

## Issues

### Current Issues Facing the Village

Jefferson believes in an open and free exchange of ideas and debates for Village Staff, Village Board and residents.

He doesn't believe in having the Village President suppressing Trustees by calling them to the woodshed and making threats if they don't fall in line to make sure they "stay out" of the papers and being sure to vote the same way on issues.

A true democracy allows debate without the fear of retribution or persecution by those in power. The following are just a few of the many issues that face our great community and they must be dealt with in order for the Falls to become even more successful than what we already are in order to move forward to meet the daily challenges that face us.

Jefferson presenting a commemorative poster for Pearl Harbor survivors at the Thomas Jefferson Middle School Veterans Day program.

### Privatization of Village Services

The Village has done a good job over the last few years of moving in the direction of privatizing Village Services with private sector companies due to the cost savings that are commonly experienced without compromising quality.

Some examples in the Village are as follows:

- garbage pick up
- Assessor's Office
- home inspection services for electrical, heating, plumbing, etc
- mowing of some boulevards
- cleaning sewer lines
- perhaps some janitorial services
- some tree planting

A recent survey of some 452 Wisconsin Communities conducted by 3 professors, (<http://lgc.uwex.edu//program/pdf/factsheet2.pdf>), shows that more and more villages and cities are moving to privatization of services to keep costs down and improve quality.

Some examples of additional privatization of services that could be utilized in Menomonee Falls that are currently being done in other Wisconsin Communities are as follows:

- street sweeping
- snow plowing
- grass mowing for parks
- horticulture efforts
- brush pick up
- leaf pick up

It just makes sense to let the private sector purchase, maintain and store the equipment as well as pay the benefits of employees.

The City of Nashville has successfully made the conversion from public employees to private sector contractors for their street sweeping services (<http://www.sweepingcorp.com/MainPage.php>).

If the City of Nashville can do it, so can Menomonee Falls.

When it currently costs taxpayers nearly \$85,000 a year for an employee to mow grass and sweep streets, it's time to look for alternatives.

According to the Village's 2008 Union Wage Scale, the average employee's costs are as follows:

- Base wages \$52,000
- Social Security Contribution \$3,978
- Wisconsin Retirement Contribution \$5,720
- Health Insurance \$20,772
- Dental Insurance \$2,226

Total: \$84,696\*

(\*employees pay a small portion of these costs)

Bass Pro Shop

Speculation has it that Bass Pro Shop may be coming to Menomonee Falls at the old Stolper Foundry Site at Pilgrim Road and Main Street which is Tax Incremental District (TID) 8.

This is a blighted area of Menomonee Falls that desperately needs to be cleaned up and renovated, but at what cost and proper business(es) to locate in a heavy residential area just a block or two from St. Mary's School and Church.

Here's what we know as the preliminary plans for the Bass Pro Shop Project:

- Taking nearly \$2 million from TID 4 at Good Hope and Appleton Avenue that is scheduled to close in 2010 and be given to TID 8 because the numbers won't come out for Bass Pro Shop to locate there without taxpayer subsidies.
- The nearly \$2 million from TID 4 was scheduled to go to the Menomonee Falls School District (\$1 million), Village (\$505,000), Waukesha County (\$190,000) and WCTC (\$117,000) in 2010 and instead will go to the Bass Pro Shop Project.
- Bass Pro Shop had 2 stores in 1995 and now has approximately 60 as a result of large taxpayer subsidies.
- TID 4, which is scheduled to close in 2010, will now remain open 10 more years and will subsidize TID 8 with \$18.3 million in new revenues from TID 4 that was scheduled to be paid out as follows over the next 10 years:
  - School District \$10.1 million
  - Village \$5.12 million
  - Waukesha County \$1.92 million
  - WCTC \$1.17 million
- Every homeowner will on average be paying \$500.00 to the Bass Pro Shop Project because of the TID 4 Funds being used for TID 8 over the next 10 years.
- By admission, the Village is conceding that Bass Pro Shop will not generate enough revenue to pay back the bonds because it is taking TID 4 funds (\$20.1 million) that should go to the taxpayers for tax relief and giving it to the Bass Pro Shop Project in TID 8.
- TID 8 will cost anywhere between \$27-\$40 million for the Bass Pro Shop Project for the purchase of the foundry and land, demolition of the foundry, clean up of the soil and infrastructure costs over possibly 27 years with no guarantees.
- A Bass Pro Shop store located in the Falls would be similar to their other stores around the country ([www.showmeboone.com](http://www.showmeboone.com) - Columbia Missouri Store) and would be valued at approximately \$4,000,000 and generate about \$80,000 a year in property taxes which is far below the annual \$2.4 - \$2.8 million annual debt service payments.
- The Bass Pro Shop would probably be the only tenant to locate in TID 8 because of the sheer size of the facility in such a small area. Think of the Cabella Store in Richfield to compare the size of the facilities.

