

## First Term Accomplishments

### First Term Accomplishments With Village Board

While serving as Village President from 2003-2005, Jefferson, Village Staff and the Village Board worked closely together to accomplish many new and exciting things.

The following highlights are just a few of those accomplishments.

It's exciting to think how many more things can be accomplished for our great Village when the Board has a free and open exchange of ideas and ideals that will truly make the Falls an even better place to live, work and play than it already is.

### Three Year Property Tax Levy Freeze

Menomonee Falls became the first community in the State of Wisconsin to pass a property tax levy freeze when the Village Board unanimously voted to impose a 3 year freeze from 2004-06.

The first year of the freeze saw an actual cut in property taxes for most residents stimulating the local economy.

This freeze reversed a disturbing trend of tax levy increases that had averaged more than double the rate of inflation between 1997-2002 ([click here for article](#)).

Of course there were howls from some Village Board Members about the damage this would do to the Village, but as usual there was no damage and only resulted in better services and lower taxes for everyone.

Jefferson helping to celebrate Millie's 100th birthday at The Arboretum.

Unfortunately, since 2005, high tax levy and fee increases are back as the norm for village residents.

Jefferson's personal tax/fee increase was nearly 12% for 2006 ([click here for tax bill](#)) while 2007 and 2008 total tax bill increases were over 10% when the new garbage tax is included.

Menomonee Falls is now the 7th worst taxed community in Waukesha County according to the 2008 Journal Sentinel Community Survey (<http://www.jsonline.com/realestate/39528637.html>).

When the new \$100 per household garbage tax, that was passed by the current Village President and Village Board in 2006, is included in the total tax bill, Menomonee Falls is #5 on the list of the top 10 worst taxed communities in Waukesha County.

According to Waukesha County's 2009 Tax Rate Chart,

([http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/uploadedFiles/Content\\_Department/Elected\\_Officials/Treasurer/Treasurer\\_Info/2008%20Tax%20Rate%20Chart.pdf](http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/uploadedFiles/Content_Department/Elected_Officials/Treasurer/Treasurer_Info/2008%20Tax%20Rate%20Chart.pdf)), Menomonee Falls has the 4th highest tax rate in the county.

This disturbing trend has to be reversed immediately for tax relief to homeowners in severe recessionary times.

When Jefferson took office in 2003, Menomonee Falls was also the 7th worst taxed community in Waukesha County until the 3 year property tax levy was passed unanimously by the Village Board which moved the Falls down the list of worst taxed communities in Waukesha County to #10.

Wisconsin, depending on which survey is cited, is usually in the top 5 "worst taxed" states in America. Wisconsin is the #1 worst taxed state in America for retirees.

It's not the tax levy, the tax rate or assessments that are the problem, it's spending.

Every homeowner and businessperson in the Falls has to control their spending in order to balance their books on a daily basis.

Village government should not be the exception to that rule.

High taxes drive away homeowners and business people.

We need to do everything we can to keep them in the Falls.

Lower taxes are just one of many things that can be done to keep them here.

#### Health care Reform

The taxpayers were faced with having to pay astronomical increases for the Village's Employee Health care Plan (VEHP) with no relief in sight.

Between 1999-2003, the taxpayers saw the VEHP's premiums increase from about \$1.1 million to nearly \$2.5 million for an annual average increase of about 18% ([click here to see increases](#)).

The Village had been with the same provider for 25 years and had not gone to the free market for any comparisons that maybe could have saved the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The Village Board in 2001-2003 spent thousands of dollars on a "consortium" idea with other communities that had received much attention from the press only to find out after more than two years of "study" that the "consortium" would have increased the existing premiums for the taxpayers by nearly \$1.7 million or almost 62% in one year ([click here to see consortium chart](#)) and then quietly disappeared without any review by the Village Board or newspaper articles.

The Village Board, in 2004, unanimously voted for the first time to work with a benefits analyst who immediately brought relief to an area that, quite frankly, was out of control.

By going to the free market, the benefits analyst, who was paid by the health care provider and not the taxpayers, was able to maintain the great health benefits that village employees had enjoyed while at the same time lowering the Village's health care premiums by an average of 2% in 2004 and 2005 thus saving the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars ([click here to see savings](#)).

