Ashland Committee of the Whole Meeting
Tuesday, August 26, 2025 – 6:00 PM
601 Main Street W. Ashland WI 54806

Take notice that the City of Ashland Committee of the Whole will meet immediately following the adjournment of the City Council Meeting in the City Hall Council Chambers, 601 Main Street W. Ashland, WI, to consider and act upon the following agenda.

To attend the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone:
https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/500263957
Or dial in using your phone. United States (Toll Free): 1-877-309-2073 Access Code: 500-263-957
Please contact the Clerk's office if you require accommodations to attend the meeting.

Tuesday, August 26, 2025 Ashland Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda

1. **Roll Call**
2. **Approval of Agenda**
3. **Council President's Report**
4. **Committee Updates**
5. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**
   A. **2025 Sewer Rate Study Phase 1** ***(Public Works)***
   B. **Continued Review of Vacant Housing Ordinance Draft** ***(Administrator)***
   C. **Continued Discussion Regarding the Potential Development of a Municipal Court System** ***(Administrator)***
   D. **Master Plan for Northland College** ***(Administration)***
6. **Items for Future Discussion**
7. **Adjournment**

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Ref: COW-195

COMMITTEE AGENDA:
4. (8/26/2025)

SUBJECT: Committee Updates

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion Only

DEPARTMENT OF ORIGIN: Council President

CLEARANCES:

EXHIBITS:

COMPLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC PLAN: NA

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

DPEAC - Sztyndor
HARBOR COMMISSION - Gregoire
HISTORIC PRESERVATION - Sztyndor
LIBRARY BOARD - Levi
PARKS & REC - Seefeldt
PLAN COMMISSION - Brede
PUBLIC WORKS - Goyke
SUSTAINABILITY - Ortman

Ref: COW-196

COMMITTEE AGENDA:
5.A. (8/26/2025)

SUBJECT: **2025 Sewer Rate Study Phase 1** ***(Public Works)***

RECOMMENDATION: Presentation, Discussion and Possible Action

DEPARTMENT OF ORIGIN: Public Works

CLEARANCES: Public Works Director

EXHIBITS: 1. Ehlers Inc - 2025 Sewer Rate Study, Phase 1

COMPLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC PLAN: Infrastructure

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

At the August 12, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting, the Public Works Director explained that staff has been working with Ehlers Inc to assess the need for wastewater utility rate increases and that the need for rate increases is driven by necessary upgrades to the City's wastewater treatment plant. These needs and other priorities for capital improvements have been presented by the Public Works Director in a 5 year capital improvement plan (CIP)

Brian Roemer from Ehlers will provide a virtual presentation on results of their analysis, with recommendations on how to proceed. In the opinion of the Public Works Director, the rate increases necessary to support the proposed CIP are reasonable and reflective of effective management of the Utility's operational and capital needs over time.

The Public Works Director requests Council approval to move forward with the recommended sewer rate increase for the 2026 budget. The rate increase would be implemented in coordination with the 2026 budget process.

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City of Ashland, WI

2025 Sewer Rate Study
Phase 1: Long-Range Cash Flow Analysis

August 26th, 2025 City Council Meeting

Why are we here?

- Analyze the impact of planned capital projects on the sewer utility
- Ehlers to identify fiscal sustainability
- Our Process
  - ✓ Historical Rate and Financial Performance; PSC Education
  - ✓ Future Projections
    - ➢ O&M, Depreciation, and PILOT
    - ➢ Funding Project(s): Debt vs. Cash
  - ✓ Rate Impact

Sewer Rates Historical Implementation

- May 14th, 2002 the Common Council approved a Wastewater rate increase of 15%
- May 28th, 2013 the Common Council approved a Wastewater rate increase of 5.9%
- May 10th, 2016 the Common Council approved a Wastewater rate increases of 17.8% with an estimated effective date of May 26th, 2016 and 4.4% with an estimated effective date of May 24th, 2017

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Rate Revenue Determination

How much revenue should we generate from user rates?