Communities are generally supportive of destination sites as long as they are affordable and are located in the right spot for taxpayers.

This project leaves open a lot of questions when it comes to this criteria.

#### New Village Debt Service

The Village Board is currently on a path to add some \$75-\$80 million in new debt service to the taxpayers of Menomonee Falls as follows:

- \$18 + million for a new public works garage at Good Hope and Pilgrim Road
- \$27-\$40 million for the Bass Pro Shop Project
- \$23 million for the expansion of the downtown TID 2 which has not performed very well and has many empty stores

At a time when all levels of government are drowning in debt during severe recessionary times, perhaps it's time to hit the pause button and wait to see how the economy is a year or two from now before plunging Menomonee Falls into an additional mountain of debt.

The Village currently has debt service of more than \$100,000,000 and has incurred annual debt service payments over the last several years of between \$10-\$12 million.

TID 5 is Underperforming

Tax Incremental District (TID) 5 is at the corner of Main Street and Fon du lac Avenue in Menomonee Falls across the street from the landfill.

TID districts are a joint agreement between a businessman and the village government when upfront costs are taken care of by the taxpayers with bond issues and are paid back over a period of up to 27 years by the new taxes generated from the district by the new businesses who have located there.

Once the debt service is paid off, any leftover funds and any new taxes are given to the village, school district, county and technical college.

TID 5 started in 1999 and is currently more than 50% empty while a similar district was built after TID 5 some 1/4 of a mile to the east in the City of Milwaukee and is completely built out.

The debt service payments are approximately \$1.5 million a year through 2018 (\$14.6 million total) and approximately \$575,000- \$590,000 in revenues are being generated each year by the businesses in the district leaving a shortfall of about \$1,000,000 a year.

Someone(s) is making up that \$1,000,000 shortfall and it's usually the taxpayers.

A new business, Acutant, an electrical tool and supply company from Butler, is moving in to the old Bemis Manufacturing Plant that was previously located in the district.

Acutant is scheduled to receive \$3.25 million from state taxpayers and an additional \$3 million from Menomonee Falls taxpayers to move from Butler.

Expanding the tax base is generally a good idea provided the taxpayers come out in the black on any proposal.

With what is going on in Madison and Washington D.C. with the excessive giveaways, bailouts, high taxes and oppressive government spending, Menomonee Falls taxpayers need to be protected locally as a last line of defense.

New Garbage Collection Fee Needs to be Eliminated

If elected, Jefferson will call for a vote by the Village Board to immediately eliminate the newly imposed \$100 garbage collection fee that is supported and promoted by the current Village President and Village Board. This will save the taxpayers \$1.2 million a year on their property tax bill or \$100 per homeowner.

Garbage collection needs to be returned to the property tax roll. This was a legal way to break the Governor's Tax Levy Freeze law. Jefferson supports the Governor's Tax Levy Freeze and the current Village President is highly critical of it.

The concern is that Menomonee Falls will morph into a Milwaukee with all of these new fees (click here to see a Milwaukee Water Bill). Jefferson will make sure that there will not be any new fee proposals to cover Village services. That's what property taxes are for!

Again, we should be looking for ways to reduce spending and not looking for new ways to raise taxes, fees or revenues (click here to see Village Impervious Surface Fee and Fire Hydrant Rental Fee Proposals).

In reality, our garbage should be picked for free by Waste Management because they are the ones who are profiting the most from the garbage being dumped in Menomonee Falls.

Waste Management is not the issue. They are a for profit corporation that has to meet a bottom line on a daily basis.

Waste Management grosses well in excess of \$13,000,000,000 (billion) annually in national sales and \$1,000,000,000 (billion) in net profits (<http://www.wm.com/wm/investor/subscriptions/2008/2008AnnualReport.pdf>).

