish to pilot solutions and scale them statewide”, he added.*

The City of Rhinelanders wishes to thank the Joint Finance Committee for holding this listening session in the Northwoods and looks forward to discussing ways to strengthen the State and Local Partnership.

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