More can and should be done in this area. With the Village Staff, Village Board and Benefits Analyst working together, more will be done in the future.

Unfortunately, the current Village President and Village Board voted in 2006 to "fire" the Benefits Analyst who had done such an outstanding job for the previous 3 years. It was hoped that someone would have said this was a bad re-run of "The Apprentice", but it appears to be based on bad "politics" instead of job performance or public policy as the former Village Manager told the former Benefits Analyst when he was fired.

#### Village Web Site Improvement

There's an old saying that goes something like this, "...knowledge is power".

The internet is a very powerful and informational tool that can and should be utilized to the fullest of its ability. The Village had a web site that, quite frankly, was very underutilized before 2003.

The Village Board worked with Village Staff to dramatically improve this very important communication tool for our community. Many new features were added at no cost to the taxpayers because existing resources and staff were used to accomplish this.

Features like the Weather Channel, church website listings, links to other governmental agencies, staff directories, elected officials contact information, Board/Committee agendas and minutes, Village service notices, ordinances, codes, etc. were added.

There is a lot of work that still needs to be done, but at least the efforts are headed in the right direction. Village Staff is talented and capable of making those improvements with existing resources. Leadership and support from the Village Manager's Office and the Village Board are needed to continue to make the additions that will improve the web site ([www.menomonee-falls.org](http://www.menomonee-falls.org)).

Citizens deserve to have as much information about their government at their immediate disposal that will ultimately result in an informed public.

Jefferson with local veterans on Veteran's Day.

#### Village Board Numbered Seat Initiative

Voters overwhelmingly supported, by a 60%-40% margin in the 2003 April Referendum, to direct the Village Board to implement a Numbered Seat initiative for the election of trustees. The Village Board unanimously voted to implement this initiative in 2003 which replaced the former election process that allowed trustees to retain their positions on the Village Board if they were one of the top three vote getters in an election.

The numbered seat initiative requires trustees to defend a specific seat on the Board by having to campaign, defend their record and not hide behind the power of incumbency. The Village Board also unanimously approved new 3 year terms for trustees on a staggered basis which allows trustees to serve without having to concern themselves about getting re-elected every 2 years.

The current Village President and certain members of the Village Board want to eliminate the numbered seat initiative without letting the voters have a say in the matter even though voters overwhelmingly approved the initiative just 4-5 years ago. Jefferson supports the wishes of the voters and wants to keep the numbered seat initiative in place.

### Clergy and Community Organizations Address Village Board Meetings

One of the greatest assets of any community are clergy and non-profit groups. For the first time in Village history, community clergy members opened Village Board Meetings with prayer as a guest of Jefferson and the Village Board.

Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Veteran Organizations, Special Olympic Groups and others led the Village Board in the Pledge of Allegiance. The clergy and community groups were a tremendous addition to the Board Meetings.

Unfortunately, the current Village President has eliminated clergy from attending Board Meetings and rarely, if ever, do community groups lead the Board in the pledge of allegiance anymore.

Jefferson believes that clergy and non-profit groups play an important role in our community and ought to be part of Village Board Meetings to promote a sense of community. He will re-implement both of these features at Board Meetings if elected.

### Live Broadcast and Replaying of Village Board/Committee Meetings

Citizens want to know what is going on with their government. The Village Board worked together in 2003 to have Town Hall and Village Board Meetings broadcast live and replayed the following week. Some Committee Meetings were also taped and rebroadcast.

The more the citizens know about their government the better. Taping these meetings will also keep elected officials and other speakers on record for their votes and positions.

Improvements are still needed in this area, but it can be done. The taxpayers spend a lot of money for this feature on a local basis.

Unfortunately, the Village Board recently eliminated the live broadcast of the Town Hall portion of Board Meetings in an apparent attempt to keep information and issues from becoming public. The Town Hall portion was a unique opportunity for citizens to share their concerns with the Village Board because too many Board Members don't respond to citizens. This feature needs to be reimplemented to keep the public informed.

