



PUBLIC SAFETY REFERENDUM **FAQS**

WHAT IS THE PROPOSED PUBLIC SAFETY REFERENDUM THAT IS ON THE BALLOT FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 6?

The referendum will ask voters to decide whether or not to support an increase in the City's annual tax levy, beginning in 2022, to cover the cost for six additional firefighter/paramedics, six additional police officers, and the equipment those staff members require.

WHY DO WE NEED ADDITIONAL FIREFIGHTER/PARAMEDICS?

The current staffing levels make it difficult for Fond du Lac Fire Rescue to adequately cover a service area of this size with growing needs. Hiring six additional firefighter/paramedic positions would bring city-wide base staffing to a level of staffing that would enable Fond du Lac Fire Rescue to meet current and future call volume and response time benchmarks, particularly by adding sufficient staff to regularly support a fourth ambulance.

At current staffing levels, when calls come in for four or five ambulances to respond to health crises at the same time, **firefighter/paramedics are forced to take a fire engine out of service in order to fully staff the ambulances, decreasing the department's ability to fight fires.** This is an increasingly common challenge; in 2015, four ambulances were out concurrently just 57 times. By 2018, that number had nearly doubled to 101 instances.

Between 2010 and 2019, the number of calls for service by Fond du Lac Fire Rescue grew from 5,201 calls to 7,492 calls - a 44% increase in just nine years.

WHY ARE WE PROPOSING THIS REFERENDUM NOW?

Current public safety funding is insufficient to meet the current and projected needs of the community. The fundamental challenge driving the need for funding to support additional firefighter/paramedics and police officers is an **increase in calls for service** - a trend that is projected to continue as the City of Fond du Lac continues to grow.

WHY DO WE NEED ADDITIONAL POLICE OFFICERS?

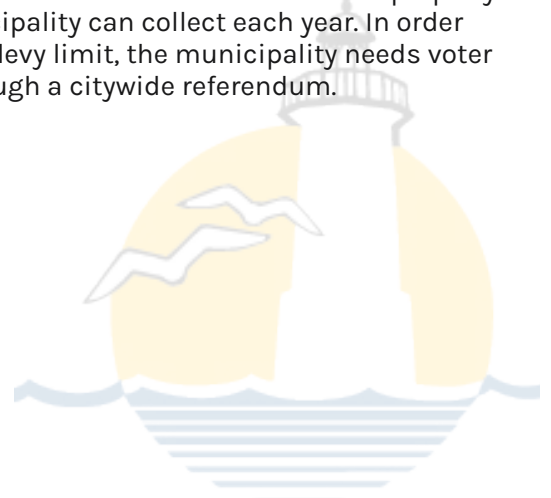
Current public safety funding is insufficient to meet the growing current and projected needs of the community. The Fond du Lac Police Department responded to nearly 5,000 more calls in 2019 than it did in 2010. In addition, the calls for service are for more complex issues including gun violence, drug overdoses, mental illness and other issues driving calls by the public for support.

At current budget levels, a fully-staffed Fond du Lac Police Department does not have a large enough force to sufficiently patrol the City of Fond du Lac during all times of day and night. Increasing the number of officers by just six would enable the Fond du Lac Police Department to augment its shift staffing to meet peak demand, while reducing overtime impacts and ensuring that off-duty officers are able properly to rest and recover from their shifts.

Despite the City of Fond du Lac's greater demand for officer time due to increases in violent crime and drug-related incidents, the Police Department has not been able to hire additional officers. In fact, the Department has fallen behind both the national average and peer cities in Wisconsin in terms of staffing.

WHY DO WE NEED A REFERENDUM TO RAISE THE TAX LEVY LIMIT?

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





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WHAT OTHER ALTERNATIVES WERE CONSIDERED TO FUND PUBLIC SAFETY?

The City evaluated potential means of funding the necessary additional police and fire positions through internal and other external sources. Funding these positions with internal resources would mean reducing City Departmental budgets across the board in order to transfer additional funds to Fire/Rescue and Police.

It was also determined that there are no additional revenues available to the City from external sources and that the reductions to non-public safety services would be crippling.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF A MAJORITY VOTE “NO” AND THE REFERENDUM FAILS?

A failure to pass the referendum will result in **continued service delays and an inability to provide proactive policing services** in some areas of need. Additionally, the City will be faced with difficult decisions about how to address the growing need for public safety services, **will likely have to make additional cuts to current services – potentially including public safety** – and would be unable to hire additional police officers and firefighter/paramedics to meet the growing community need.

WHAT WILL APPEAR ON THE BALLOT?

The formal resolution requesting permission to exceed the state revenue limit will appear as follows on the April 6 ballot:

“Under State Law, the increase in the levy of the City of Fond du Lac for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year, 2022, is limited to 2.75%, which results in a levy of \$28,577,487. Shall the City of Fond du Lac be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year, 2022, and on an ongoing basis, for the purpose of employing and equipping six (6) additional full-time Firefighter/Paramedics and six (6) additional full-time Police Officers by a total of 4.69%, which results in a levy of \$29,880,774 and on an ongoing basis, include the increase of \$1,303,287 for each fiscal year going forward?”

WHEN AND WHERE DO I VOTE?

Election Day is Tuesday, April 6, 2021. All polling places will open at 7:00 AM and will close at 8:00 PM. Wisconsin voters are required to show an acceptable photo ID in order to vote.

Additional voting information, including polling places and information about requesting an absentee ballot, can be found on the City’s website at www.fdl.wi.gov/administration/city-clerk/elections/

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS REFERENDUM?

Send any questions or feedback to the City of Fond du Lac at referendum@fdl.wi.gov

Additional information about this Public Safety referendum will be available online at <https://www.fdl.wi.gov/referendum/>