Cash Basis

- \+ Op. and Maint. Expenses
- \+ Taxes/Transfer Payments
- \+ Debt Service (P&I)
- \+ Capital funded from rates
- \- Less Non-rate Revenue
- = Total Revenue Requirements

Utility Basis - PSC

- \+ Op. and Maint. Expenses
- \+ Taxes/Transfer Payments
- \+ Depreciation
- \+ Rate of Return on Rate Base
- \- Less Non-Rate Revenue
- = Total Revenue Requirements

Sewer: Historical Rate Performance

Revenue Requirement		Shown with no increase					
						Est	Budget
Component	Description	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Cash Basis							
1	Operating and Maintenance	$1,548,151	$1,549,678	$1,544,622	$1,870,926	$1,842,711	$1,867,634
2	Debt	$114,741	$112,668	$131,234	$146,700	$176,247	$219,267
3	Cash Funded Capital	$643,803	$1,835,959	$2,090,123	$489,218	$70,499	$87,707
	Less:						
	Other Revenue	$64,297	$64,402	$68,227	$70,295	$70,303	$71,850
	Interest Income	$12,615	$3,644	$9,518	$25,151	$7,585	$23,100
	Revenue Requirement (Costs less Other Income)	$2,229,783	$3,430,259	$3,688,234	$2,411,398	$2,011,569	$2,079,658
	User Rates Revenue	$2,056,719	$2,106,036	$2,109,216	$2,107,756	$2,171,301	$2,208,554
	Rate Adequacy	($173,064)	($1,324,223)	($1,579,018)	($303,642)	$159,732	$128,896
	Rate Adjustment Needed	8.41%	62.88%	74.86%	14.41%	0.00%	0.00%
Utility Basis (PSC)							
1	Operating and Maintenance	$1,548,151	$1,549,678	$1,544,622	$1,870,926	$1,842,711	$1,867,634
2	Depreciation	$842,337	$843,245	$776,203	$799,189	$844,000	$901,353
	NIRB	$12,181,194	$12,674,095	$13,984,635	$15,041,038	$15,441,154	$15,666,801
3	Typical ROI (2.5%)	$304,530	$316,852	$349,616	$376,026	$386,029	$391,670
	Less:						
	Other Revenue	$64,297	$64,402	$68,227	$70,295	$70,303	$71,850
	Interest Income	$12,615	$3,644	$9,518	$25,151	$7,585	$23,100
	Revenue Requirement (Costs less Other Income)	$2,618,106	$2,641,729	$2,592,696	$2,950,695	$2,994,852	$3,065,707
	User Rates Revenue	$2,056,719	$2,106,036	$2,109,216	$2,107,756	$2,171,301	$2,208,554
	Rate Adequacy	($561,387)	($535,693)	($483,480)	($842,939)	($823,551)	($857,153)
	Rate Adjustment Needed	27.30%	25.44%	22.92%	39.99%	37.93%	38.81%

Rates break even on a cash basis

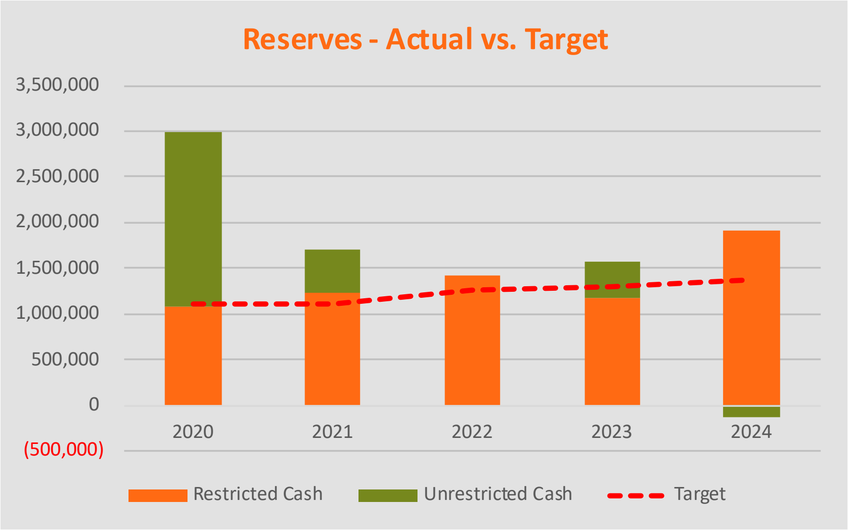
and not on utility basis (PSC uses)

Let's investigate the history further….