### Committee Structure and Appointment Process

For many years, Village Committee appointments were a closed shop. There are many Village Committees with many necessary appointments on an annual basis.

The Village President is supposed to make nominations for these committees and the Village Board either confirms or denies those nominations.

The Village Board worked together in 2003 to restructure a number of the committees and adopted a Rules, Structure and Appointments Committee that would be the catalyst for a fair and balanced appointment process.

Notices were put in the local papers and on the website to let citizens know of openings for those who were willing to serve. The new process allowed many of those who have wanted to serve the Village a chance to do so.

Unfortunately, the current Village President doesn't follow the adopted policy of the Village Board for this process and it's time to return to this policy that worked so well ([click here for news article](#)).

More work needs to be done as our Village is blessed with many talented people who would love to serve their community but are currently being shut out.

### Questionable Village Spending and Personnel Positions Uncovered

The Village Board worked together in 2003-04 to save the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars in government spending with some of the following examples:

- They eliminated the Village's \$2 million Wisconsin Retirement System arrearage that was costing \$160,000 a year in property taxes to finance the debt with interest only payments.
- The Board also worked together by not filling three administrative positions that saved the taxpayers around \$300,000 a year without any loss in services or programs.
- The Board refinanced a number of Village Bonds which once again saved the taxpayers a tremendous amount of money.
- The nearly \$2 million in "unused sick leave lump sum cash payouts" to Village Retirees since 1990 along with an additional \$3 million in unfunded cash payouts ([click here for Finance Director's memo](#), [Pension shortfall article](#), [sick leave article for Milwaukee County](#), [Menomonee Falls Sick leave article](#)) and a number of "double dipping" contracts ([click here for Human Resources memo](#)) for those who retired from the Village and then were rehired shortly thereafter were also discovered. Both of those areas need to be addressed immediately.
- Approved a new health care plan saving the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars while maintaining and even improving the benefits for employees. The Village had been with the same carrier for 25 years without going to the free market for other options.
- \$30,000 of taxpayer's money was given to the Menomonee Falls Police Association Retiree Health Trust in 2003 and immediately invested in the stock market. The \$30,000 has not shown up on the Association's Annual Report since then.

The current Village President wants to leave things the way they are without asking any questions ([click here for article](#)). Other communities are restructuring these types of perks and Menomonee Falls should too.

### Gypsy Moth Program

The Village was plagued with an outbreak of the gypsy moth that literally destroyed every tree in its path in 2003-04. The Village Board worked together to implement a public private partnership program to ensure residents, at a nominal cost,

that this nasty pest would be dealt with in a swift and comprehensive manner. The results were outstanding and the community now enjoys a virtually free gypsy moth zone. This was a model program that could be used for other community issues.

## Main Street Renaissance

The Village Board worked together to initiate the renaissance of Main Street in 2003 with the investment of hundreds of thousands of dollars for studies, legal fees and consultants that has now reached \$1.6 million.

Many thanks goes to those businesses who hang in there on Main Street waiting for the Village to get its act together to bring the necessary improvements that are badly needed for this area.

So much time and taxpayer's money has been spent with so few results. There is obviously a lack of leadership with this project. Thanks to those who serve on the various committees that are trying to make this happen.

Unfortunately, the current Village Board and one particular important Village Trustee are totally absent from this project. All of this money has been spent and not one shovel of dirt has been turned in over 7 years of studies, consultant reports, legal fees and committee meetings.

It's time to turn the project over to the private sector and get the government out of the way. These types of projects are being done all over southeastern Wisconsin with tremendous success. We deserve the same success in the Falls.

By the way, what ever happened to the new hotel project?

Since 1989 the taxpayers of Menomonee Falls have been asked by the Village Board to float nearly \$100 million ([click here for TIF District Costs](#)), not including interest payments, in bonds for the establishment of five (5) Tax Incremental Finance Districts (TIFs) to assist business people with their business plans. The taxes from these districts are then used to pay back the principal and interest payments for the bonds. Once the bonds are paid off, the property taxes are then released to the Village ([click here for chart](#)) for general revenue purposes.

