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Over 200 Attend County's Fiscal Health Informational Presentation

County Officials Recommend Dumping POWTS Fee

Town of Polk, WI – Following hundreds of public comments to a fee for mandated services regulating septic systems, county officials are responded by scheduling an information session on the county's fiscal health forecast. The session held on Tuesday, August 27, 2019, was attended by over 200 citizens, featured a presentation by County Administrator Joshua Schoemann, and included the participation of many county board members. The meeting follows an August 22, Land Use and Planning Committee recommendation of a "no" on the proposed fee. A final vote by the full County Board is likely to occur in October.

"I will be recommending that the County Board vote no," said County Administrator Joshua Schoemann at last night's informational meeting. Regardless of the vote on the fee proposal, the proposed fee will not be included in the administrator's recommended budget which requires a 2/3 majority vote to pass. "Simply put, an \$11 fee is not worth tearing apart Washington County."

The Fiscal Health Informational meeting focused on the county's structural deficit and the challenges caused by annual expenses outpacing property tax limits. The result: shrinking government, seeking shared services with surrounding units of government and discussing revenue diversity. Details were provided about how Washington County is accomplishing these results:

- 2019 marks the lowest tax rate in 100+ years
- 2019 property tax levy (the amount collected by the county) is lower than 2009
- Total employees have decreased by 6.2% (54) since 2009
- Low priority programs have been cut completely
- Shared services are being implemented to save taxpayer dollars

The presentation named the county's park entrance fee, solar now initiative, and facility rental program as revenues that have been implemented. Other, less popular, revenues did not move forward. The POWTS fee is another revenue diversification discussion.

"We 'fail fast' in Washington County," added Schoemann. "and we will continue to propose new ideas, seek feedback, implement and repeat." County officials called on constituents to get involved, continue providing feedback and be a part of the solutions.

[Last night's presentation](#) and [specific information on the POWTS fee proposal](#) can be found on the county's website.