The issue has to do with the fact that we were promised as a community in 2002 that our new village hall, library and police station were going to be built as part of the \$42 million Municipal Facilities Fund without any taxpayer money which turned out to be untrue.

It was discovered that we were millions of dollars short in meeting debt service payments that were going to go onto the property tax roll as early as 2016 costing the average homeowner between \$416-\$2,218 in new taxes through 2022.

Having Waste Management pick up our garbage for free will save every homeowner a minimum of \$100 a year on their property tax bill for at least the next 9 years.

The Village will be stuck with the aesthetic, environmental, legal and lost revenue issues forever when the dump is eventually closed in 2017-18. The least we can expect in exchange for having to deal with those issues is to have our garbage picked up for free (Click here for January 2008 article).

The Village Board did expand the agreement(s) with Waste Management in 2008, but it remains to be seen if the \$42 million Municipal Facilities Fund will be paid off before 2022. This never would have happened if it had not been for those on the Village Board who discovered the shortfall in 2003-04 and made an issue of it. Visit the "Accomplishments Page" of the website for more details.

The taxpayers also have a right to know what Waste Management's Financials are for the landfill in Menomonee Falls instead of being sealed from the public as unanimously approved by the Village Board in 2008.

It has also been learned that 10-15,000 area homes are provided energy by the methane gas from the landfill without Menomonee Falls taxpayers receiving any leasing rights from the gas sales to We Energies from Waste Management (<http://www.jsonline.com/business/87542832.html>).

Jefferson believes and supports asking for a \$200 per homeowner tax credit from Waste Management until the methane gas is gone which is projected to last anywhere from 20-35 years while the landfill is operating and eventually closes.

Similar agreements have been reached or used in the following communities:

- Muskego (<http://milwaukee.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/stories/2009/02/23/daily29.html>)
- Town of Paris in Kenosha County (<http://www.town-of-paris.org/Meeting%20Minutes/2008/05-20-2008%20Special.pdf>)

- Ft. Worth Texas ([http://money.cnn.com/2008/04/30/news/economy/elkind\\_ftworth.fortune/index.htm](http://money.cnn.com/2008/04/30/news/economy/elkind_ftworth.fortune/index.htm))
- Livermore CA (<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/business/6799059.html>)
- BMW Plant Greer SC (<http://www.reliableplant.com/Read/8454/bmw-plant-taps-into-lfill-gas-for-60-of-its-energy>)
- Ocean Spray Wisconsin (<http://www.epa.gov/lmop/documents/pdfs/conf/10th/strube.pdf>)

When the landfill closes, tax revenues will plummet to about \$50,000 a year and the \$3 million annual tipping fees will be eliminated and the Village will be stuck with a closed landfill that only produces gas. The taxpayers should get some of those methane gas revenues to make up for the lost tipping fee revenues.

### Efficiency Expert

Jefferson supports contracting with an outside efficiency expert similar to what the Menomonee Falls School District did in 2006. The school district results were spectacular and the Village's will be too.

Let's make the contract incentive based where the vendor will be paid based on quantitative and quantifiable results. The details can be worked out by the Village Manager and Village Board. There is plenty of money to hire this person for this very important task.

There are many places to save on a \$30 million annual budget (click here to see tax savings ideas). Many steps have been taken by the new Village Manager in the right direction to accomplish these efforts, but more work needs to be done. Hopefully this will be accomplished without having to hire an outside firm.

### Cost Sharing Ideas With Village Employees

The Village's annual payroll is approximately \$13 million.

The annual Village Employee Health care and Dental Premium is approximately \$3 million and the annual contribution to the Wisconsin Retirement System Pension Plan is approximately \$1.7 million.

That means approximately \$17.7 million or 60% of the Village's annual \$30 million budget is for employee payroll and benefits.

Currently Village Employees pay nothing for their retirement and disability income plans. The taxpayers pay 100% for the Village Employees.

The Village Health care Plan requires single employees to pay approximately \$45 a month/\$540 a year and employees with a family to pay approximately \$90 a month/\$1,080 a year or about 5% -7.5% of the annual premium.

The 2010 Village Employee Family health and dental package totals about \$23,200 per employee with employees paying a small portion of that annual premium.