With the somewhat successful use of TIF Districts ([click here for TIF District values](#)) by the Village over the last 20 years or so, why have TIF District #6 and #8 (Main St.) painfully languished over the last three (3) years without any seemingly meaningful direction or purpose?

Having a hotel(s) in a community immediately provides jobs, commerce, an expanded tax base, tax revenues and a nice place to have family, friends or business people stay ([click here for hotel tax survey](#)).

The City of Milwaukee has two new beautiful hotels across the street from Menomonee Falls on Good Hope Road since 2000. These hotels bring in an approximate \$720,000 annually between property and hotel taxes not to mention how many jobs have been created. The same should be done in the Falls with the right leadership.

Jefferson with Big Ten Meet Announcer and his former college track coach, Buck Jones, at the 2008 Big Ten Indoor Championships in Madison

## Sound Barrier Wall

An attractive sound barrier wall was installed on the west side of 41/45 from Pilgrim Road south to Main Street by working with the State Department of Transportation.

Residents were able to enjoy their backyards for the first time in many years.

The same needs to be done for the residents on the east side of the freeway between the pedestrian bridge and Brisco County where some of the back yards are only 20'-30' from the freeway.

The right leadership on the Village Board and the State of Wisconsin can get this done.

## Regulatory Reform

Jefferson received so many phone calls as Village President from community groups and businesses who wanted simple help with Village Hall regulations that were punitive in nature for commerce and retail. These types of issues should really be handled by Staff and not have to involve members of the Village Board, but as is often the case with government bureaucracy, policy gets in the way that requires intervention in order to do the right thing. Some examples were:

- The Laker's Baseball Team wanted to pay for one permit instead of 30-40 permits to hang on the outfield fence at Trenary Field as a fundraiser during the baseball season saving them hundreds of dollars in permit fees.
- McDonald's was going to be fined by Village Hall if they didn't take down the inflatable Ronald McDonald from their roof as a promotional offer for residents.
- St. Mary's Catholic Church wanted to hang some banners on the Main Street light poles in observance of their anniversary.
- Krueger's Entertainment Center challenged the Village's prohibition of light emitting diode (LED) signage and won which led to many other businesses in the Falls to do the same thing with a safer and more professional look.
- The Kiwanis Club wanted to erect 3-4 sandwich board around the Village to promote a major fundraiser for their Club in order to give back to community groups when they were going to be prevented from doing so by the Village because it wasn't on their "property".
- A long time Falls resident had his farm mysteriously rezoned by the Village in 1985 as a single family residence without his approval. This led to his property being wrongly assessed and costing him thousands of dollars in unnecessary property taxes. It was reversed in 2005 and saved him about \$5,000 a year in property taxes.
- A number of sewer breaks also occurred when it wasn't the home-owner's responsibility and the Village tried to get out of the claim only to have the Village Board intervene to take care of the taxpayer.
- A well known businessperson, whose corporate headquarters are located in Menomonee Falls, was required by certain members of the Village Board to purchase a private residence if they wanted their project to get approved in 2002-03. Never again.
- The property next to Village Hall was illegally delineated by SEWRPC at the illegal request of the Village to prevent the landowner from building on his property because he wouldn't "give" his property to the Village for "their" campus idea.

The delineation was reversed after the landowner's attorney raised questions to the SEWRPC Executive Director about the Village's behavior.

- A non-profit organization, made up of primarily current and former Village Officials, questionably obtained the Kohler Zahn House in downtown Menomonee Falls with Village Board votes for hundreds of thousands of dollars to be paid back to the taxpayers, but hasn't done so and continues to receive money from the taxpayers to this day through rental fees from the Chamber of Commerce.

- A landowner was "forced" by all but one of the Village Board Members to sell 50 acres of his property (swamp land) to the Village if he wanted to get approval for a sub-division proposal even after the Village Board had agreed unanimously in Closed Session not to buy it. The landowner had to wait 3 years to get his money from the Village.

- Some members of the Village Board "forced" a very prominent state businessperson to sell one of his properties in Menomonee Falls to them at a 75% discount in exchange for approval of the business person's new proposal on the Village's northwest side. The businessperson sold his former property to a non-profit organization made up of current and former Village Officials 10 days after his new business proposal was approved by the Village Board.

