



**TOWN OF BOWLING GREEN
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
M I N U T E S**

**Thursday, May 22, 2025
4:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:

- Mayor Gambill called the Public Hearing for the Notice of Proposed Real Property Tax Increase to order at 4:04 PM, initiating roll call.

Council Members Present:

Honorable Mayor Tina Gambill, Vice-Mayor Valarie Coyle, Councilmember Jean Davis, Councilmember John Chinault, Councilmember Jeff Voit, Councilmember Dan Webb, Councilmember David Storke, Councilmember Randy Hageman

Staff Members Present:

India Adams-Jacobs, Town Manager; Jeff Gore, Town Attorney

CONSENT AGENDA:

- None.

STAFF REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS:

- Town Manager India Adams-Jacobs stated there was no additional information to present before opening the hearing for public comment.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Public Hearing — Notice of Proposed Real Property Tax Increase

- The public hearing was opened to the public at 4:05 PM. Mayor Gambill began by reviewing public comment procedures and rules of decorum. Citizens were instructed to address the Chair, limit comments to three minutes, sign in, and maintain respectful language.
- A written letter from Cindy and John Plachinski of 107 South Main Street and 100 South Main Street, Bowling Green was read into the record by Mayor Gambill. The letter stated:
“We have lived in Bowling Green for more than 35 years, having run businesses here and currently owning and renting the building on 100 South Main Street. We are very concerned that financial decisions will be made that negatively impact our ability to enjoy life in this town. Too much tax is not a good idea, especially as we recover from the last four years of an incompetent federal government. Please consider carefully any increase in tax burden for the citizens of this town. Tax increases should be minimal and used for specific benefit to all. Keep taxes low. Thank you for listening.”

- Mayor Gambill requested that the letter be added to the official public record.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: 3 MINUTES PER INDIVIDUAL

- **Cindy and John Plachinski (written comment)** — Expressed strong opposition to any tax increase. Urged council to keep taxes minimal and only raise them when the benefit to all citizens is clearly defined.
- **Jeff Sili** — Explained that reassessment is not the same as a tax increase. Opposed the proposed 20¢ rate, recommending the equalized rate of 6.5¢. Cited examples of how previous reassessments resulted in stable or lower rates.
- **Rick Hanley** — Opposed the magnitude of the proposed increase. Asked whether alternatives such as trimming administrative costs were considered. Called for creative financial planning.
- **Pat Cropper** — Opposed increases to real estate taxes, meals taxes, and utility rates. Warned these changes would harm local businesses already struggling.
- **Glenn McDearmon** — Objected to the 20¢ rate, estimating it would generate \$265,000 in additional revenue. Urged the council to address the lack of audited financials and explore engineering studies for water/sewer projects before raising taxes.
- **Arthur Wholey** — Expressed concern about prior financial decisions, such as replacing financial systems. Questioned the town's strategic direction and transparency. Urged partnerships like VA WARN and better financial forecasting.
- **Peggy Wholey** — Opposed tax increases and expressed disappointment in council actions. Urged members to vote with integrity and community focus.
- **Scott Pace** — Strongly opposed the tax, meals, and utility rate increases. Criticized the plan as a strategy to build reserves instead of funding needed services, calling it a waste of funds.
- **Lynda Keath** — Business owner who opposed the proposed increases. Criticized town leadership for poor transparency, lack of communication, and unresponsiveness to citizen concerns.
- **Brian Gambill** — Called attention to confusing budget documentation and contractor usage. Questioned long-term use of the tax increase and urged council to postpone a vote until clear planning is presented.
- **Kathy Self** — Elderly resident on fixed income. Voiced concern that increased taxes could force senior citizens to sell their homes.
- **Pam Weldon** — Business owner, who opposed the increase. Feared that higher taxes and utilities would force many small businesses to close, reversing recent growth on Main Street.
- **Peter Haase** — Requested a clear explanation from the council on how the town ended up in a financial crisis and how future issues will be prevented. Thanked the council for their service.
- **Rachel Phillips** — Opposed the proposed increase due to the effect on elderly and low-income citizens. Advocated for gradual adjustments rather than drastic hikes.
- **Heather Lewis** — Single mother and renter. Warned that rent and utility hikes would drive working families out of town. Urged the council to reconsider.
- **Jessica Beale** — Business owner who supported a moderate increase. Blamed poor planning in previous years for the financial shortfall. Acknowledging the increase is difficult but necessary to prevent infrastructure failure.
- **Scott Seigmund** — Opposed the increase. Cited steep increases in commercial property assessments and emphasized the risk of businesses leaving town due to unfavorable tax climate.
- **Ashley Adams** — Opposed full increase but was open to gradual adjustments. Suggested cutting town-funded events like the Harvest Festival and Christmas Parade to save funds.
- **Katie Gibson** — Business owner who supported the tax increase. Emphasized the need to invest in infrastructure and restore basic services. Called the increase a long-overdue reset.
- **Ed Bonham** — Opposed the 20¢ proposal. Asked what the town had done to cut costs or explore grants before turning to taxpayers. Urged better financial planning.

MEMBER COMMENTS:

- **Councilmember Davis:** No comments
- **Councilmember Voit:** Thanked residents and noted Clean Sweep event success; deferred tax discussion to regular meeting
- **Councilmember Webb:** Deferred comments until budget discussion
- **Councilmember Chinault:** No comments
- **Vice-Mayor Coyle:** Thanked the public for their attendance and participation
- **Councilmember Storke:** Clarified that the 20¢ rate is a legal ceiling, not a confirmed figure; emphasized Council's shared financial responsibility and intent to act with fairness
- **Councilmember Hageman:** Urged residents to attend future meetings consistently and voiced appreciation for their input
- **Mayor Gambill:** Stressed the importance of public involvement and asked residents to remain engaged year-round, not only during financial emergencies

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- None

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- Citizen feedback, written correspondence, and member comments summarized above.

ADJOURNMENT:

- At 4:55 PM, Councilmember Randy Hageman motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Vice-Mayor Coyle and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:55 PM.