President Bush and Congress passed legislation in 2003 that provided for municipalities to implement Health Savings Accounts (HSA's) at a tremendous cost savings for taxpayers vs. conventional plans with the Village refusing to participate.

Implementing HSA's for the Village Health Care plan would save taxpayers anywhere from \$750,000-\$900,000 a year in taxes.

The State of Indiana implemented HSA's for State Employees and over 50% participate in the plan with unbelievable success ([http://www.heartland.org/full/26302/Indiana\\_HSA\\_Success\\_a\\_Lesson\\_for\\_Other\\_States.html](http://www.heartland.org/full/26302/Indiana_HSA_Success_a_Lesson_for_Other_States.html)). The Village Board should do the same for Village Employees.

Other communities require their employees to pay at least 10% of their monthly health care premium and 10% of their retirement. This would give the employees more of a stake and ownership with their benefits package. It would also save the taxpayers about \$300,000 every year.

The overwhelming majority of Village Employees do a great job. They appreciate their jobs, benefit packages and just want to do their work. At last count, nearly 66% of the Village Employees don't live in the Village.

Let's not make these suggestions political or personal but about proper public policy. Most everyone in the private sector has to pay a large percentage of their benefits package. It's only fair to look at options for public employees who are paid by the taxpayers.

### Three Year Property Tax Levy Reduction and Control Spending

Jefferson will propose a 3-year 5% property tax levy reduction phased in over three years starting in 2010 which means about \$1,050,000 in spending reductions on budgets totaling over \$90 million which should be easy to do without any reductions in staff, programs or services.

We must control spending and work to cut the tax rate for businesses, corporations and homeowners while maintaining a high quality of life in Menomonee Falls through proper marketing, economic growth, increased tax base, organizational structure and management personnel reviews.

For too long we have accepted that myth that if there is "growth" there will be higher taxes to pay for new services. That is simply untrue. A growing tax base should lower taxes.

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 behind Waukesha and the Villages of Butler and Oconomowoc Lake.

That's unacceptable!

Let's get Menomonee Falls out of the top 10 (currently #7) highest taxed communities in Waukesha County (click here for news article).

When Jefferson took office in 2003, Menomonee Falls was #7 and working with the Village Board was able to almost get us out of the top 10. Under the current Village President and Village Board, Menomonee Falls is moving up the top 10 list which is in the wrong direction.

Menomonee Falls is now the 7th worst taxed community in Waukesha County according to 2008 Journal Sentinel Community Survey (<http://www.jsonline.com/realestate/39528637.html>) and when the new \$100 per household garbage tax, that was passed unanimously in 2006 by the current Village President and Village Board, is included on the property

tax bill, Menomonee Falls is the 5th worst taxed community in Waukesha County.

This is a very disturbing trend that needs to be reversed immediately for tax relief to homeowners in severe recessionary times.

It's not the tax rate, the tax levy or assessments that drive high taxes.

It's government spending.

Reign in spending and taxes will automatically take care of themselves ([click here to see tax savings ideas](#)).

### Strengthen Our Community Through Marketing

Develop a comprehensive marketing program for Menomonee Falls to include the following:

- a monthly or quarterly newsletter mailed or on the Village website
- CCS (comment, concern, suggestion) cards
- the Chamber
- web site improvements
- Village Board Meetings on the south side
- informal listening sessions with Staff and Trustees
- fully utilizing holding regular press conferences at Village Hall with Staff and Board
- reinstating the President's Cabinet
- having clergy and non-profit groups say a prayer and the pledge of allegiance at Village Board Meetings
- Fully utilize Falls Cable Access

This will give the citizens of Menomonee Falls a voice, timely information and will grow our economy which unfortunately is too often going to other areas in southeastern Wisconsin.

This will also allow the full potential of the many organizations in the village to network with each other to make our community an even better place to live than what it already is.

This can be done with existing resources at Village Hall.

All non-profits need to be afforded the opportunity to be on the Village's Web Site.

### Continued Affordable Health Care Reform

Jefferson will commit to work toward the providing of health care services at a more affordable rate without compromising quality of care regarding benefits, doctors, clinics and hospitals for village employees by working with the federal government, insurance companies and providers.

Only 10-20% of our population use 80-90% of our health care system on an annual basis which is about 1/6th of our \$14 trillion economy.

