

Update: The Old Junior High

Turning Our Largest Blighted Property Into a Productive Asset

You can't miss the activity at the Old Junior High site as MRD Group, Inc, secured the Village Board's approval with a low bid of \$481,470 for the demolition. Additionally, the Board sanctioned \$25,000 for on-site crushing of non-contaminated materials, an efficient cost-saving measure compared to off-site processing, significantly below the anticipated bid.

Kicking off in November, site activity primarily entailed installing security fencing, implementing pest control, and meticulously handling asbestos-contaminated materials. Certified Wisconsin asbestos workers utilized stringent containment procedures with 3-stage negative air machines, ensuring no potential release of hazardous air.

The asbestos abatement, employing a systematic two-stage removal process, aims to conclude by 2023's end, with non-contaminated materials visibly present outside the building during the process.

The slated building demolition, set for mid/late January, is expected to span two months, followed by on-site concrete crushing lasting 3-5 working days, culminating in full demolition completion by the end of March 2024.

The Village's focus now pivots toward site redevelopment in alignment with its 2022 Comprehensive Plan,

earmarking multi-family use. To facilitate this, the Community Development Authority will craft an RFP for developers, prompting engagement in forthcoming meetings centered on redevelopment discussions and actions outlined in Community Development Authority and Village Board agendas.



COMMUNITY CHAMPION

Jay and Stacey Nesseth stand as pillars of generosity through their unwavering leadership and boundless involvement with the Ellsworth Lions Club. Within the Ellsworth Lions, Jay and Stacey have worn numerous hats of responsibility. Their influence extends beyond the local community; the Nesseths have spearheaded various service projects and fundraisers, also showcasing their leadership within the District and State Lions.

Some of the initiatives they are most proud of include:

- Providing Vision Screening for children, from 4 years old to 2nd grade, within the Ellsworth school district. Through cutting-edge screening devices they detect eye issues, facilitating timely referrals to eye professionals, ensuring no child's vision problems go unnoticed or unaddressed. If a child needs glasses and a family does not have the financial resources, the Lions will purchase glasses for the child.
- For almost 30 years the Ellsworth Lions have held a Fishing Derby at Nugget Lake for kids of all ages. It is so fun to see the kid's excitement when they bring the fish they have caught to be measured.
- Providing items for children in our Ellsworth schools who are in need (tennis shoes, socks, underwear, lice treatment, etc.).
- Sending children who are cognitively challenged, vision impaired, or deaf to Wisconsin Lions camp, as well as sending children with diabetes to Camp Needlepoint.

Jay and Stacey's dedication stems from a profound belief in the Lions' motto, "We Serve." They express their heartfelt connection to the Ellsworth community, emphasizing the importance of making their hometown the best it can be for all residents. Their acts of kindness, whether aiding families through difficult times or brightening community events, echo a sentiment of loving support and genuine care for their neighbors.

The Ellsworth Lions always welcome new members. If interested in learning more, please visit lionsclubs.org. Or reach out to the Ellsworth Lions via their Facebook page (Ellsworth Lions) or email at ellsworthlions@gmail.com.



WINTER 2024

HOURS

Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

CONTACT INFO

130 N Chestnut Street

Village Hall
(715) 273-4742

Police Department
(715) 273-3275

Ellsworth Public Library
(715) 273-3209

DROP BOX

A 24-hour drop box is available on the front of the Village Hall.

PAYMENTS

We accept cash, check, and/or online payments. Paperless billing and auto-payments now available!

Wanted: A Slow Clap

Message from Becky Beissel, President, Village of Ellsworth

I've been told that I don't spend enough time celebrating my successes. It's not that I'm not proud of myself, or don't like to have a good party, I'm just motivated by progress and quickly move onto the next thing.

I'm probably not alone in this, so I'm taking a moment to remind us all to celebrate our successes more in 2024. Not only ours, but the successes of others, and the successes of our community. We've been working really hard, Ellsworth! A lot of us! While it feels slow, and hard, and painful at times, we're making big progress (see all our wins from 2023 below).

And we're all playing an important part. This community is full of people, pitching in and volunteering their time to make positive change happen in this community (see two great examples in the Community Champion section).



And if for whatever reason you aren't able to get as involved as you'd like, cheering everyone on is just as valuable.

I picture it like an iconic slow clap scene from an '80s movie, where a group shifts from silence to enthusiastic applause. It's about recognizing an ap-

plaudable moment and rallying behind someone who needs our support for blazing a trail, doing a difficult thing, being selfless in their actions. Because, well, a lot of the time, it's hard to keep going. Let's show some appreciation, folks! Let's cheer, let's clap, let's be positive, let's encourage, let's support.

And, if you're working hard to create something positive, and you're needing a little applause, this one's for you! Keep up the great work! Ellsworth needs you! 🙌🙌🙌

A Look Back on 2023

Look At What We Achieved Together in 2023

As we near the end of the year, we'd like to reflect on our achievements at the Village of Ellsworth throughout 2023. While some accomplishments stand out more than others, each plays a vital role in our ongoing journey forward.

New Ellsworth Public Library

We kicked off 2023 with quite the celebration moving into our new public library! The new facility has been greatly embraced (and used), seeing 571 new cardholders and around 40,000 visitors (we saw 23,808 in 2023)!

Old Junior High

The biggest and most exciting news was the start of demolition of the old junior high building. The Village purchased the property in August 2022 and has since worked slowly and methodically to ensure a successful project. See a project update later in this newsletter.

New Staffing Structure

We implemented a staff restructuring at the Village with the hiring of a Deputy Clerk, Marcy Kopp, in February, and a Deputy Treasurer, Cyndi Kern, in May. A

focus has been put on cross-training and both have been great additions to the Village team.

Police Staffing

A big congratulations and "job well done" to the Ellsworth Police Department who has operated understaffed a majority of the last four years. By focusing on being an "employer of choice" and enacting the police sponsorship program, the dept will be kicking off 2024 being full-staffed!

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...A Look Back on 2023, continued

Downtown Design Guidelines

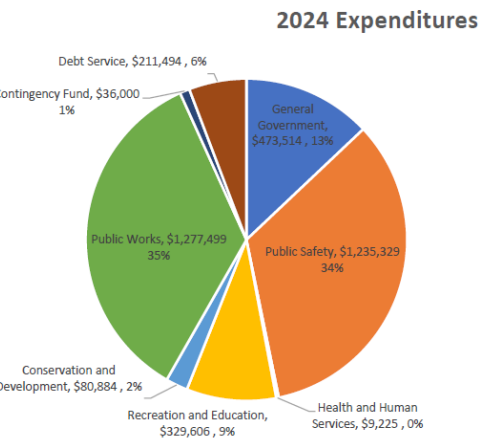
Our Community Development Authority got a great start on our Downtown Design Guidelines, with tentative completion looking to be Spring 2024.

Update to Village Ordinances

As with anything, it's good to give them a fresh look from time to time. Special focus will be given to zoning, historic preservation, land division and subdivision regulations, and floodplain ordinances to effectively align Village ordinances with the Comprehensive Plan and ensure future development meets community priorities and values.

Streaming Meetings

Continuing with our desire to have a more engaged and transparent ap-



Looking Forward to 2024 Where We Plan to Focus This Year

Our updated Comprehensive Plan is just over 1-year old. We will continue to work through the outlined short-term goals in 2024, focusing on these priorities:

Board Strategic Planning

The Village Board will work through a strategic planning process to establish a mission statement and values to give clear understanding of the purpose, principles, and culture to guide and direct the Board going forward.

Winter Parking Ordinance

The Street & Sidewalk Committee will explore a possible need to update our Winter Parking Ordinance to better

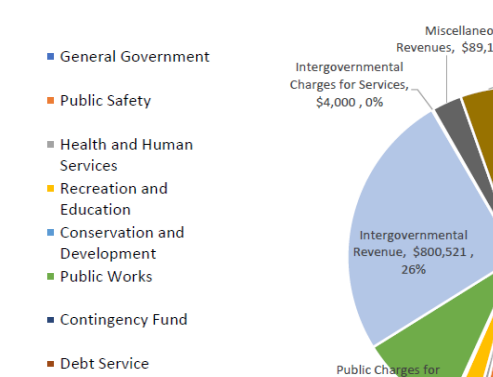
proach, we launched an option to video stream our village board and committee meetings this year. Zoom links can be found on our website on the calendar events for each meeting, and also on each meeting agenda.

Crossing Meadows Land Sale

The Village sold a property in Crossing Meadows to Mahn Funeral Home to build a new funeral home/chapel. This is the first property to be sold in Crossing Meadows in more than 10 years.

E-Billing & Automatic Payments

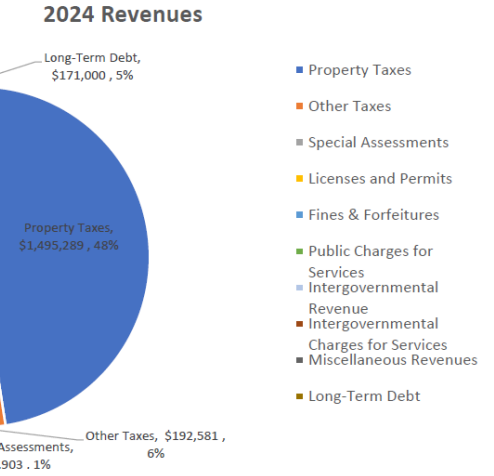
We launched the option for residents and property owners to get their quarterly utility bills via email and/or set up automatic payments options. If you would like to sign up for this feature, visit



our Resident Help Center on our website, under Pay a Bill, or call the Village Hall.

Reduced Budget and Borrowing

Our 2024 overall annual budget was reduced by 6.51% and the annual debt was reduced by 65.80%. Each department reduced its budget from the previous year. A thorough review of expenditures identified opportunities for savings without a reduction in services. See graphs below (these graphs can also be found on our website under Departments, under Annual Budget).



Congratulations, