



# Wauwatosa Financial Snapshot

2023

## Finding Efficiencies and Sharing Services in the Fire Department

On a typical day inside one of our three fire stations, you'll hear sound patterns to indicate the types of calls happening at the moment. A subdued tone indicates a medical/rescue call, and this is our most common type of response, representing roughly 80% of our calls. In recent years, you'd hear more of these types of calls. In fact, our call volume continues to grow roughly 5% per year over the last 10 years.

Another important number we watch is our staffing level to respond to increasing calls. In 2009, our Fire Department had 115 full-time positions. In 2023, we have 103. This might seem contradictory, given that our call volume has increased, but we have successfully found efficiencies and invested in shared services to continue to provide emergency services, fire protection, and fire prevention.

One resource that has helped us maintain efficiencies is Wauwatosa's participation in a mutual aid program called Shared Services. This means we respond to calls in other communities, and other municipalities respond to calls in Wauwatosa. The closest units respond, regardless of city boundaries, because every second counts in an emergency.

This has been a successful model for us because, within Milwaukee County, we have access to 45 engines, 14 ladder trucks, 27 paramedic rigs, 12 battalion chiefs, additional higher level chiefs, hazardous materials teams, water rescue teams, incident command post and more. We might not be able to provide these resources internally without great cost.

Hiring highly skilled firefighter paramedics, maintaining specialized equipment, keeping apparatus ready

for response and responding to an increased demand for service makes our budgeting process challenging. A notable challenge we've seen since the pandemic is the exponential increase in the cost for EMS supplies. Narcan, a medication that reverses the effects of opioid overdoses now costs \$51.50 per vial. In 2018, the cost was \$15.47. Even simple supplies like gloves have seen a 450% increase in price since 2018.

Briefly, some of the other operational solutions we are expanding include an internship program that recruits people exploring the career while offering tuition, gear stipends, and job shadowing. We have also hired a shared social worker between our Fire, Police, and Health Departments to provide referrals for care needed by some of our residents. We continue to evaluate our service model to ensure safety for all in Wauwatosa.

## Tax Rates of Comparable Communities

Wauwatosa remains competitive in its tax rate compared to other communities. The 2022 tax rate increased 4.5%, from \$20.85 per \$1000 of assessed value to \$21.79.

The rate is calculated by taking the overall tax levy dollars, net of tax credits, plus the tax increment for tax incremental financing districts, and dividing by the total local assessed value of property within Wauwatosa. The city portion of that tax rate increased 2.7%, from \$7.00 to \$7.19.

The average residential property is valued at \$271,000, slightly up from last year's value of \$270,000.

The 2022 tax bill for the average residence in Wauwatosa is \$5,654. In 2021, the tax bill for the average residence was \$5,358.

To the right is a chart showing each comparable communities' tax rate per \$1000 of equalized value. This only reflects the city or village portion of their tax bill.

Municipality	Tax Rate per \$1000 of equalized value
New Berlin	\$4.77
Franklin	\$4.81
Brookfield	\$5.26
Oak Creek	\$5.89
Wauwatosa	\$6.82
Sheboygan	\$8.25
Greenfield	\$8.27
La Crosse	\$9.10
Fond du Lac	\$9.28
West Allis	\$9.94





## Wauwatosa Maintains Top Rating for Financial Operations

Moody's Investor Services has given Wauwatosa the highest bond rating (Aaa), ranking the City of Wauwatosa with the strongest creditworthiness compared to other U.S. borrowers. We have received this designation for several years.

Wauwatosa benefits from a growing tax base and a strong financial profile with healthy reserves. Despite state imposed levy limits, we retain excess levy capacity for debt service.

Levy limits restrict the city's ability to increase its annual levy by more than the percentage of valuation change driven by net new construction exclusive of increases for debt service.

This strong financial rating is important because our bonds finance street, water system, sewerage improvement, and other city projects.

Earning Moody's top bond rating enables us to secure funding for lending at the most competitive rates.



## Where Do My Property Taxes Go?

Wauwatosa property owners received their 2022 tax bill in the mail in December. You can also view your tax bill online ([wauwatosa.net/taxes](http://wauwatosa.net/taxes)).

Notice that 31.1% of your total taxes support the City of Wauwatosa. The remaining amount supports Milwaukee County, Wauwatosa School District, Milwaukee Area Technical College, and the Metropolitan Milwaukee Sewer District.

See the dollar bill below for the percentages that each of these entities receive from your tax bill.

Some people may not realize that

although you pay your tax bill to the City, not all of it stays with us. The city portion of your tax bill supports an array of services.

For an average Wauwatosa home (valued at \$271,000), the monthly bill for city services is \$162.33.

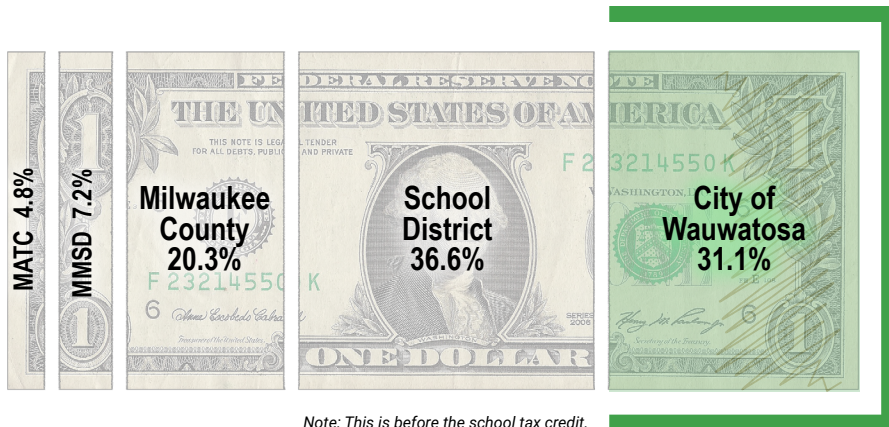
This means for \$162.33 per month, you get fire protection and police response in the event you need it. You get your trash and recycling collected, leaf and yard waste collection (which some other cities don't offer), public health services, parks to play in, access to books, media, and programming at the library, well-maintained streets to

drive on, and plowed streets to get you where you need to go in the winter.

