

Legislative Update and League News

League's Annual Conference

October 21, 2021

Curt Witynski, Deputy Executive Director
Toni Herkert, Government Affairs Director



The Plan for today

1. League News and Updates
 - a. Toni Herkert hired as Government Affairs Director
 - b. Responsible Contractor Evaluations
 - c. CNU – Zoning for Affordable Housing Guidebook
 - d. Dark Store Update

2. Review of State Legislation including State Budget

Responsible Contractor Database



In 2020, League partnered with Construction Business Group to Create [ResponsibleWisconsin.com](https://www.responsiblewisconsin.com)

- Provides local government officials/staff with access to project evaluation form for public works projects.
- Project evaluations are connected to the contractor and available to view by other local governments.
- Survey form allows local staff to weigh in on whether project was completed on time, within budget, and whether the quality of work was satisfactory.

Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) League Collaboration



- New zoning guide to help communities create more workforce and “missing middle” housing by making small changes to zoning codes.
- CNU’s Project for Code Development emphasizes incremental change, rather than wholesale rewriting of a zoning code.
- Project includes training for municipal staff and private planning consultants on implementing guide.

Update on Dark Store



- League is no longer pursuing a legislative fix.
- Instead, encouraging communities to defend assessments against dark store-based challenges brought by big box stores.

Update on Dark Store



- Wisconsin courts remain unconvinced by dark store arguments presented by big box stores attempting to reduce their assessments.
- On July 28, the Wis. Court of Appeals issued its third decision in 10 months rejecting dark store-based assessment challenges filed by Lowe's stores.

Under the Dome

Split Control of State Capitol

Continues



- Expect fewer laws to be passed and less interference with local control.
- Session may end by February.

State Budget



- Except for increases in local transportation aids, the 2021-2023 state budget is a status quo budget for cities and villages.
- Gov. Evers introduced a budget that increased shared revenue, allowed communities to increase property tax levies by minimum of 2 percent, and provided for local sales tax option for some communities. However, Republican controlled Legislature removed those items.

State Budget

A few Specifics



- **GTA** – 2% increase both years of the biennium.
- **Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) Supplement** \$100 million in 2021-2022 on a onetime basis to be used to fund local road projects under the Local Roads Improvement Program discretionary component to be allocated as follows: \$25,386,000 for cities and villages; \$35,559,100 for counties; and \$39,054,900 for towns.

State Budget

A few Specifics

- **Medicaid Reimbursement Rate for Ambulance Runs**
\$16 million increase in the Medicaid reimbursement rate for all ambulance trips for up to 80% of the current Medicare “urban rate.”
- **PFAS Firefighting Foam**
\$1 million in funding for collecting and disposing of PFAS containing firefighting foam.
- **Stewardship Program**
Increases Local Assistance Grants for local governments under the Stewardship program from \$6 million to \$9.25 million annually.

League Supported/Initiated Legislation



Act 61 – Distribution of personal property and computer aid payments when a TID closes. Ensuring that personal property aid payments being made to a TID transfer to the municipality and other taxing jurisdictions when TID terminates.

Act 69 – Allowing village trustees to be hired as village employees and receive an hourly wage, not to exceed \$15,000 each year. The bill mirrors a current law provision allowing town board members to be hired by the town and earn wages up to \$15,000

Other New Legislation of Note



- **Act 55 – Room Tax Law Updates**
- **Act 29 – Worker’s Compensation Coverage for Police and Fire PTSD Claims**

Other Legislation



SB 189/AB 191 -- Eliminating the Personal Property Tax on businesses – **Vetoed** (Democrats are introducing their version of a repeal, though a compromise is unlikely this session).

- **SB 119** -- Penalizing Cities for Reducing Spending on Police and Fire Compared to prior year -- **Vetoed**

Other Legislation Likely to be Enacted



- **AB 399/SB 396**, Allows communities to share cost of paying interest on property tax refunds with other taxing jurisdictions; Modernizes method of calculating interest owed on tax refunds.
- **AB 300/SB 316**, Establishes deadlines for certain Public Service Commission approvals after a water utility application for certificate of authority or approval of lead service line financial assistance is filed.
- **AB 302/SB 315**, Exempts water utilities and combined water and sewer utilities from needing a certificate of authority issued by the Public Service Commission before beginning customer meter installation, repair, or replacement projects.

Other Municipal Legislation of Note



- **AB 517/SB 518**, broadens definition of environmental pollution that tax increments generated by an environmental remediation TID can fund to include substances released into air, land, or water due to redevelopment of an existing structure.
- **AB 526/SB 533**, authorizes a housing authority to undertake certain mixed-use developments and increases bidding threshold for housing authority projects from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

Other Municipal Legislation of Note



- **AB 596/SB 596**, Increasing state coverage of public deposit Losses and extending maturity date of promissory notes to 20 years.
- **AB 608**, Mandating certain municipal zoning and subdivision practices relating to multifamily housing and workforce housing projects.
- **AB 610**, Prohibiting certain property tax assessment practices.

Other Municipal Legislation of Note



League and WI Towns Association compromise legislation addressing incorporation loophole and annexation issues.

PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) Program Modifications. Circulation closes Oct. 22nd.

How you can help us advocate for municipalities



Stay informed about legislation affecting municipalities.

- Receive and read League's Legislative Bulletin
- Participate in Voter Voice – quick pre-written emails provide you with the opportunity to advocate for your community
- Participate in League Lobby Days and regional meetings.

How you can help



Develop and nurture relationships with your legislators:

- Invite them to your next Board meeting to talk about your village's budgeting challenges
- Give them a tour of municipal facilities
- Schedule regular (monthly/quarterly) meetings with your legislators
- Join with other communities to host regional meetings and invite your legislators to attend

By working together and speaking with a unified voice we can make a difference.



Questions and Comments



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