It is commonly accepted that there are only four (4) reasons we use the health care system on an annual basis:

- We get sick
- We have an accident or injury
- We attract a disease
- We make poor lifestyle choices which accounts for over 80% of the reason why we use the health care system.

The lifestyle choices include drinking too much, smoking too much, too many drugs, sexually transmitted diseases and improper nutritional behavior/lack of exercise.

Until lifestyle choices are properly addressed through wellness efforts, affordable health care will continue to be an issue.

Implementation of HSA's (Health Savings Accounts) is a step in the right direction that will save hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxpayer's money while maintaining or even improving great benefits. Waukesha County and Community Memorial Hospital offer HSA's to their employee unions.

We all know there are many other reasons for high health care costs and we can work on those issues at the same time.

#### Property Improvements of Village Parks, Boulevards and Foot/Bike Paths

Look at various areas of the Village that need attention for sprucing up, development, maintenance and improvements. Work with the State, County and private sector to get this done when appropriate. We need to enhance our Park System, boulevards, freeway corridor, Lime Kiln Park, the river downtown, freeway pedestrian bridge and foot/bike paths throughout the Village. We can do this with existing resources. We already have the money, equipment and labor. Let's just get it done. Residents are expected to keep their property and sidewalks clean throughout the year, the Village should be expected to do the same.

#### Recycling Management

Work with Waste Management, Waukesha County and non-profit organizations to help keep recyclable items out of the landfill while at the same time giving individuals job training skills and the opportunity to become independent with little or no government help.

Let's take a look at environmentally sound incineration alternatives along with composting options for gardens and organic farmers. This will also extend the life of our landfill past the scheduled 2017-19 closing and protect the environment by using renewable sources for our needs.

Let's expand the school district's curriculum to educate our children how to properly recycle.

#### Support Non-Profits

Let's make sure tax exempt 501 (c) 3 private non-profit organizations aren't assessed for storm water runoff, fire hydrant rental or leaf pick up fees that include the YMCA, public schools, The Ranch, Community Memorial Hospital, private schools and churches.

The current Village Board is supportive of looking at assessing the non-profits with these fees. They've already voted for the new garbage \$100 per household collection fee ([click here to see non-profit concerns](#)).

We also need to allow non-profits to have links on the Village Web Site to show our support of their efforts in order to promote a sense of community.

#### Review the Milwaukee Water Agreement and MMSD

Look at the water and sewer agreement with MMSD and the City of Milwaukee to ensure that Menomonee Falls is getting the best possible deal for the prices that are being paid by businesses and homeowners.

Menomonee Falls residents are currently being serviced by four (4) districts ([click here for breakdown red/Sussex, blue/Brookfield, green/Milwaukee/MMSD and white/independent](#)) for treatment of their waste.

Those being serviced by Sussex, Brookfield and independently are being charged based on usage for their waste treatment.

Those being serviced by Milwaukee are being charged/taxed for a portion of their bill by the value of their home as follows:

- \$1.5 million annual treatment charge
- \$4.5 million annual property tax payment
- \$110.11 per home for a wholesale residential charge or about \$1.2 million

This has totaled over \$45 million in new taxes to Milwaukee from Menomonee Falls homeowners since 1997 for Capital Charges/Property Taxes.

Some 10,000 homeowners ([click here for chart](#)) are currently being serviced by MMSD in Menomonee Falls.

MMSD settlement costs will have totaled nearly \$37 million when the final bond payment is made in 2012. It would have cost a lot more if the Village hadn't taken advantage of historically low interest rates when we refinanced some of the bonds in 2004.

In summary, the Menomonee Falls taxpayers have paid out about \$100 million since 1996 for these agreements.

Menomonee Falls water is currently blended with Milwaukee water on an occasional basis to keep the Menomonee Falls wells active ([click for well map](#) and for Milwaukee water service area).

We have paid Milwaukee nearly \$12 million since 1999 for their water. Let's make sure that our water is safe and that our wells aren't being drawn down too far. There are a lot of people in Menomonee Falls that still use our water without blending Milwaukee water.

No one wants to rehash the legal arguments of the '80's and '90's. The current Village Board is very content with the existing agreements.

Every contract needs to be occasionally reviewed. It has been over 10 years since the Village settled with MMSD and started buying Milwaukee Water ([click here to see MMSD chart](#), [click here to see water fees](#), [click here for latest coercive tactics for water supply with Milwaukee](#)).