- The Main Street Hotel Owner and his potential business partner were asked for cash from one Village Trustee and former Municipal Judge to get their project approved.

- Many other business people "had to use" the Village President as their attorney if they wanted their projects approved from 2005-2009.

Government should always try to find a way to say "yes" instead of exercising their muscle to say "no" or "getting a deal" when it's about doing the right thing.

#### Modernized the Water/Sewer Bill

The Village adopted a water/sewer bill that was easy to understand, private and practical.

For so many years residents received a postcard bill in the mail that was easily lost, unsecured and without an envelope to mail payments.

Residents expect efficiency and practicality from their government just like they do from the private sector.

This was especially timely because of the increase in identity theft.

#### Government Oversight

For too many years, Village residents were asked to accept what was being told to them by the Village Board and Staff as truthful, honest and accurate.

Jefferson brought to the forefront the following policy issues:

- The Village's nearly \$157 million in Debt Service ([click here for chart 1](#), [chart 2](#)).

- The taxpayer's \$11.2 million "reserve account" ([click here for chart](#)) which has fallen to \$7.5 million in the last 4 years.

- The \$17 million dollar shortfall for the new police station, Village Hall and library which may hit homeowners and businesses hard starting in 2016 ([click here to see shortfall and 2016 impact on the average homeowner](#)).

- The "truth" about the 1996 MMSD Settlement (click here for chart).
- The uncovering of the Falls Cable Access lack (click here for chart) of oversight by the Village Board involving hundreds of thousands of dollars of the taxpayer's money. Falls Cable Access monies should be returned to the taxpayers which is where it came from in the first place.
- Double-dipping contracts for Village Retirees.
- The truth about Menomonee Falls water.

The whole structure of Falls Cable Access needs to be reviewed with the need of a Board of Directors, all new monies going directly to the Village for appropriation as Time Warner has suggested in their contract negotiations with the Village and possibly putting the operations out for bid just like the Assessor's Office was in 2005.

The Village Manager and the Village Board need to work closely together to make sure all Village Operations are being monitored for proper usage of public funds.

The Village Manager also needs to update the Village Board on a monthly basis as to the Operating Results of the Village's Finances.

The Manager also needs to inform the Board of the Year End Operating Results and as to why the budget did or did not work according to his plans.

The Village Manager also needs to explain why, if any, "Reserve Account" monies were used during the fiscal year.

#### Health care, Fine Arts and Culture and Business Summits

Jefferson led these three initiatives to help get a handle on the health care situation facing governmental entities with very promising results that led to savings, wellness programs and quality improvements in the way employees look at their health care benefits.

The Falls is blessed with many wonderful arts and culture opportunities. Using the downtown as a focal point, the "Artifacts and Origins Show" was started with a public private partnership to attract people and talent to the downtown which desperately needs traffic for the betterment of commerce and retail. This was a good start that should and will be continued if Jefferson is re-elected.

The first ever Village wide Business Summit was held to show appreciation to those businesses who pay a tremendous amount in taxes, provide good jobs and make philanthropic contributions to our community. The Village needs to do more of this type of activity.

#### Expanded the Village's Tax Base

The Village's tax base grew at a very successful rate through growth and not re-assessment during Jefferson's first term.

If an individual or business wants to make the Falls their home and are willing to meet all of the rules, regulations and requirements that are imposed on them by the Village Government, then they should be made to feel welcome in our community.

We cannot have an "ostrich" mentality or revenue streams will then dry up forcing taxes to go through the roof for those who remain ([Click here for demographic composition of the Village](#)).

### Coca-Cola Contract

Jefferson approached Coca Cola to form a public private partnership that will give the Village an estimated windfall of some \$120,000 over five years by simply placing vending units throughout the Village. More partnerships should be explored like this where everybody will win.

### President's Cabinet

A President's Cabinet was established that had volunteer representatives from all 29 wards in the Village that became the ears and eyes of their respective wards to advise the Village Board as to what was going on in their neighborhoods. This was an excellent tool to promote a sense of community and involvement from citizens. The current Village President eliminated this wonderful group of people.