



Administration and Finance Committee

Assessor Communication

May 19, 2020

Issue: The City of Milwaukee recently undertook a residential revaluation. Many property owners throughout Milwaukee experienced notable increases in their assessed value. This communication is meant to communicate the general purpose and process of a revaluation, provide an explanation as to what happened in Milwaukee, and explain how a residential revaluation may affect West Allis.

Overview: The Assessor's Office is responsible for the discovery, listing, and valuation of all taxable property within the City, review and approval of property tax exemption requests, maintenance of ownership information, and conducting all process related to property valuation, including tax appeals. Duties are performed in accordance with Chapter 70 of the Wisconsin State Statutes and the Wisconsin Property Assessment Manual.

The Assessor's Office strives to ensure uniformity of assessments and a fair and equitable distribution of the tax burden to the taxpayers of West Allis.

When assessed values are not aligned with market values by more than 10% of estimated fair market value, a revaluation is required by State Law. However, a municipality may choose to perform a revaluation for other reasons such as property record maintenance or maintaining a tighter conformity to changes to market activity.

Key Points: The amount a property owner will pay on the tax bill is primarily determined by the tax levy. The tax levy is set by the various taxing jurisdictions including the City of West Allis, West Allis/West Milwaukee School District, Metropolitan Milwaukee Sewage District (MMSD), Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), Milwaukee County, and the State of Wisconsin.

Assessments are based on a comparison of homes to other similar ones that have sold over the past year. Thus, property owners can see values go up even if they have not made improvements — and even if they don't intend to.

Assessed value can go up, but the tax bill may stay the same if the levy is unchanged. Alternatively, a tax bill can go down while an assessed value remains constant. To be clear, the overall tax burden is a function of the tax levy approved by taxing jurisdictions whereas the assessed value is a marker for the share of that burden.