**City of West Allis** 



## 2017 Budget & Action Plan

as recommended by

**Mayor Dan Devine** 

Administration and Finance Committee Presentation October 24, 2016



# Introduction



**Mayor's Remarks** 



#### **Expenditure Restraint Program (ERP)**

- What is it?
  - Aid provided by State to municipalities who limit growth in spending.
- How is it calculated?
  - For the year prior to the aid payment, the rate of expenditure growth cannot exceed the inflation rate plus an adjustment based on the growth in municipal property values.
- What is the limit?
  - Last year, inflation rate and growth combined for a 0.7% allowable expenditure increase, or approximately \$394,000. (0.7% x \$57 million-expenses)
  - ➤ 2017 budget proposal, as presented, assumes a 1% allowable increase, or approximately \$589,000
  - Final figures to be provided by State next week. League estimating 1.3% increase for West Allis
- What is the aid amount we get if we remain within the limit?
   ~\$1,500,000 per year (or 3% of our annual budget)
- What is the penalty for exceeding the ERP limit?
  - Disqualification from the program for that year—no aid payment



#### **Levy Limits**

#### What is it?

Levy Limits prohibit county, city, villages or towns from increasing its base tax levy by more than the percentage change of the Jan. 1 equalized value due to new construction, less improvements removed, between the previous year and the current year.

#### What is the limit?

- In 2016, the levy limit was 0.71%. (0.71% x \$35.6 million tax levy ~ \$252,000).
- In 2017, the levy limit is 0.659% (again, approximately \$252,000).
- Repayment of debt (principal and interest) is outside these limits.

#### What is the penalty for exceeding the levy limit?

The penalty is a loss of shared revenue. This is a dollar for dollar penalty.

**Example:** If a municipality exceeds its levy limit by \$1,000, its state shared revenue payment is reduced by \$1,000. If the penalty amount is greater than the state shared revenue amount for that year, the remaining penalty amount is deducted from subsequent state shared revenue payments until the penalty is paid in full.



#### **Personnel Costs**

#### What are they?

- Salaries/Wages--\$34.5 million.
- Benefits--\$15.5 million (includes Social Security, WRS pension contributions, health, dental, life insurance for current employees and health insurance benefits for retired employees).
- Totals more than \$50 million per year, and 85% of general fund budgeted expenses.

#### How many employees?

We currently have ~580 regular positions, over 169 other positions and close to 550 retirees to whom we provide benefits.

#### What is our OPEB liability? (other post-employment benefits)

- \$158 million.
- Actuarial calculation of the cost of health insurance coverage owed to retirees and current employees (i.e. future retirees) per city policies and union contracts.



# Staffing

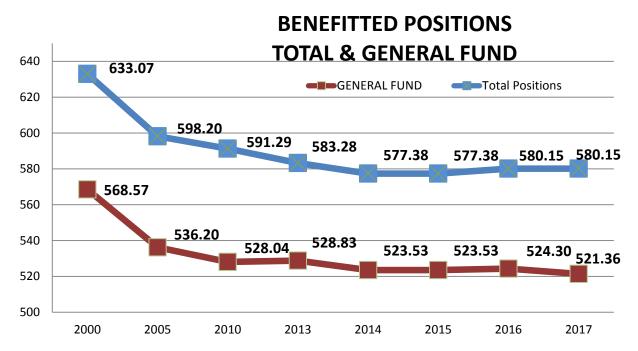
2017 Benefitted Positions	580.15
Funded by General Fund	521.36
Other Funding Sources *	
Utilities, Grants, TID's, FIRE (NMTC)	58.79*
Misc. Part-time, Non Benefitted	169.75
Total 2017 Positions	749.90

What is the right number??

<sup>\*</sup>Other funding sources cover salary/fringe benefit cost of active employees, but upon retirement, General Fund is responsible for cost of retiree insurance benefits.