Notes:

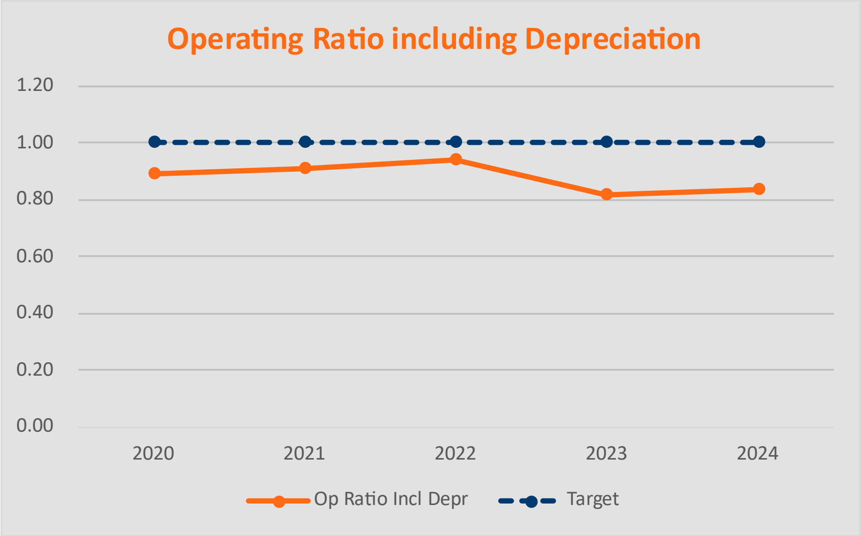
^Includes recommended debt coverage at 1.4x annual debt payment

Sewer: Historical Financial Indicators



- Reserves to fund deficits and capital (5 mo. Target)

- Cause for concern in an aging system (currently 37% depreciated)



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Sewer: Capital Needs 2025-2030

- $10,553,921 Total
- Project List in reference slides at the end of this presentation

Sources of Funding	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Totals
Revenue Debt	789,543	225,337	900,000	320,232	1,260,000	213,750	*3,708,862*
Grants/Aids	916,132	275,412	1,100,000	391,396	1,540,000	261,250	*4,484,190*
Equipment Replacement Fund	0	600,000	0	0	0	0	*600,000*
Cash	0	175,000	371,868	0	350,000	864,000	*1,760,868*
Total	**1,705,675**	**1,275,749**	**2,371,868**	**711,628**	**3,150,000**	**1,339,000**	**10,553,921**

- 2020 – 2024 CIP expenses totaled $8.9 million
- Total capitalized sewer assets as of 1/1/2020: $29,598,100
- $19,453,921/$29,598,100 = adding 65% book value 2020-2030

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Sewer Rate Option 1 – Do Nothing