These services are based on the city's budget - which is created in conjunction with the Common Council, city staff, and the public considering the fiscal and strategic goals each year.

## What's an Average Tax Bill?

Average Monthly Bill = \$162.33  
*The average monthly tax bill for city services is \$162.33. Here's a breakdown of what that supports:*



- \$13.61 General Government
- \$45.49 Police
- \$32.86 Fire
- \$2.68 Other Public Safety
- \$12.56 Public Works
- \$3.77 Health
- \$6.66 Conservation and Development
- \$9.39 Library
- \$28.29 Debt
- \$4.46 Parks
- \$3.06 Capital





## Chasing Leaks - How Acoustics Help us Repair Water Mains

Wauwatosa’s Water Department uses a variety of methods to detect and repair leaks in its water mains. One common method is the use of acoustic leak detection technology, which uses sensors to pick up the sound of water escaping from a pipe. These sensors can be placed on a fire hydrant, the surface of the ground above the pipe, or directly on a water valve. The sensors pick up the sound of the leak and transmit it to a computer, which analyzes the data and can pinpoint the location of the leak.

In 2022, we worked with a consultant on the latest leak detection correlation technology. The consultant identified 24 leaks. They estimated that - if not fixed - this could cost up to \$785 per week. Our skilled professionals in the Water Department repaired all 24 leaks in 2022.

Our team also performs regular routine acoustic leak checks and pressure monitoring to detect leaks. If our team detects a leak in a water main, we will dispatch a crew to repair the leak as soon as possible. This may involve digging up the street to access the damaged pipe and replacing or repairing it as needed.

It’s worth to mention that, in addition to the leak detection, Wauwatosa also makes use of preventive maintenance by replacing old and worn pipes and performing regular fire hydrant inspections to find leaks before they have a chance to cause major damage.

Wauwatosa uses a combination of technology and human expertise to detect and repair leaks in its water mains, ensuring a consistent supply of clean and safe drinking water to its residents.

### What can residents do about water leaks?

Residents can play an important role in addressing water leaks by being aware of the signs of a leak and taking action to report any leaks they find. Some signs of a water leak include:

- A sudden increase in water bills
- Low water pressure
- A wet or saturated area on the ground, even in dry weather
- The sound of running water when no water is in use

You can also sign up for an Eye on Water account to monitor your household’s water usage and get a text or email if a leak is detected in your account. Not every leak would have the signs listed above, but every leak can add up to a costly bill.

In addition to reporting leaks, residents can also take steps to reduce their own water usage and help conserve resources. Simple measures such as fixing leaks in the home, taking shorter showers, and using water-efficient appliances can make a significant impact.



*A staff member is within one of the water pumping stations conducting an inspection.*

## Tracking American Rescue Plan Act Funding



In 2022, Wauwatosa received over \$24 million in federal funding intended to support our response to and recovery from the pandemic. Through a public process, our residents, business owners, and other stakeholders gave input on how to allocate these funds. Ultimately, the Common Council passed a funding package that includes:

- investing in water infrastructure such as replacing water mains and building a pump station
- pandemic safety for first responders
- mental health programs for the community, including substance use resources, youth programming, and more
- direct support to small businesses for emergency and/or resiliency efforts

You can see all of the projects and their progress at [wauwatosa.net/ARPA](http://wauwatosa.net/ARPA)





## Wauwatosa Elected Officials

**Mayor Dennis McBride**  
 mayor@wauwatosa.net  
 (414) 479-8915

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**Common Council**  
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**District 1**

**James Moldenhauer**  
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 (414) 453-8821

**Andrew Meindl**  
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 (262) 696-9117

**District 2**

**Margaret Arney**  
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 (414) 454-9152

**John Dubinski**  
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**District 3**

**Joseph Makhlof II**  
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**Robin Brannin**  
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**District 4**

**Ernst Franzen**  
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 (414) 475-5575

**David R. Lewis**  
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 (414) 312-3478

**District 5**

**Sean Lowe**  
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 (262) 269-1536

**Joel Tilleson**  
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**District 6**

**Meagan O'Reilly**  
 moreilly@wauwatosa.net  
 (414) 465-8330

**Joe Phillips**  
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 (414) 215-9191

**District 7**

**Mike Morgan**  
 mmorgan@wauwatosa.net  
 (414) 335-9467

**Amanda Fuerst**  
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 (262) 372-1060

**District 8**

**Jason Wilke**  
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 (414) 520-1962

**Melissa Dolan**  
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## 2022 BY THE NUMBERS



Calls for Police Service

**27,114**



Trees Pruned

**2,600**



Calls for Fire/EMS Service

**8,219**



Tons of Materials Recycled

**5,000**



Water Meters Inspected & Repaired

**15,500**



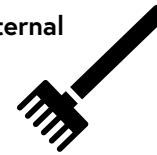
Tons of Garbage Collected

**11,000**



Assessed high-risk maternal health issues

**572**



Tons of Yard Waste Collected

**1,500**



Library Checkouts

**780,000**



Fire Department Medical Calls

**6,629**



Building Permits Issued

**4,754**



Tons of Asphalt Patch

**608**



Building and Safety Inspections

**1,016**



Wauwatosa.net Web views (million)

**1.42**