Let's see if there are alternatives to be pursued at a more affordable rate that is environmentally, fiscally and legally sound for the treatment of our waste instead of more of the same ([click here for latest MMSD lawsuit](#)).

To find out the truth about the quality and quantity of Menomonee Falls water ([click here](#)) and to find out the DNR's take on "radium" ([click here](#)).

It's one thing to be told over the last 10-15 years by certain elected officials that our water is of poor quality and that we're running out, but it's another to know the truth from Village Hall documents and the DNR. You can judge for yourself who has been telling the truth.

Let's consider joining what the City of Waukesha and their water director is suggesting by taking the EPA to federal court to correct the standards that some professionals feel are way out of line imposing an unnecessary financial burden on consumers with treatment alternatives. Radium treatment facilities ([http://www.pennnet.com/display\\_article/319741/41/ARTCL/none/none/1/Zeolite-Based-System-Safely-Removes-Radium-From-Drinking-Water/](http://www.pennnet.com/display_article/319741/41/ARTCL/none/none/1/Zeolite-Based-System-Safely-Removes-Radium-From-Drinking-Water/)) are a very viable option at a very cost effective means.

Joliet, IL had a similar issue a few years back and learned that the "scare" of radium was basically without merit and chose to leave their system as is

([http://www.suburbanchicagonews.com/heraldnews/lifestyles/focus/radium/32176,JO\\_radium1.article](http://www.suburbanchicagonews.com/heraldnews/lifestyles/focus/radium/32176,JO_radium1.article)).

### Strengthen Ties With School Districts

Strengthen the relationship with the Menomonee Falls and Sussex Hamilton School Districts as we look to the future of growing our community together through joint efforts that will be mutually beneficial to both entities.

Cost sharing ideas, service agreements and open communications are just a few of the ideas that can be explored.

Taylor Davis performing at John Harbor's

### Promote Our Downtown Area Through Fine Arts, Culture and Commerce

Promote the historic downtown through an aggressive and comprehensive marketing program with business owners, landlords, schools, churches, community organizations and tenants that will allow the downtown to become more alive and thrive even more than what it currently is.

We have many organizations that would love to be part of this effort if they were simply asked to do so. There are so many things that can be done if we have the right people in leadership positions to facilitate this.

Many communities are successful in doing this and so can we.

It's time to review the BID (Business Improvement District) District. Downtown business owners for nearly 20 years have been taxed an extra layer of taxes that has amounted to hundreds of thousands of dollars. Some want out of the BID but have few alternatives. It may be time to turn these operations over to the Chamber of Commerce and make it voluntary instead of mandatory.

Let's have a free and open exchange of the debate without making it personal as has been the case too often when changes are suggested in the way government operates in the Falls.

### Promote Our History

Aggressively promote Old Falls Village Museum to schools, churches, businesses, corporations, community organizations and neighboring communities with the assistance of interested parties to help improve attendance, revenues, membership, collections, donations, new programs and facility acquisitions.

A marvelous opportunity that will preserve our unique history to promote the unlimited potential of our future. The taxpayers have poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into this facility over the last 5-10 years and its time to get a return on their investment.

Thanks to the volunteers who have labored to keep this facility open. It may be time to work with the Historical Society to look at privatizing this museum.

### Village Financials and Personnel Matters

The former Village Manager admitted recently that he submitted a balanced budget for the first time in over 20 years. How sad.

All submitted budgets should be balanced without looming deficits. The budgeting process needs to start earlier for the trustees and they need to be more involved rather than having a large three ring binder dumped on their lap in October

or November without any knowledge or input as to how they got there. This will make the process much more efficient and supportive.

The Village also needs to get their Debt Service ([click here for charts](#)) to \$100,000,000 million as soon as possible.

According to the Village's Finance Director, the Village, since the end of 2003, has defeased, refunded or paid nearly \$29 million in debt. When there is a defeasance, the taxpayers are still obligated to pay the debt even though it may not show up on the books for the Village.

This will lower taxes and improve the bond rating. The Village also needs to follow the suggestions of Moody's for its "Reserve Account" Policy ([click here to view Moody's](#)).