	Budget	Projected								
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Revenues										
Total Revenues from User Rates[1]	$2,173,553	$2,138,553	$2,198,553	$2,198,553	$2,198,553	$2,198,553	$2,198,553	$2,198,553	$2,198,553	$2,198,553
Percent Increase to User Rates	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**
Cumulative Percent Rate Increase	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**
Dollar Amount Increase to Revenues		**-$35,000**	**$60,000**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Other Revenues										
Interest Income	$23,100	$4,936	$3,101	$2,236	$2,021	$721	$0	$0	$0	$0
Other Income	$71,850	$72,569	$73,294	$74,027	$74,767	$75,515	$76,270	$77,033	$77,803	$78,581
Total Other Revenues	$94,950	$77,505	$76,395	$76,263	$76,788	$76,236	$76,270	$77,033	$77,803	$78,581
Total Revenues	$2,268,503	$2,216,058	$2,274,948	$2,274,816	$2,275,341	$2,274,789	$2,274,823	$2,275,586	$2,276,356	$2,277,134
Less: Expenses										
Operating and Maintenance	$1,867,634	$1,923,663	$1,981,373	$2,040,814	$2,102,039	$2,165,100	$2,230,053	$2,296,954	$2,365,863	$2,436,839
PILOT Payment	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Net Before Debt Service and Capital Expenditures	$400,869	$292,394	$293,575	$234,002	$173,303	$109,689	$44,771	($21,368)	($89,507)	($159,704)
Debt Service										
Existing Debt P&I	$217,036	$217,066	$216,983	$216,987	$216,976	$216,950	$216,909	$216,952	$216,879	$216,889
New (2025-2034) Debt Service P&I	$2,231	$34,264	$50,946	$103,005	$126,281	$197,458	$202,224	$202,310	$202,398	$202,488
Total Debt Service	$219,267	$251,330	$267,929	$319,992	$343,256	$414,408	$419,133	$419,262	$419,277	$419,377
Transfer In (Out)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Less: Capital Improvements	$1,705,675	$1,275,749	$2,371,868	$711,628	$3,150,000	$1,339,000	$0	$0	$0	$0
Debt Issued/Grants/Aid	$1,705,675	$500,749	$2,000,000	$711,628	$2,800,000	$475,000	$0	$0	$0	$0
Net Annual Cash Flow	**$181,602**	**($733,936)**	**($346,222)**	**($85,991)**	**($519,954)**	**($1,168,719)**	**($374,363)**	**($440,630)**	**($508,783)**	**($579,082)**
Restricted and Unrestricted Cash Balance:										
Balance at first of year	$1,792,805	$1,974,407	$1,240,471	$894,249	$808,258	$288,304	($880,415)	($1,254,778)	($1,695,408)	($2,204,191)
Net Annual Cash Flow Addition/(subtraction)	$181,602	($733,936)	($346,222)	($85,991)	($519,954)	($1,168,719)	($374,363)	($440,630)	($508,783)	($579,082)
Balance at end of year	$1,974,407	$1,240,471	$894,249	$808,258	$288,304	($880,415)	($1,254,778)	($1,695,408)	($2,204,191)	($2,783,273)
"All-in" Debt Coverage	1.83	1.16	1.10	0.73	0.50	0.26	0.11	(0.05)	(0.21)	(0.38)

Notes:

1) Assumes no changes in customer count or usage beyond Test Year.

2) Assumes 3.00% annual inflation beyond budget year.

Legend:

Increase depicted to maintain with assumed O&M inflation

Increase needed above inflationary adjustment

Sewer Rate Option 2 – Minimum Recommended Rev. Adjustments (Level)

