



*Preserving Yesterday's Heritage for Tomorrow.*

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### **Town Board of Supervisors**

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Gary Wickert, District 3  
Larry Lechner, District 4

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 9, 2009

## **Town Board Responds to City Rejection of Shared Services Proposal**

*Board Approves New Approach for Library, Senior Center & Recreation Services*

At their meeting on October 7<sup>th</sup>, the Cedarburg Town Board approved a series of changes related to the library, senior center and recreation shared services. In summary, the Board directed Town staff to create a Town recreation program, encourage Ozaukee County to provide programming for Town seniors at Lasata Crossings, and to not participate in a joint library with the City of Cedarburg. This decision was made in response to the City of Cedarburg's rejection of the Town's shared services proposal. The Town's current agreement with the City for these services will expire at the end of 2009.

For over two years, the Town has been negotiating with City officials on a variety of issues, including a permanent boundary, the Prochnow landfill and shared services. While progress has been made on many of these issues, most notably the City's agreement to a permanent boundary for the Five Corners area, City officials were not willing to accept the Town's proposal for recreation and senior center programming. The Town's proposal called for a more equitable and self-supporting user fee system to pay for these services.

The Board's decision to no longer participate in a joint library means Town residents will pay a county library tax next year rather than paying for library services through the Town tax levy. As a result, Town taxpayers will save about \$10,000 by paying the county library tax. In addition, the Town Board explained that the county library tax offered other benefits to residents, including:

- **Town resident tax dollars will now be spent at the library they patron.** Last year, 30% of Town residents received library services from a library other than the Cedarburg Public Library. The Town Board believes the county library tax is a more equitable way to fund library services because it is a use-based financing method. For example, if 70% of Town resident library use is at the Cedarburg Library then the reimbursement the Cedarburg Library would receive from Town resident county library tax dollars will be 70%. The balance of the reimbursement will be distributed to other libraries in proportion to Town use.
- **Town residents will no longer over pay for library services.** Since 2003, Town residents have paid more than their fair share to the City. Although Town resident use has accounted for about 22% of all Cedarburg Library use, they've paid for approximately 36% of all Cedarburg

Library costs. Over the past seven years, Town residents have spent over \$150,000 more than their use justifies.

- **Town residents may continue to use the Cedarburg Library** or any other library in the Eastern Shores Library System.

As for senior citizen programming, the Town Board will ask Ozaukee County to consider offering these services to Town residents at Lasata Crossings, which will open next summer in the City of Cedarburg. The Town believes such an arrangement could be a win-win scenario for both seniors in the Town and Ozaukee County. Town residents would be well served by Lasata staff at a state-of-the-art and convenient location, and Ozaukee County would be able to raise awareness of other opportunities Lasata has to offer seniors. At their meeting on October 7<sup>th</sup>, the Town Board expressed concern that the current shared service agreement for the City senior center placed a disproportionate financial burden on Town taxpayers. For example, over the last three years, the Town has paid the City as much as 28% of total senior center costs while only 5% of senior center use can be attributed to Town residents.

The Town Board also directed staff to create a self-supporting recreation program to ensure Town resident needs would be met in a cost-effective manner. This new recreation program will be open to area youth and will utilize Town, Cedarburg School District, and private properties/facilities and volunteers. Town staff has already begun to analyze recreation needs and opportunities. Gaps in existing programs offered by neighboring communities and local sports clubs will also be identified with the help of resident input. Several members of the Town Board questioned whether Town tax dollars were being well spent by the City under the current shared services agreement. Only about 17 cents of every dollar the Town paid the City has gone toward actual recreation programming while the overwhelming majority of Town tax dollars went toward overhead costs, such as wages and benefits for City employees.

Several factors contributed to the timing of the Board's decisions, including a County deadline for a decision on library financing, the need to prepare the Town's 2010 budget, and the absence of a counter proposal from the City on recreation and senior center services.

As previously stated, the Town's shared service agreement with the City will expire at the end of 2009. In 2010, Town residents may continue to use the Cedarburg Library or any other library in the Eastern Shores Library System. Senior and recreation services will not change for the rest of 2009. If the City accepts non-residents next year, Town residents may participate in City programming by paying the non-resident fee. However, Town seniors will be guaranteed access to the City senior center for lunch through the County's dining center program.

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### ***Town of Cedarburg, Wisconsin***

*The Town of Cedarburg, which is home to Wisconsin's last [covered bridge](#), strives to maintain its rural charm and high-quality of life while balancing growth and progress. The Town is located in Ozaukee County, which is ranked [the 2<sup>nd</sup> Best Place to Raise a Family](#) by Forbes.com. For more information, visit [www.town.cedarburg.wi.us](http://www.town.cedarburg.wi.us)*