The Village has millions of dollars in reserves for no apparent reason. It's time to adopt the right policy ([click here for change page 1 and page 2](#)) that will properly use the taxpayer's surplus account.

The Village Manager needs to submit his Capital Budget for the year in which it is to be spent and not six (6) months after the fact. This can be done in conjunction with the Operating Budget process in the fall of the year.

Double dipping contracts for Village retirees and the multi-million dollar cash payouts for unused sick leave to retirees also need to be restructured.

Let's work with neighboring communities first for fire protection on the Village's southwest side before we ask the taxpayers to spend millions of dollars to purchase property, build a facility, equip and staff it.

Cooperative agreements with neighboring communities are available and should be pursued first.

The Village needs to look at combining some departments which will save money and require less personnel.

#### Inventory of Village Property, Equipment and Cash

The Village has a very successful annual auction for excessive equipment that has served its purpose or is no longer needed. The Village should do the same thing with its property holdings.

Ideas and plans change and the Village is no exception to that. Where there is property that can be properly and feasibly liquidated, let's do so to put it on the tax roll for revenue purposes.

The State of Wisconsin recently did this with one of their office buildings in downtown Madison and so can we.

As of late October 2006 ([click here to see Village of Menomonee Falls List of Cash and Investments](#)), the Village had nearly \$58 million of cash on hand. Understandably, some of that cash is "designated" for use. However, not all of it can be. The taxpayers gave this money to the Village Manager and Village Board to use and they deserve an accounting from the Manager and the Board as to what is the best use of these funds.

Too often in government, money is taken from the homeowners and business people only to be forgotten and there ends up being "unused" account balances. If these monies are no longer being used for their intended purpose, then they ought to be given back to the taxpayers in the form of tax relief, a tax rebate or to be applied to future budgets to keep taxes down like the City of Muskego recently did ([click here for the Muskego story](#)).

Having cash on hand to just earn interest isn't the wisest use of the "extra" money. Government should not be in the investment business. Interest money is really nothing more than "gravy" that the Village Manager and Board can spend however they want with little or no justification or accountability because some have said it's really "not" (wink, wink, nod, nod) the taxpayer's money. Competitive interest bids should be sought by the Village Manager and approved by the Board for these "unused" account balances.

### Sound Barrier Wall on Highway 41/45

Residents on the north side of Highway 41/45, between the pedestrian bridge and County Line Road, deserve a sound barrier wall so they can enjoy their backyards just like those residents on the south side of Highway 41/45 have enjoyed for several years now. The Village has the money to work with the State to get this done.

### Village Wide Leaf Pick-up

The Village Board needs to implement a Village wide leaf pick-up. We already have the resources to get this done. It's just a matter of getting it done. Residents shouldn't be penalized because of where they live or because they don't have a curb in front of their home. Other communities do it and so can we.

### Outside Legal Fees

The Village Board needs to adopt a policy on how outside legal fees are approved. Taxpayers have paid over \$2 million in the last five (5) years ([click here for news article](#)) for legal fees. Unfortunately we live in a litigious society that requires legal advice on a regular basis. Let's just make sure we don't have an open checkbook for this type of activity.

### Maintain Outdoor Privileges

Menomonee Falls and its residents are blessed with many wonderful opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors. One of them is the ability to go hunting for small and big game. Let's make sure that we work together to maintain and respect those privileges. We have a lot of outdoorsmen in our Village who really love nature and want to enjoy it without too much interference from restrictive regulations.

### Jefferson on the Menomonee River in downtown Menomonee Falls

### Pet Ordinance

Let's just enforce the current ordinances instead of making drastic and disturbing changes while having pet owners choosing which pet(s) to keep and be burdened with one more layer of government that isn't necessary. Let's be proactive as a Village Board on the issues instead of unnecessarily forcing residents to be reactive after the thought due to poor communication from Village Hall.

#### Implement Community Survey Results

The taxpayers paid somewhere between \$12,000-\$20,000 in 2006 for a Community Wide Survey that overwhelmingly resulted in citizens saying three things:

- Citizens want lower taxes
- Citizens want better communication from Village Hall and Board
- Citizens want better representation from elected officials

As is often the case with government surveys, money is paid out, citizens respond and the survey is put on a shelf to collect dust instead of being used. The Village Board needs to listen to citizens and implement what they want and not necessarily what the Village Board wants.