	Budget	Projected								
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Revenues										
Total Revenues from User Rates[1]	$2,173,553	$2,241,204	$2,411,661	$2,527,421	$2,648,737	$2,775,877	$2,909,119	$3,048,756	$3,195,097	$3,348,461
Percent Increase to User Rates	**0.00%**	**4.80%**	**4.80%**	**4.80%**	**4.80%**	**4.80%**	**4.80%**	**4.80%**	**4.80%**	**4.80%**
Cumulative Percent Rate Increase	**0.00%**	**4.80%**	**9.83%**	**15.10%**	**20.63%**	**26.42%**	**32.49%**	**38.84%**	**45.51%**	**52.49%**
Dollar Amount Increase to Revenues		**$67,651**	**$170,458**	**$115,760**	**$121,316**	**$127,139**	**$133,242**	**$139,638**	**$146,340**	**$153,365**
Added/Subtracted Customer Revenue[2]	**-$35,000**	**-$35,000**	**$60,000**							
Total Other Revenues	$94,950	$77,505	$76,652	$77,053	$78,402	$78,980	$78,263	$79,871	$81,673	$83,680
Total Revenues	$2,268,503	$2,318,708	$2,488,313	$2,604,474	$2,727,139	$2,854,856	$2,987,382	$3,128,628	$3,276,769	$3,432,141
Less: Expenses										
Operating and Maintenance[3]	$1,867,634	$1,923,663	$1,981,373	$2,040,814	$2,102,039	$2,165,100	$2,230,053	$2,296,954	$2,365,863	$2,436,839
Net Before Debt Service and Capital Expenditures	$400,869	$395,045	$506,940	$563,660	$625,101	$689,756	$757,329	$831,673	$910,906	$995,302
Debt Service										
Existing Debt P&I	$217,036	$217,066	$216,983	$216,987	$216,976	$216,950	$216,909	$216,952	$216,879	$216,889
New (2025-2034) Debt Service P&I	$2,231	$34,264	$50,946	$103,005	$126,281	$197,458	$202,224	$202,310	$202,398	$202,488
Total Debt Service	$219,267	$251,330	$267,929	$319,992	$343,256	$414,408	$419,133	$419,262	$419,277	$419,377
Transfer In (Out)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Less: Capital Improvements	$1,705,675	$1,275,749	$2,371,868	$711,628	$3,150,000	$1,339,000	$0	$0	$0	$0
Debt Issued/Grants/Aid	$1,705,675	$500,749	$2,000,000	$711,628	$2,800,000	$475,000	$0	$0	$0	$0
Net Annual Cash Flow	**$181,602**	**($631,285)**	**($132,857)**	**$243,667**	**($68,155)**	**($588,652)**	**$338,196**	**$412,411**	**$491,630**	**$575,925**
Restricted and Unrestricted Cash Balance:										
Balance at first of year	$1,792,805	$1,974,407	$1,343,122	$1,210,264	$1,453,932	$1,385,776	$797,124	$1,135,320	$1,547,732	$2,039,361
Net Annual Cash Flow Addition/(subtraction)	$181,602	($631,285)	($132,857)	$243,667	($68,155)	($588,652)	$338,196	$412,411	$491,630	$575,925
Balance at end of year	$1,974,407	$1,343,122	$1,210,264	$1,453,932	$1,385,776	$797,124	$1,135,320	$1,547,732	$2,039,361	$2,615,286
"All-in" Debt Coverage	1.83	1.57	1.89	1.76	1.82	1.66	1.81	1.98	2.17	2.37

Notes:
1) Assumes no changes in customer count or usage beyond 2027.
2) Isolates impact of lost customers and added customers.
3) Assumes 3.00% annual inflation beyond budget year.

Legend:
Increase depicted to maintain with assumed O&M inflation
Increase needed above inflationary adjustment

Impact on Avg. Res. Bill: Percent increase

		Sewer			
Year	Increase	Sewer Vol. Charge[3]	Sewer User Charge[3]	Utility Bill (Monthly)	Change Over Prior Year
		100CF	Gen Service		
2024		5.90	13.52	$ 39.19	
2025	0.00%	5.90	13.52	$ 39.19	$ -
2026	4.80%	6.18	14.17	$ 41.07	$ 1.88
2027	4.80%	6.48	14.85	$ 43.04	$ 1.97
2028	4.80%	6.79	15.56	$ 45.10	$ 2.07
2029	4.80%	7.12	16.31	$ 47.27	$ 2.16
2030	4.80%	7.46	17.09	$ 49.54	$ 2.27
2031	4.80%	7.82	17.91	$ 51.91	$ 2.38
2032	4.80%	8.19	18.77	$ 54.41	$ 2.49
2033	4.80%	8.59	19.67	$ 57.02	$ 2.61
2034	4.80%	9.00	20.62	$ 59.75	$ 2.74
Total Change over planning period					**$ 20.57**

- The current Sewer volumetric rate is $5.90 per 100 cubic feet and a service charge of $13.52 for 5/8 inch meter.
- The usage is assumed to be 435 CF per month.
- Using the percent increase method the additional charge gradually increases. Utility gets less money up front in this scenario.

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Alternative: Impact on Avg. Res. Bill: Level Annual Impact

	Sewer				
Year	Increase	Sewer Vol. Charge[3]	Sewer User Charge[3]	Utility Bill (Monthly)	Change Over Prior Year
		100CF	Gen Service		
2024		5.90	13.52	$ 39.19	
2025	0.00%	5.90	13.52	$ 39.19	$ -
2026	5.83%	6.24	14.31	$ 41.47	$ 2.29
2027	5.51%	6.59	15.10	$ 43.76	$ 2.29
2028	5.22%	6.93	15.89	$ 46.04	$ 2.29
2029	4.96%	7.28	16.67	$ 48.33	$ 2.29
2030	4.73%	7.62	17.46	$ 50.61	$ 2.29
2031	4.52%	7.96	18.25	$ 52.90	$ 2.29
2032	4.32%	8.31	19.04	$ 55.18	$ 2.29
2033	4.14%	8.65	19.83	$ 57.47	$ 2.29
2034	3.98%	9.00	20.62	$ 59.75	$ 2.29
Total Change over planning period					**$ 20.57**

