



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE
FINANCE DIVISION

December 20, 2013

Mayor Dan Devine
Members of the Common Council

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Dear Mayor & Members of the Common Council:

I wanted to bring to your attention an upgrade and improvement made to the City's property tax billing and collection system.

In late September 2013, Milwaukee County Treasurer Dan Diliberti approached staff in the Treasurer's office regarding converting to GCS Tax and Property Software, a system used by all Milwaukee County municipalities that settle taxes with the County, except us. Treasurer Diliberti offered to pay for the cost of conversion and the on-going maintenance of the system if the City of West Allis agreed to switch to the County system.

After careful consideration and discussion between Rosemary West in the Treasurer's Office, Mark Wyss in the Finance Division, along with Kris Moen, Shawn Hart and Nicole O'Conner of the Finance Division, and Kathryn Perrone and Jim Jandovitz from IT, we decided to meet with representatives from GCS to look at the possibility of conversion.

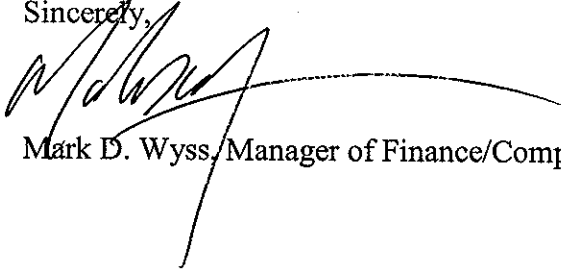
On October 17, 2013 the above-mentioned individuals met with representatives from GCS and saw a demonstration of the software. After that meeting, we sat down to discuss if we thought we could make the conversion happen, knowing we only had five weeks to make it work. After much discussion, we decided to make the switch.

Over the next four weeks, Kris, Shawn, Kathryn and I worked with programmers at GCS as well as our property assessment software provider, with assistance from Lori Hauser in the Assessor's Office, to convert property data, design the tax bills, and prepare the tax roll. Twenty thousand property records were converted, the billing system was tested and verified, and tax bills went out within the normal timeframe.

Meanwhile, Rosemary and Candi in the Treasurer's office worked to set up the cash receipting side of the operation and Nicole has been working on GCS system reporting. In the span of four day's time, they worked the bugs out of the cash receipting system and were ready when the first tax payers arrived at City Hall. From a taxpayer perspective, the transition was seamless.

Often I have heard that the pace of change is too slow. This project is a wonderful example of three departments working together with a clear common goal and solving a problem. Kudos go out to all the individuals mentioned in this letter, especially Kathryn and Kris, who did a great job turning around a project which will save the City money, increase productivity, and simplify operations, and doing it in a little over one month, which demonstrates, we when put our minds to it, we can make change happen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wyss', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark D. Wyss, Manager of Finance/Comptroller.