## **Historical Staffing**

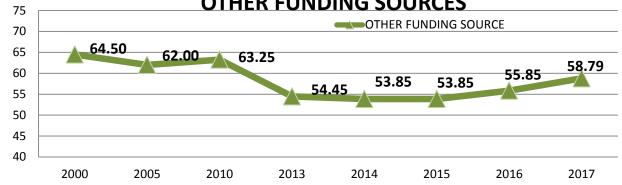


Total Positions and General Fund positions have decreased since 2000...

...but recent decreases in General Fund positions have often been offset by a corresponding increase in positions funded by other sources---these are funding changes not staffing changes

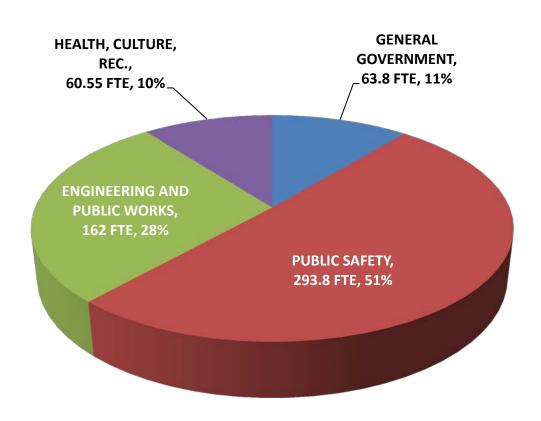
Note: other funding sources include Utilities, Grants, TID's , FIRE (NMTC)

## BENEFITTED POSITIONS OTHER FUNDING SOURCES





## Personnel by Function



# WEST ALLIS

# Challenges

## **Growing Capital Needs**

- Roads
- Sewers
- Water
- Facilities Maintenance
- Vehicle Replacement
- Levy Limits & Expenditure Restraint program restrict financial options to fund capital needs--effectively steering municipalities to borrow



#### **Other Challenges**

- Increasingly complex societal problems.
- Neighborhood blight and code enforcement issues.
- The ability to continue to attract, develop and retain highly motivated, committed and trained employees.
- Socio-economic status of community.



# Demographics

#### Demographics

Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey Five Year Estimates (US Census Bureau)

	V	Vest Allis	Milw Cty	Wisconsin	La Crosse	Janesville	Eau Claire	Oshkosh	Waukesha
Median* Household Income	\$	44,475	\$ 43,385	\$ 52,738	\$ 40,340	\$ 49,392	\$ 43,295	\$ 42,860	\$ 58,126
Poverty		13.9%	21.9%	13.3%	23.5%	15.0%	18.5%	18.9%	12.2%
Median Age		37.9	34	38.8	28.8	36.9	30.5	33.1	34.1
Occupied Housing Units		27,294	381,446	2,293,250	20,749	25,581	27,255	25,987	28,466
Vacant Housing Units		1,962	36,303	342,352	1,482	1,559	1,415	2,144	1,175
Owner Occupied		55.1%	50.7%	67.7%	50.2%	66.9%	53.4%	54.6%	58.9%
Renter Occupied		44.9%	49.3%	32.3%	49.8%	33.1%	46.6%	45.4%	41.1%
Median Housing Value	\$	145,500	\$ 154,400	\$ 165,900	\$ 129,000	\$ 129,200	\$ 138,600	\$ 115,300	\$ 194,400
Population		60,411	947,735	5,686,986	51,320	63,575	63,883	66,083	70,718

(\*Median = "Middle Value", 50% of values above, 50% below)



# **Overall Budget Strategy**

### Analyze

 Review current processes and structure to ensure the most efficient operation of service delivery (external and internal); lean, continuous improvement and innovation

#### Allocate

 Repurpose resources (human and capital) to new areas of need based on savings from streamlining and technological improvement, differing service needs; not more with less, change use of resources to fit current and future state

#### Align

 Provide delivery of services in a manner consistent with needs and wants of citizens and customers (internal and external)



- Health Care transition = continued budget capacity.
- Priority Based budgeting implementation.
- Succession planning for CFE Department.
- Lean Training Continuous improvement initiative.
- Shared Administrative Staff Opportunities.
- Facilities Study, Inventory Audit and Water Reservoir Study.
- Capital Budget Planning.