- The current Sewer volumetric rate is $5.90 per 100 cubic feet and a service charge of $13.52 for 5/8 inch meter.
- The usage is assumed to be 435 CF per month.
- Using the annual amount increase the increase in charge is consistent from one year to the next. Utility gets more money up front in this scenario.

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Sewer: Recommendations

- Consider alternatives and define long term goals
- This plan identifies the <u>**minimum**</u> recommended revenue adjustments given all current facts and circumstances with following goals
  - ✓ Max use of cash above benchmark
  - ✓ Keep "All-in" Debt Coverage above 1.4 (minimum recommendation)
- Identify other ratemaking goals (if any)
  - ✓ Optional Phase 2: Instead of simple percentage adjustment, complete a Cost-of-Service Study to allocate increase equitably over customer classes based on cost function

Ashland, WI - 2025 Sewer Rate Study

REFERENCE TABLES

CIP

Projects	Funding	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Totals
Lift Station Improvements - Turner Road	Revenue Debt	$225,900						225,900
Lift Station Improvements - Turner Road	Grants/Aids	$276,100						276,100
New Jetter Truck	Revenue Debt	$281,250						281,250
New Jetter Truck	Grants/Aids	$343,750						343,750
WWTP Improvements PH 1	ERF		$600,000					600,000
Lift Station Improvements - Main Lift Station Ph 1	ERF		$175,000					175,000
16th St E to 20th St E Sewer Replacement ("Tree To	Revenue Debt		$225,337					225,337
16th St E to 20th St E Sewer Replacement ("Tree To	Grants/Aids		275,412					275,412
WWTP Improvements Ph 2	Revenue Debt			900,000				900,000
WWTP Improvements Ph 2	Grants/Aids			1,100,000				1,100,000
CIPP Project	Cash			371,868				371,868
16th St E Sewer Extension	Revenue Debt				219,925			219,925
16th St E Sewer Extension	Grants/Aids				268,798			268,798
18th Ave W Sewer Replacement	Revenue Debt				100,307			100,307
18th Ave W Sewer Replacement	Grants/Aids				122,598			122,598
Heavy Equipment Upgrades	Cash					350,000		350,000
WWTP Improvements Ph 3	Revenue Debt					1,260,000		1,260,000
WWTP Improvements Ph 3	Grants/Aids					1,540,000		1,540,000
MacArthur Ave Sewer Replacement	Revenue Debt						213,750	213,750
MacArthur Ave Sewer Replacement	Grants/Aids						261,250	261,250
Sludge Press Upgrade and Admin Addition	ERF						864,000	864,000
CWFL Proj. No. 4525-21 Remainder	Revenue Debt	282,393						282,393
CWFL Proj. No. 4525-21 Remainder	Grants/Aids	296,282						296,282
Actual CIP Costs		**1,705,675**	**1,275,749**	**2,371,868**	**711,628**	**3,150,000**	**1,339,00[illegible]**	**10,55[illegible]**

Questions?

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Ref: COW-197 **COMMITTEE AGENDA: 5.B. (8/26/2025)**

SUBJECT: Continued Review of Vacant Housing Ordinance Draft *(Administrator)*

RECOMMENDATION: Advance to Council for formal approval

DEPARTMENT OF ORIGIN: Administration

CLEARANCES: The Council as Committee of the Whole previously discussed and approved this item to return to the Committee of the Whole agenda for further discussion.

EXHIBITS: 1. DRAFT Vacant and Foreclosed Properties Ordinance

COMPLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC PLAN: HOUSING

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

As a part of our ongoing discussion regarding vacant property registration, a first draft was introduced to the Committee of the Whole on July 29, 2025. Discussion brought about suggested changes, and I have not yet established a potential fee structure for the annual registration but will compile some numbers for the meeting.

Please recall, this is not meant to be punitive unless there is an irresponsible owner who is not maintaining a property to a minimal standard, and that any fees we collect will go to pay for the increased cost of public safety and property maintenance.

VACANT AND FORECLOSED PROPERTIES

ARTICLE I. - VACANT PROPERTY REGISTRATION PROGRAM

Sec. 1-1. - Vacant property regulated.

The purpose of this article is to establish a vacant property registration program and to regulate the maintenance of vacant properties by parties asserting a collateral or other legal or equitable interest in the property. This article is intended to reduce and prevent neighborhood blight, to ameliorate conditions that threaten the health, safety and welfare of the public, to promote neighborhood stability and residential owner occupancy by preserving the condition and appearance of properties, and to maintain property values and assessments.

Sec. 1-2. - Definitions.

(a) *"Agent"* means a person, firm or other entity that is responsible to a bank, lender, other financial institution or individual, for securing, maintaining, foreclosing upon or selling any property as the result of loan default or mortgage foreclosure proceedings whether or not the proceedings are judicial or initiated as the result of a power of sale clause in the mortgage document. In this section, agent does not include a servicing company. Except, however, an attorney shall not be deemed to be an agent if that attorney is retained solely to represent a bank, lender or other financial institution in connection with a foreclosure proceeding in a court of competent jurisdiction.

(b) *"Financial institution"* means any individual, firm, corporation or entity other than a lender or duly constituted bank that asserts a collateral interest in residential real property as the result of an assignment, sale or transfer of a mortgage or similar instrument.

(c) *"Foreclosure"* means the judicial process prescribed by Wis. Stats. ch. 846 and the process for non-judicial sale authorized by a power of sale clause in a mortgage document.

(d) *"Occupied property"* or *"occupied premises"* refers to premises upon which any persons over one year of age, including an owner or operator, lives, sleeps, cooks, or otherwise maintains actual possessions.

(e) *"Owner"* means any person, agent, operator, or entity having a legal or equitable interest in the premises, or recorded in the official records of the state, county or municipality as holding title to the premises; or otherwise having control of the premises, including the guardian of the estate of any such person, and the executor or administrator of the estate of such person, if ordered to take possession of real premises by a court.

(f) *"Property"* means any unimproved or improved real property or portion thereof, situated in the city and includes the buildings or structures located on the property regardless of condition.

(g) *"Secured"* means a building that has a permanent door or window in each appropriate building opening that is secured to prevent unauthorized entry and has all its door and window components, including frames, jambs, rails, stiles, muntins, mullions, panels, sashes, lights and panes intact and unbroken.

(h) *"Servicing company"* means an individual, firm or entity that, as a regular part of its business, provides services to the owner or holder of one or more mortgage liens which services may include collection of payments, creation and administration of escrow and insurance accounts, assessment of late-payment charges, managing loss mitigation, and securing and managing foreclosed properties on behalf of the holder of a mortgage lien or the holder's attorney or agent.

(i) *"Unsecured"* means any building that does not meet the definition of secured.

(j) *"Vacant"* means entire abandonment or non-occupancy for any purpose other than residential uses. Vacant shall also include buildings that lack habitual presence of human beings who have a legal right to be on the premises, or at which substantially all lawful business has ceased operation within.

Sec. 1-3. - Vacant property registration.

(a) The owner of vacant property whether vacant and secure, vacant and unsecured shall register with the city no later than the earliest of:

(1) Ninety days after the premises become vacant; or

(2) Thirty days after being notified by an enforcement officer of the requirement to register; or

(3) Thirty days after a bank, lender, or other financial institution shall, directly or through an agent or servicing company, initiate foreclosure proceedings by filing a summons and complaint in Ashland County Circuit Court upon residential real property.

(b) The bank, lender, other financial institution or its responsible agent or servicing company, shall submit a registration fee as pursuant to the city's fee schedule and register the property in the name of the lien holder with the community services department on a form prescribed by the city administrator or his designee that includes, but is not limited to:

(1) A description of the premises, e.g., square footage, number of stories, age of buildings, and most recent or current use of buildings.

(2) A statement of physical inspection of the premises including one or more photographs of the property accurately portraying current condition of the exterior premises.

