



# Police and Fire Commission Meeting

Whitewater Municipal Building Community Room,  
312 West Whitewater St., Whitewater, WI 53190  
\*In Person and Virtual

**Monday, February 17, 2025 - 6:00 PM**

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**Citizens are welcome (and encouraged) to join our webinar via computer, smart phone, or telephone.  
Citizen participation is welcome during topic discussion periods.**

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

## **Police and Fire Commission Meeting**

February 17, 2025, 6:00 PM

**Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.**

<https://meet.goto.com/685218381>

**You can also dial in using your phone.**

Access Code: 685-218-381

United States: +1 (224) 501-3412

**Please note that although every effort will be made to provide for virtual participation, unforeseen technical difficulties may prevent this, in which case the meeting may still proceed as long as there is a quorum. Should you wish to make a comment in this situation, you are welcome to call this number: (262) 473-0108.**

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## **AGENDA**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

### **ROLL CALL**

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*A commission member can choose to remove an item from the agenda or rearrange its order; however, introducing new items to the agenda is not allowed. Any proposed changes require a motion, a second, and approval from the Commission to be implemented. The agenda shall be approved at each meeting even if no changes are being made at that meeting.*

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

*Items on the Consent Agenda will be approved together unless any commission member requests that an item be removed for individual consideration.*

1. **Approval of Minutes from December 2, 2024**

### **HEARING OF CITIZEN COMMENTS**

*No formal Commission action will be taken during this meeting although issues raised may become a part of a future agenda. Participants are allotted a three minute speaking period. Specific items listed on*

*the agenda may not be discussed at this time; however, citizens are invited to speak to those specific issues at the time the Commission discusses that particular item.*

***To make a comment during this period, or during any agenda item: On a computer or handheld device, locate the controls on your computer to raise your hand. You may need to move your mouse to see these controls. On a traditional telephone, dial \*6 to unmute your phone and dial \*9 to raise your hand.***

**REPORTS**

**2. Police Chief's Report**

- a. Whitewater Professional Police Association and Whitewater Professional Police Supervisor Association Residency Update
- b. Public Safety Referendum Update

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Adjourn to Closed Session, TO RECONVENE, pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes 19.85(1)(c) "Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility" . Items to be discussed:

- 3. Interview of FTE EMT/Firefighter Candidates  
Interview of Patrol Lieutenant Candidate

**RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION**

- 4. Announcement of Recommendation Concerning Whitewater Fire Department Hiring Process  
Announcement of Recommendation Concerning Whitewater Police Department Promotional Process

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**ADJOURNMENT**

A quorum of the Common Council may be present. This notice is given to inform the public that no formal action will be taken at this meeting.

**Anyone requiring special arrangements is asked to call the Office of the City Manager / City Clerk (262-473-0102) at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.**



## Police and Fire Commission Meeting

Whitewater Municipal Building Community Room,  
312 West Whitewater St., Whitewater, WI 53190  
\*In Person and Virtual

**Monday, December 02, 2024 - 6:30 PM**

**Citizens are welcome (and encouraged) to join our webinar via computer, smart phone, or telephone.  
Citizen participation is welcome during topic discussion periods.**

**Police and Fire Commission Meeting**  
December 2nd, 2024, 6:30PM

**Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.**  
<https://meet.goto.com/186659989>

**You can also dial in using your phone.**  
Access Code: 186-659-989  
United States: +1 (872) 240-3212

**Please note that although every effort will be made to provide for virtual participation, unforeseen technical difficulties may prevent this, in which case the meeting may still proceed as long as there is a quorum. Should you wish to make a comment in this situation, you are welcome to call this number: (262) 473-0108.**

### AGENDA

#### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Commissioner Vice Chair Mwita Binagi

#### ROLL CALL

##### PRESENT

- Commissioner Beverly Stone
- Commissioner Mwita Binagi
- Commissioner Marissa Aranda
- Commissioner Tom Miller
- Police Chief Daniel Meyer
- Police Administrative Captain Adam Vander Steeg
- Police Patrol Captain Ryan Taft
- Support Services Manager Sabrina Ojibway

##### ABSENT

- Commissioner Jerry Grant

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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Motion made by Commissioner Aranda, seconded by Commissioner Stone to approve modified agenda in which Executive Session Item 3: Interview of FTE EMT/Firefighter Candidate be removed due to applicant withdrawing from hiring process.

Voting Yes: Commissioner Stone, Commissioner Binagi, Commissioner Aranda and Commissioner Miller. Motion passed.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

*Items on the Consent Agenda will be approved together unless any commission member requests that an item be removed for individual consideration.*

**1. Approval of Minutes from November 18, 2024.**

Motion made by Commissioner Stone, seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the consent agenda.