## Budget Highlights – Quality of Life and Safety

- Police Body Worn Cameras July 2017.
- Police Training Facility Construction.
- IT Network Security Firewall Installation.
- Buildings-Facilities phone lines rewiring.
- Police and Fire file server upgrade.
- Center for Excellence/ IT Succession and transition plan
- Exploring streamlining code enforcement process to reduce investigation and processing time – possible implementation – Spring 2017



## Budget Highlights – Funding Adjustments

- Reallocation of claims/judgments/outside counsel costs to City Attorney accounts.
- Moved Creative Services Division of Communications from Administration to Communications Department.
- Aligned city newsletter costs with Communication Department budget.
- Reduced funding for replacement vehicles/equipment in the operating budget.
- Limited funding of ~\$600,000 in the DPW operating budget for equipment replacement.
- Room Tax--for tourism development and tourism promotion funding.
- Reallocation of COLA and performance allowance funding to address potential implementation of Compensation Study results



## Budget Highlights – Capital Budget

Implemented audit recommendation to formalize capital expenditure planning

- Budget includes 5 Capital Projects funds to allow for better planning and financial oversight
  - 1. Public Infrastructure Construction
  - 2. Public Buildings & Facilities
  - 3. Capital Accumulation Fund
  - 4. Parks & Open Spaces
  - 5. Misc. Non-Operating Initiatives

Budget continues to include strategic use of reserves for one-time capital needs

Alternative to debt financing or deferring maintenance



#### Streets, Sewers, Water Mains and Sanitary Sewers

- \$2.75 million bond funding for street construction.
- \$293,000 Other Construction.
- Enterprise Funds \$6.4 million.
- Tax Levy Impact
  - Debt Service expenditures increase approximately \$200,000 in 2017
  - Larger increases in future years if additional street funding is authorized
    - CIP Committee to recommend 5 year Capital Improvement Program in early 2017 for A&F approval
    - Policy Decision to be made.



## **Open Space and Parks**

- \$250,000 funding with priorities to be evaluated in near future.
- Funded from reserves (no levy impact).

### Facilities - Repair, Maintenance & Replacement

- \$600,000 funding with priorities to be evaluated in near future.
- Funded from reserves (no levy impact).



#### **Capital Equipment Requests**

- Public Works request reduced by \$1 million.
- ~\$600,000 for annual replacement remains in Operating Budget.
- Average age of PW fleet is 15+ years.
- Additional funding or significant operational changes needed.



## Capital Equipment Requests - Fire

- Ladder Truck \$1.4 million.
- Engine \$565,000.
- Refurbishment of two existing Engines \$205,000
- Equipment Replacement Fund depleted due to:
  - Replacement of one Fire Engine in 2016
  - Planned replacement of three ambulances (two in late 2016, one in early 2017).



# Capital Budget – Policy Consideration

#### Capital Equipment Requests – Fire Funding

- Salary savings from 2016 can be repurposed towards equipment replacement but won't provide sufficient funding.
- Debt financing for replacement equipment will be required. — This is a departure from our current equipment replacement practice and is an important policy decision.
- Fiscal Impact
  - Debt service expenditures increase ~\$180,000 in 2018
  - \$7.50 increase on the average tax bill (5 cents on the tax rate) to fund replacement of fire apparatus.



## MISC NON-OPERATING INITIATIVES PROJECTS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL 2017 CAPITAL BUDGET

Project	Proposed Funding	Est (	Cost
Fire Engine Purchase New	Bond Funds	\$	565,000
Aerial Truck Purchase New	Bond Funds	\$	1,450,000
	Bond Funds Total	\$	2,015,000
Fire Engine Refurbish 2 Current engines	Carryover	\$	205,000
HR Biddle Testing Software	Carryover	\$	6,000
HR Total Rewards Statement	Carryover	\$	5,000
Neogov Onboarding	Carryover	\$	6,000
Neogov Performance Review	Carryover	\$	9,000
Inventory Audit	Carryover	\$	25,000
Lean Training	Carryover	\$	20,000
Design/Planning for Remodeling of City Hall and Meeting Areas for Shared Administrative/Citizen Central	Carryover	\$	60,000
	Carryover Total	\$	336,000
Communications AV Enhancements to City Hall Conference Rooms, Art Gallery & Council Chambers	Communications Funding	\$	20,000
Website Redesign and Upgrade	Communications Funding	\$	30,000
	Communications Funding Total	<b>\$</b>	50,000
IT Network Security Firewall	IT Capital Accumulation Funds	\$	35,000
IT Rewire of Buildings-Facilities Phone Lines	IT Capital Accumulation Funds	\$	10,000
	IT Capital Accumulation Funds Total	\$	45,000
Police Training Facility (Construct House for Simulation Training)	Mulitple Sources- \$135k Capital Accum Funds, \$15k SIU	\$	150,000
	Mulitple Sources Total	\$	150,000
Morgan Avenue Gate Replacement	Reserve-Capital Replacement	\$	5,000
	Reserve-Capital Replacement Total	\$	5,000
Facilities Study	Reserve-Productivity/Operational Improvements	\$	75,000
IT/Police and Fire file server upgrade	Reserve-Productivity/Operational Improvements	\$	75,000
Priority Based Budgeting (Implementation)	Reserve-Productivity/Operational Improvements	\$	50,000
Performance Review/Pay for Performance Implementation	Reserve-Productivity/Operational Improvements	\$	50,000
	Reserve-Productivity/Operational Improvements Total	\$	250,000
Body Worn Cameras	Departmental Budget	\$	204,000
	Departmental Budget Total	\$	204,000
Water Reservoir Study	Water Utility	S	40,000
	Water Utility Total	\$	40,000
	Grand Total	\$	3,095,000
FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES			_
Communications Funding (Fund 260)		\$	(50,000)
Water Utility (Fund 501)		\$	(40,000)
Body Worn Cameras were included in the Police Department Operating Budget in the General Fund		\$	(204,000)
IT Capital Accumulation Funds & Police Capital Accumulation Funds are in Fund 351		\$	(45,000)
SIU Funding comes from the Police Department's Asset Forfeiture Fund		\$	(150,000)
NET FUNDING IN MISC NON-OPERATING INITIATIVES FUND (FUND 352)		\$	2,606,000



## 2017 Recommended Budget Fact sheet

City of West Allis													
Recommended 2017 Budget - Fact Sheet													
	F	Budget Year		Tax		Budget Year		Tax					
		2016	]	Rate	2017			late *	Change *				
Total General Fund Expenditures	\$	57,621,784	\$	9.25	\$	58,211,502	\$	9.35	1.02%				
General Government	\$	9,614,248	\$	1.54	\$	9,538,206	\$	1.53	-0.79%				
Public Safety	\$	31,708,828	\$	5.09	\$	32,286,279	\$	5.19	1.82%				
Engineering & Public Works	\$	11,626,476	\$	1.87	\$	11,874,417	\$	1.91	2.13%				
Health, Culture, Recreation	\$	4,672,232	\$	0.75	\$	4,512,600	\$	0.72	-3.42%				
* Assessed Value	\$	\$ 3,731,629,800		s	\$ 3,748,119,000			0.44%					
General Fund Tax Levy	\$	33,631,139	\$	9.25	\$	34,158,048	\$	9.35	1.57%				
Health Fund Tax Levy	\$	2,000,000	\$	0.54	\$	2,000,000	\$	0.53	0.00%				
Parking Fund Tax Levy	\$	43,000	\$	0.01	\$	43,000	\$	0.01	0.00%				
Debt Fund Tax Levy	\$	3,802,118	\$	1.02	\$	3,999,194	\$	1.07	5.18%				
TID Levy	\$	877,692			\$	1,058,693			20.62%				
Total Levy /Total Tax Rate	\$	40,353,949	\$	10.81	\$	41,258,935	\$	11.01	2.24%				
Taxes on \$150K home:	\$	1,621.50			\$	1,651.50			1.85%				
Change in Taxes:					\$	(30.00)							
Total Employees (FTE, All Funds)		580.55				580.15			0.0%				
Projected Fund Balance	\$	6,214,373			\$	6,412,820			3.2%				
Fund Balance as % of Gen Fund Exp		10.8%				11.0%			0.2%				

<sup>\*</sup> ESTIMATED



## 2017 Recommended Budget Expenditures

#### CITY OF WEST ALLIS EXPENDITURE SUMMARY-ALL FUNDS 2017 BUDGET

		Mayoral/CC															
	2014				2016			2016	2017		Additions/		2017			%	
EXPENDITURES	_	Actual		Actual		Budget	Ac	ljusted Budget		Request		Deletions		Budget	_	Change	Change
GENERAL GOVERNMENT																	
Common Council	\$	263,392		275,112		249,888	\$	251,271		247,328	\$	-	\$	247,328		(2,560)	-1.02%
Mayor	5	129,353	\$	128,813	\$	121,642	1 -	123,140	1 -	121,872	\$	-	\$	121,872		230	0.19%
City Attorney	\$	675,653	\$	683,669	\$	693,164		701,696		874,200	\$	-	\$			181,036	26.12%
Municipal Court	\$	479,217	\$	493,900	\$	409,376	\$	412,668	\$	412,391	\$	-	\$	412,391	\$	3,015	0.74%
City Assessor	\$	536,182	\$	548,388	\$	539,428	\$	564,633	\$	530,220	\$	-	\$	530,220		(9,208)	-1.71%
Administration	\$	134,560	\$	237,310	\$	412,961	\$	494,825	\$	210,650	\$	-	\$	210,650		(202,311)	-48.99%
Information Technology	\$	1,246,325	\$	1,848,584	\$	1,624,539	\$	1,807,660	\$	1,860,183	\$	-	\$	1,860,183	\$	235,644	14.51%
Purchasing/Central Services	5	515,645	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	
Human Resources	\$	461,176	\$	466,165	\$	464,439	\$	551,056	\$	462,977	\$	-	\$	462,977	\$	(1,462)	-0.31%
Finance	\$	515,710	\$	845,230	\$	857,775	\$	866,248	\$	852,865	\$	-	\$	852,865	\$	(4,910)	-0.57%
City Clerk	\$	643,140	\$	523,813	\$	529,915	\$	613,111	\$	516,945	\$	-	\$	516,945	\$	(12,970)	-2.45%
Promotion, Celebrations, Awards	\$	100,816	\$	119,331	\$	121,575	\$	128,575	\$	68,225	\$	-	\$			(53,350)	-43.88%
General Fringe Benefits *, Workers Comp, Insurance	\$	1,307,604	\$	938,226	\$	2,884,946	\$	3,155,371	\$	2,734,750	\$	-	\$	2,734,750	\$	(150,196)	-5.21%
Other General Government	\$	780,125	\$	1,237,582	\$	704,600	\$	1,077,708	\$	645,600	\$	-	\$	645,600	\$	(59,000)	-8.37%
TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT	\$	7,788,900	\$	8,346,123	\$	9,614,248	\$	10,747,962	\$	9,538,206	\$	-	\$	9,538,206	\$	(76,042)	-0.79%
PUBLIC SAFETY																	
Police & Fire Commission	\$	24,826	\$	21,862	\$	20,000	\$	22,750	\$	45,000	\$	-	\$	45,000	\$	25,000	125.00%
Police	\$	17,412,223	\$	17,927,840	\$	17,586,272	\$	17,642,092	\$	17,915,211	\$	-	\$	17,915,211	\$	328,939	1.87%
Fire	\$	12,175,674	\$	11,959,242	\$	12,647,736	\$	14,091,417	\$	12,716,015	\$	-	\$	12,716,015	\$	68,279	0.54%
Building Insp & Neighborhood Services	S	1,181,656	\$	1,157,014	\$	1,145,658	\$	1,160,049	\$	1,257,680	\$	-	\$	1,257,680	\$	112,022	9.78%
Planning	\$	428,118	\$	406,759	\$	309,162	\$	360,075	\$	352,373	\$	-	\$	352,373	\$	43,211	13.98%
TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY	\$	31,222,498	\$	31,472,717	\$	31,708,828	\$	33,276,383	\$	32,286,279	\$	-	\$	32,286,279	\$	577,451	1.82%
PUBLIC WORKS																	
Engineering	s	1,206,070	s	1,192,264	s	1,301,786	s	1,323,528	s	1,297,636	\$	_	s	1,297,636	s	(4,150)	-0.32%
Public Works	Š	9,983,989	Ś	9,485,771	Ś		Š	11,783,867	Š	10,576,781	Š	-	Š	10,576,781		252,091	2.44%
TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS	\$	11,190,059	\$	10,678,036	\$	11,626,476	\$	13,107,395	\$	11,874,417	\$	-	\$	11,874,417	_	247,941	2.13%
HEALTH, CULTURE, RECREATION	•																
Health Department	s	1,937,402	s	2,040,427	s	2,047,201	s	2,130,612	s	2,043,347	\$	_	s	2,043,347	s	(3,854)	-0.19%
Senior Center	\$			220,568		238,383		241,783		218,268	\$	-	\$	218,268		(20,115)	-8.44%
Library	S	2,096,030	\$	2,088,412	\$	2,386,648	\$	2,462,353		2,250,985	\$	-	\$	2,250,985	\$	(135,663)	-5.68%
TOTAL HEALTH, CULTURE, RECREATION	\$		\$	4,349,407	\$	4,672,232	\$	4,834,748		4,512,600	\$	-	\$	4,512,600	\$	(159,632)	-3.42%
TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES	\$	54,458,292	_	54,846,283	_	57,621,784	\$	61,966,488		58,211,502		-	\$	58,211,502	\$	589,718	1.02%

\* City paid fringe benefit expenses for social security, medicare, pension, as well as health, dental, and life insurance are included in departmental budgets. General fringe benefits includes cost of miscellaneous benefit programs not specifically attributable to individual departments



#### CITY OF WEST ALLIS Summary of City of West Allis Tax Levies & Comparative Analysis of City of West Allis Tax Rates 2014(2015), 2015(2016) Actual and 2016(2017) Levy

	2014(2015) Rate	2015(2016) Rate	2016(2017) Rate	2016(2017) Increase (Decrease)	2016(2017) % Increase (Decrease)
Assessed Valuation (including TIF) *	\$3,724,450,300	\$3,731,629,800	3,748,119,000 (estimated)	\$16,489,200	0.44%
Tax Rates/\$1,000 Property Valuation					
General Fund Rate	\$8.98	\$8.99	\$9.11	\$0.12	1.33%
Health Insurance Rate	\$0.54	\$0.54	\$0.53	(\$0.01)	-1.85%
Parking Utility Rate	\$0.02	\$0.02	\$0.01	(\$0.01)	-50.00%
Debt Fund Rate	\$1.02	\$1.02	\$1.08	\$0.06	5.88%
Tax Increment Financing Rate	\$0.25	\$0.24	\$0.28	\$0.04	16.67%
Tax Rate/\$1,000 Property Valuation	\$10.81	\$10.81	\$11.01	\$0.20	1.85%

#### Comparative Tax Rates Per \$1,000 of Valuation

	Assessed	Equalized
2006 for 2007 (1)	\$8.49	\$8.37
2007 for 2008	\$8.65	\$8.22
2008 for 2009	\$8.70	\$8.25
2009 for 2010	\$8.94	\$8.76
2010 for 2011 (1)	\$9.61	\$9.53
2011 for 2012	\$9.75	\$10.18
2012 for 2013	\$9.81	\$10.71
2013 for 2014 (1)	\$10.75	\$10.87
2014 for 2015	\$10.81	\$10.84
2015 for 2016	\$10.81	\$10.84
2016 for 2017	\$11.01	\$11.04

<sup>(1)</sup> Revaluation conducted this year.

<sup>\*</sup> NOTE: Final Assessed Values for 2016(2017) are not available as of publication date. Estimates are used in the tax rate calculations above.



## **Utility Rates**

#### UTILITY RATE SUMMARY PROPOSED 2017 CITY RATES

Average household has 3 individuals with an average individual using 10ccfs per quarter												
	Proposed		Cı	urrent	Pr	oposed		Oollar	%			
		Rate	Usage				Rates	In	crease	Increase		
Water/CCF *	\$	2.60	30 CCFs	\$	67.80	\$	78.00	\$	10.20	15.04%		
City Sewer**	\$	1.75	30 CCFs	\$	52.50	\$	52.50	\$	-	0.00%		
Waste Mgmnt***	\$	22.50		\$	22.50	\$	22.50	\$	-	0.00%		
MMSD ****	\$	28.58		\$	28.58	\$	28.58	\$	-	0.00%		
Storm Water****	\$	20.58		\$	19.29	\$	20.58	\$	1.29	6.69%		
Basic Service*	\$	39.52		\$	32.94	\$	39.52	\$	6.58	19.98%		
Total Charges/Quarter				\$	223.61	\$	241.68	\$	18.07	8.08%		
Total Yearly Charges				\$	894.44	\$	966.72	\$	72.28	8.08%		

<sup>\*</sup>Water and Basic Service Charges include an increase over last years rates. The city approved and applied for a conventional rate case expecting the new rates to be effective 1/1/17

<sup>\*\*</sup> City sewer rates are to remain the same as the 2016 rates.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> Waste management rates are to remain the same as 2016 rates

<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> MMSD rates are expected to remain the same, but could increase/decrease once MMSD publishes their Cost Recovery Procedure Manual, usually the first month of the year.

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> Storm Water rates are to increase \$1.29 over 2016 rate of \$19.29

# Municipal Comparisons WEST ALLIS

#### **Municipal Comparisons**

#### Municipal Comparisons Per Capita Spending by Category



Source: MunicipalFacts16 Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance

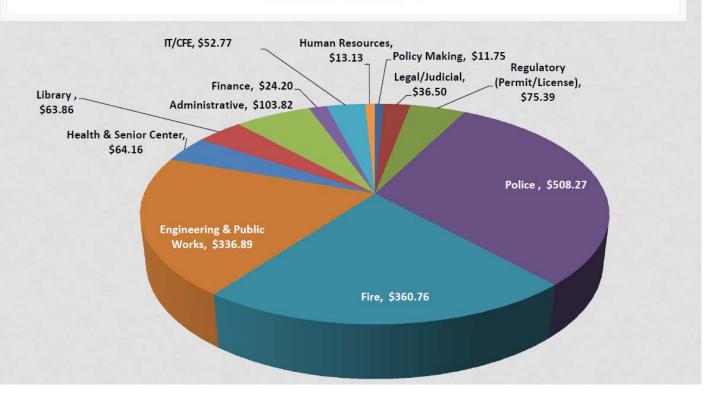
#### **Total Operating Spending Per Capita**



Source: MunicipalFacts16 Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance



# WHAT DOES \$1,651.50 IN CITY TAXES SUPPORT?

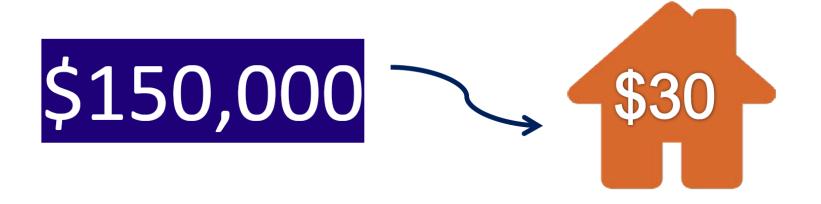




## What is the bottom line for tax payers?

# CITY OF WEST ALLIS PROPERTY TAX RATE EFFECT

Single Family Home Assessed at







Non-tax levy general fund revenue increased by \$77,000 or 0.32%.

\$600,000 General Fund Reserves = property tax stabilization.

General fund operating increase of \$589,718.
Staff Levels = Consistent

Total Net Levy increase = \$723,985 or 1.83%, (allowable due to debt levy capacity).

Net new construction in 2015 of \$24,657,200 or 0.66%

(last year's net new construction was \$26.374.000 or 0.71%).

Tax Rate ~ \$11.01 (from \$10.81), \$0.20 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation or 1.85%.



Questions?