(3) The name and addresses of all known lien holders and or parties with a legal or equitable ownership interest such as bank, lender, or financial institution including address(es), phone number(s), and/or email address(es).

(4) The name of the agent designated to act on the behalf of the owner to accept legal processes and notices and to authorize repairs as required including address(es), phone number(s), and/or email address(es).

(5) The date that foreclosure proceedings were commenced and the docket number of the foreclosure action, a description of the external condition of the property and accessory structures on the property.

(6) Information identifying the location of the property, the last known owner or owners of the property, last known contact information for owners including address(es), phone number(s), and/or email address(es).

(c) The owner of the vacant premises shall be responsible for the annual payment of a nonrefundable registration fee. If a vacant premise is owned by the city or its instrumentalities, it shall not be subject to the requirements of this article.

(d) Any new owner shall register or re-register the vacant premises with the city within 30 days of any transfer of an ownership interest in vacant premises. The new owner will comply with any approved plan and timetable submitted by the previous owner until any proposed changes are submitted and meet the approval of the city.

(e) Registration does not exonerate the owner from compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances, including this article; nor does it preclude any of the actions the city is authorized to take pursuant to this article or otherwise under the Municipal Code.

Sec. 1-4. - Minimum requirements for vacant property.

(a) *Periodic inspections.* Any bank, lender or financial institution, or its agent or servicing company, shall perform a re-inspection of vacant premises at least once every 90 days following the initial inspection until such time as the property is no longer vacant or is sold at a sheriff's sale or is otherwise lawfully conveyed to a new owner. One or more photographs shall be taken at each re-inspection and shall be dated, preserved, and shared with the city.

(b) *Exterior and interior maintenance.*

(1) It is prohibited to accumulate or permit the accumulation of junk, trash, debris, boxes, lumber, scrap metal or any other materials that may produce any health, fire or safety hazard, or provide harborage for rodents or other animals.

(2) Every foundation, roof, floor, wall, stair, ceiling or other structural support shall be safe and capable of supporting the loads associated with normal usage and shall be kept in sound condition and repair.

(3) Any plumbing fixtures, including those used for operation of sprinkling system, shall be maintained with no leaking pipes, and all pipes for water shall either be completely drained or heated to resist being frozen.

(4) Every exterior exit door or opening large enough for a person to penetrate shall be secured with a lock, or with a locking mechanism deemed equivalent or better by the building inspector. Every exit door shall be capable of being opened from the inside easily and without the use of a key or special knowledge.

(5) A working fire department lockbox (Knoxbox) key shall be provided and maintained for buildings that otherwise would require a Knoxbox.

(6) An existing alarm system shall remain operational for buildings with sprinkler systems.

(7) Exterior and interior stairs shall have treads, platforms, risers and railings that are sound, securely fastened and have no rotting, loose or deteriorating supports.

(8) Every owner shall be responsible for the extermination of insects, rodents and other vermin in or about the premises.

(9) Any opening on a building shall be closed and sealed to prevent damage from weather or nature.

(10) Boarding of vacant properties as a method for permanent security or closing of openings is prohibited. Temporary boarding for emergency purposes shall be allowed for no more than 30 days.

Ref: COW-198

COMMITTEE AGENDA:
5.C. (8/26/2025)

SUBJECT: **Continued Discussion Regarding the Potential Development of a Municipal Court System** ***(Administrator)***

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion and Possible Action

DEPARTMENT OF ORIGIN: Councilor Sztyndor

CLEARANCES: Administrator

EXHIBITS:

COMPLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC PLAN: NA

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

During their March 25, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting, Councilor Sztyndor requested to address the potential for the development of a municipal court. Administrator Kucera spoke to this issue at the May 13, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting, and Council requested further information and to bring back for discussion.

Ref: COW-199

COMMITTEE AGENDA:
5.D. (8/26/2025)

SUBJECT: **Master Plan for Northland College *(Administration)***

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion and Possible Actions

DEPARTMENT OF ORIGIN: Administrator

CLEARANCES: Mayor

EXHIBITS:

COMPLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC PLAN:

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

Statement is forthcoming.