Voting Yes: Commissioner Stone, Commissioner Binagi, Commissioner Aranda and Commissioner Miller. Motion passed.

**HEARING OF CITIZEN COMMENTS**

*No formal Commission action will be taken during this meeting although issues raised may become a part of a future agenda. Participants are allotted a three minute speaking period. Specific items listed on the agenda may not be discussed at this time; however, citizens are invited to speak to those specific issues at the time the Commission discusses that particular item.*

There were no citizen comments.

***To make a comment during this period, or during any agenda item: On a computer or handheld device, locate the controls on your computer to raise your hand. You may need to move your mouse to see these controls. On a traditional telephone, dial \*6 to unmute your phone and dial \*9 to raise your hand.***

**REPORTS**

**2. Police Chief's Report**

a. Personnel Update.

In November, the City of Whitewater Common Council approved a 2025 budget that includes an additional detective position. This will bring staffing levels up from 24 sworn officers to 25 sworn officers, the first staffing increase since 2008. The job opening will be posted at the beginning of 2025 with an anticipated hiring date of April 2025.

b. Public Safety Referendum Update.

The City of Whitewater Common Council selected Mueller Communications as the communications consultant that will be assisting in educating the community on the facts concerning the public safety referendum.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Adjourn to Closed Session, TO RECONVENE, pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes 19.85(1)(c) "Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility". Items to be discussed:

**3. Interview of Patrol Officer Candidate(s)**

Motion made by Commissioner Stone, Seconded by Commissioner Aranda to go into closed session.

Voting Yes: Commissioner Stone, Commissioner Binagi, Commissioner Aranda and Commissioner Miller.  
Motion passed.

The Police & Fire Commission went into closed session at 6:36 PM.

**RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION**

Motion made by Commissioner Miller, Seconded by Commissioner Aranda to go into open session.

Voting Yes: Commissioner Stone, Commissioner Binagi, Commissioner Aranda and Commissioner Miller.  
Motion passed.

The Police & Fire Commission went into open session at 7:24 PM

**4. Announcement of Recommendation Concerning Whitewater Police Department Hiring Process**

Motion made by Commissioner Miller, Seconded by Commissioner Aranda to endorse and recommend the hiring of Melissa Kuchenbecher to the position of patrol officer for the Whitewater Police Department.

Voting Yes: Commissioner Stone, Commissioner Binagi, Commissioner Aranda and Commissioner Miller.  
Motion passed.

Motion made by Commissioner Aranda, Seconded by Commissioner Stone to endorse and recommend the hiring of Cailey Russell to the position of patrol officer for the Whitewater Police Department.

Voting Yes: Commissioner Stone, Commissioner Binagi, Commissioner Aranda and Commissioner Miller.  
Motion passed.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No future agenda items were discussed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion made by Commissioner Miller, Seconded by Commissioner Aranda to adjourn.

Voting Yes: Commissioner Stone, Commissioner Binagi, Commissioner Aranda and Commissioner Miller.  
Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 PM.

A quorum of the Common Council may be present. This notice is given to inform the public that no formal action will be taken at this meeting.

**Anyone requiring special arrangements is asked to call the Office of the City Manager / City Clerk (262-473-0102) at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.**

DRAFT

**Letter of Understanding Between the  
City of Whitewater  
And  
Whitewater Professional Police Supervisor Association/  
Wisconsin Professional Police Association  
Law Enforcement Employee Relations Division**

Whereas: On December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, the City of Whitewater has requested and all above listed parties have agreed to an amendment of the 2023 – 2025 Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Whereas: The parties have agreed to amend Article XXIV-Residency as follows:

Article XXIV – Residence

Employees covered by this Agreement shall be permitted to establish their residence within ~~twenty~~ **30 miles** of the City limits.

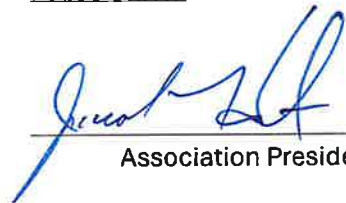
Governing Nature: Upon full and final execution, this letter of agreement shall become the status quo and will expire on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025, or when a successor bargaining agreement is reached – whichever is later. All other terms of the 2023 – 2025 Collective Bargaining Agreement will continue to be in effect.

Dated this 6<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2025.

