



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –  
December 17, 2025  
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## **CITY OF SUN PRAIRIE PLACES REFERENDUM QUESTION ON APRIL BALLOT**

*Voters to decide on an increase in the property tax levy to continue providing quality services*

**Sun Prairie, WIS.** – The Sun Prairie City Council voted Tuesday night to place a referendum question on the Tuesday, April 7, 2026 ballot. Voters will be asked to decide whether they support a \$3.95 million increase in the City’s annual property tax levy to maintain the high-quality existing services and programs the community enjoys. Additional funding is also needed to invest in adding staff to key departments in order to improve services – including Police and Fire/Emergency Services.

“The City of Sun Prairie must secure additional funding to address the growing costs of maintaining high-quality services for our residents,” said Mayor Steve Stocker. “Our talented City staff are the backbone of our community services, and additional funding is required to provide the staffing support they need. Without this funding, the City will not be able to continue on with existing service levels. We anticipate cuts to programs, services and staffing will be required should residents choose not to support the referendum come April.”

Over the past decade, demand for essential City Police and Fire/EMS services has increased. Between 2015 and 2024, calls for emergency medical services increased by 107.9%. More recently, the Police Department saw a 13.5% increase in calls from 2020 to 2024 – averaging more than 70 calls for service per day. Current staffing levels are unable to keep up with this increased demand, leading to longer response times, lessened staff availability and a decrease in the overall level of public safety services Sun Prairie residents receive. If approved via referendum, additional funding would be used to hire additional Fire/EMS and Police personnel, improving service delivery and response efficiency.

Additionally, demand for Sun Prairie Public Library services and programs has increased by nearly 75% over the past decade. The library remains open even as renovation and expansion efforts are underway on a project expected to be completed in March 2026 that will double the library’s size. To continue supporting facility operations in a building twice the size and with double the amount of programming, additional funding for a part-time Makerspace Coordinator would help deliver programming to Library visitors.

Rising operating costs add to the City’s funding challenges, as costs for equipment, vehicles and contracts have increased due to inflation. To counteract this and in response to community input, the City has reduced long-term costs by more than \$1 million each year, including by eliminating several vacant executive-level positions and adjusting employee benefits. Despite these efforts, without additional funding, the city will not be able to maintain existing service levels or make the investments necessary to improve services.

If City of Sun Prairie voters approve the referendum, the City would be able to institute a one-time, permanent \$3,950,000 increase to the property tax levy, beginning with property tax bills issued in

December 2026. This translates to a property tax increase of up to \$264 for the average single-family home in Sun Prairie.

The formal resolution requesting permission to exceed the state revenue limit will appear as follows on the April 7 ballot:

*Under state law, the increase in the levy of the City of Sun Prairie for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year, 2027, is limited to 5.462%, which results in a levy of \$39,792,820. Shall the City of Sun Prairie be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year, 2027, for the purpose of maintaining current services and increasing staffing in the police and fire departments, by a total of 9.926%, which results in a levy of \$43,742,820, and on an ongoing basis, include the increase of \$3,950,000 for each fiscal year going forward?*

The City of Sun Prairie will share more information with residents online, through direct mail and by holding public information sessions ahead of the April election. More information will be available on the City's website in the coming weeks. Visit [www.cityofsunprairie.com/fundingsolutions](http://www.cityofsunprairie.com/fundingsolutions) to learn more.

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### **About City of Sun Prairie**

Sun Prairie is a vibrant and thriving community located in northeastern Dane County, just east of the City of Madison. The City of Sun Prairie has experienced strong population growth since its incorporation from a village to a city in 1958, undergoing a transformation from a relatively small community of less than 4,000 to an estimated 39,419 today.