City of Whitewater:

Police Union:

  
City Manager

  
Association President

  
City Clerk

  
WPPA Business Agent

Letter of Understanding Between the  
City of Whitewater  
And  
Whitewater Professional Police Association/  
Wisconsin Professional Police Association  
Law Enforcement Employee Relations Division

Whereas: On December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, the City of Whitewater has requested and all above listed parties have agreed to an amendment of the 2023 – 2025 Collective Bargaining Agreement.

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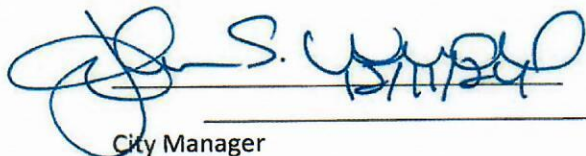
Article XXXVIII – Residence

Employees covered by this Agreement shall be permitted to establish their residence within ~~twenty (20)~~ ~~miles~~ **30 miles** of the City limits.

Governing Nature: Upon full and final execution, this letter of agreement shall become the status quo and will expire on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025, or when a successor bargaining agreement is reached – whichever is later. All other terms of the 2023 – 2025 Collective Bargaining Agreement will continue to be in effect.

Dated this 10<sup>th</sup> day of DECEMBER, 2024.

City of Whitewater:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Manager

Police Union:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Association President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
WPPA Business Agent





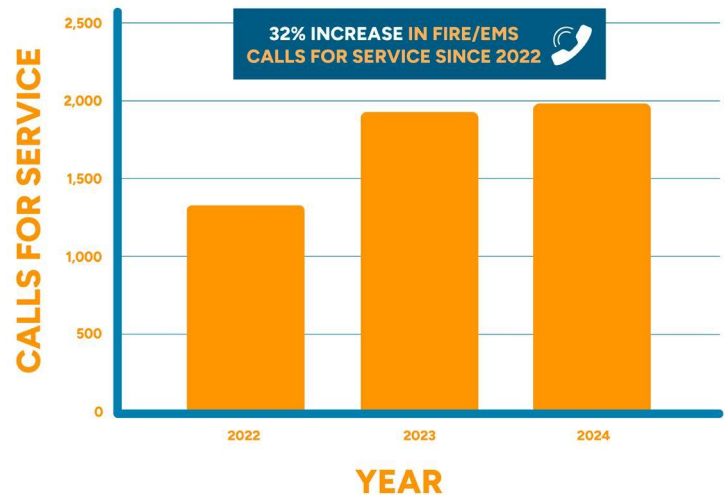
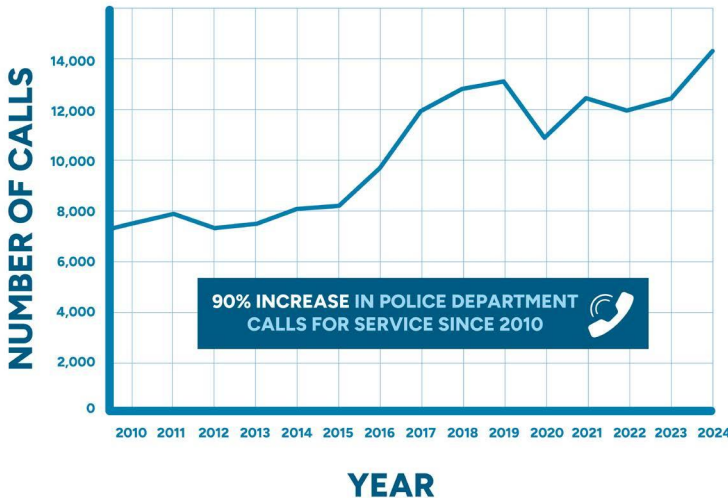
# Public Safety REFERENDUM

Item 2.

## Vote Tuesday, April 1, 2025

The City of Whitewater has identified the need to add full-time personnel to its Police and Fire departments, as current public safety funding levels and staffing models are insufficient to meet the growing demands and needs of the community. The Whitewater Police Department has seen a 90% increase

in calls for service since 2010, while staffing has remained flat. Since 2022, there has been a 32% increase in calls of service to the Whitewater Fire Department, while paid-on-call staffing continues to decrease, requiring an increase in full-time Fire/EMS personnel to meet the growing needs.



Voters will be asked on April 1, 2025 whether or not to support an increase in the City's annual tax levy, beginning with bills issued in December 2025.

## Why Referendum?



The City needs additional funding to meet the public safety needs of the community as both the volume

and complexity of calls for service continue to increase.



While the need for our public safety resources continues to rise, current funding sources are stagnant or

decreasing, and our existing staffing levels inhibit our ability to adequately respond to calls for service.



Because of state-imposed levy limits, Whitewater must ask for approval from taxpayers through a

referendum to increase the tax levy to fund these services.

## If a majority vote “YES”

If Whitewater residents approve the referendum, the property tax levy in 2025 would increase by approximately \$1,305,782 going forward to cover the cost of five additional police officers, a dispatcher, two cross-trained firefighters/EMTs, and their necessary equipment.

If the referendum passes, a homeowner in the City of Whitewater who lives in Jefferson County will see an annual property tax increase of approximately \$92.00 annually or \$1.77 weekly per \$100,000 of assessed property value, and in Walworth County, will see an increase of \$118.00 annually, or \$2.27 weekly per \$100,000 of assessed property value.

Property Tax Impact \$1,305,782 Total Increase		
Assessed Property Value	Estimated Annual Property Tax Increase	
	Jefferson County	Walworth County
\$100,000	\$92	\$118
\$250,000	\$230	\$295

## If a majority vote “NO”

If the referendum is rejected by a majority of voters, the City will be faced with difficult decisions about how to address the growing need for public safety services. A rejection of the referendum **would not** be the equivalent of maintaining the status quo of police and fire/EMS services.

A “no” vote means the City will not be able to hire additional officers or firefighters/EMTs, impacting its ability to provide the level of service the citizens of Whitewater deserve.

Investing in additional staff supports proactive policing—preventing crime, improving efficiency, and building trust by addressing issues before they escalate, as well as ensuring emergency response personnel are available to respond to calls in a timely manner.

# Vote April 1

Voting information can be found on the City’s website at [whitewater-wi.gov/615/Police-and-Fire-EMS-Referendum](http://whitewater-wi.gov/615/Police-and-Fire-EMS-Referendum) or [myvote.wi.gov](http://myvote.wi.gov)

### In-person Early Voting:

**At the City Clerk’s Office**  
Monday through Friday;  
March 18 – March 28  
from 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

### By Absentee Ballot:

Deadline to submit application  
for mailed absentee ballot:  
March 28 by 5:00 p.m.

### On Election Day:

Polling places are open from  
7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wisconsin voters  
are required to show an acceptable  
photo ID in order to vote.



# Public Safety Referendum

Item 2.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is the proposed referendum on the Tuesday, April 1, 2025 ballot?

The City of Whitewater will have a referendum on the April 2025 ballot to ask taxpayers whether or not they support a \$1,305,782 increase in the property tax levy to fund five additional police officers, a dispatcher, two cross-trained firefighters/EMTs, and their necessary equipment.

### What will appear on the ballot?

The referendum question will appear on the Tuesday, April 1, 2025 ballot as follows:

*Under state law, the increase in the levy of the City of Whitewater for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year, 2026, is limited to 2.166% (based on the City's best estimate), which results in a levy of \$6,600,275. Shall the City of Whitewater be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year, 2026 for the purpose of funding increased staffing, and continuing to operate police and fire/EMS services, by a total of 18.29% (based on the City's best estimate), which results in a levy of \$7,906,057, and on an ongoing basis, include the increase of \$1,305,782 for each fiscal year going forward?*

### Why is the City asking for this increase now?

The City of Whitewater has identified a need to add additional, full-time personnel to its Police and Fire departments.

The City of Whitewater has a critical need for more police officers. There has not been an increase in police staffing for 17 years. Since 2010, we've seen a nearly 90% increase in calls for service. As a result of additional strain on police resources, the Whitewater Police Department has seen an **80 percent increase in overtime hours worked by police officers since 2014.**

As for the Fire Department, in 2022, City of Whitewater voters passed a referendum to meet an acute Fire & EMS need in the community. Since that time, **calls for service have grown by 32%** and the number of available paid-on-call staff has further decreased. While we are in a better spot today than we were before the referendum, the bottom line is we are not meeting the current or prospective needs of the community.

### What will happen if a majority of voters vote "yes"?

If Whitewater residents approve the referendum, the tax levy in 2025—and each year going forward—would increase by approximately \$1,305,782 to fund five additional police officers, a dispatcher, two cross-trained firefighters/EMTs, and their necessary equipment.

If the referendum passes, a homeowner in the City of Whitewater who lives in Jefferson County will see an annual property tax increase of approximately \$92.00 annually or \$1.77 weekly per \$100,000 of assessed property value, and in Walworth County, will see an increase of \$118.00 annually, or \$2.27 weekly per \$100,000 of assessed property value.

### What will it mean if a majority vote "no"?

If the referendum is rejected by a majority of voters, the City will be faced with difficult decisions about how to address the growing need for public safety services. A rejection of the referendum **would not** be the equivalent of maintaining the status quo of police and fire/EMS services.

A "no" vote means the City will not be able to hire additional officers or firefighters/EMTs, impacting its ability to provide the level of service the citizens of Whitewater deserve.

Investing in additional staff supports proactive policing—preventing crime, improving efficiency, and building trust by addressing issues before they escalate.



# Public Safety Referendum

Item 2.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Why do we need a referendum to raise the property tax levy limit?

The State of Wisconsin limits the amount of property taxes a City can collect each year. In order to exceed the levy limit, the City needs voter approval through a referendum.

### What will be the impact on taxpayers if the referendum passes?

If Whitewater residents approve the referendum, the tax levy in 2025—and each year going forward—would increase by \$1,305,782 million to fund five additional police officers, a dispatcher, two cross-trained firefighters/EMTs, and their necessary equipment.

If the referendum passes, a homeowner in the City of Whitewater who lives in Jefferson County will see an annual property tax increase of approximately \$92.00 annually or \$1.77 weekly per \$100,000 of assessed property value, and in Walworth County, will see an increase of \$118.00 annually, or \$2.27 weekly per \$100,000 of assessed property value.

In addition, if the referendum passes, the Whitewater Police Department will cease borrowing for certain recurring capital items, instead annually investing the \$250,000 toward new equipment, such as vehicles. This will better serve residents by removing interest payments on depreciating assets. By doing so, Whitewater taxpayers will save approximately \$772,000 in interest over the next 10 years alone, while providing better equipment for staff.

### What is the Police and Fire/EMS Department recommending for staffing increases?

Based on an [organizational and workload study](#), the police department is recommending hiring five additional police officers and a dispatcher to help meet the public safety needs of the Whitewater community.

In addition, the fire department is recommending hiring two cross-trained firefighters/EMTs to meet the rising calls for service [following a staffing and operations report](#).

### When and where do I vote?

Whitewater voters can cast their vote one of three ways: through absentee mail-in ballots, early in-person voting at the City Clerk's office, or in-person voting on election day, April 1, 2025.

Voters can request a mailed absentee ballot from the City Clerk's office. You may request an absentee ballot be mailed to you until March 28. If you plan to return your absentee ballot using the U.S. Postal Service, please remember that the ballot must be RECEIVED by the Elections Office by the close of polls on election day, April 1, 2025. Absentee ballots may be returned to the Municipal Building Community Room on election day.

In-person early voting will take place at City Hall on the following dates:

**Monday through Friday;**

**March 18 – March 28 from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

To find your polling place, and for additional voting information, please visit [myvote.wi.gov](https://myvote.wi.gov). Please remember that Wisconsin voters are required to show an acceptable photo ID in order to vote.

### Where can I learn more about this referendum?

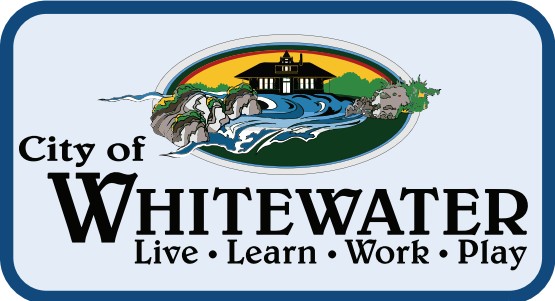
Additional information about the upcoming public safety referendum can be found at [whitewater-wi.gov/615/Police-and-Fire-EMS-Referendum](https://whitewater-wi.gov/615/Police-and-Fire-EMS-Referendum).

### Who can I contact for more information?

Send any questions or feedback via email to [WW2025Referendum@whitewater-wi.gov](mailto:WW2025Referendum@whitewater-wi.gov).

# PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSIONS

## Police and Fire/EMS Referendum



### Get the facts - directly from the City of Whitewater

These sessions are available to all members of the public who are looking to learn about the upcoming public safety referendum vote on April 1st, 2025. There will be ample opportunity to ask questions to representatives of Whitewater Police and Fire/EMS at these sessions.

**2/18**      **Municipal Building - Cravath Conference Room**      **5:00pm-6:00pm**  
 312 W. Whitewater St.      (Virtual available)  
 Whitewater, WI 53190

**3/11**      **Municipal Building - Community Room**      **5:30pm-6:30pm**  
 312 W. Whitewater St.      (Virtual available)  
 Whitewater, WI 53190

**3/13**      **Starin Park Senior Center**      **1:00pm-2:00pm**  
 504 W. Starin Rd.  
 Whitewater, WI 53190

**3/17**      **Whitewater Innovation Center**      **9:30am-10:30am**  
 1121 Innovation Dr.  
 Whitewater, WI 53190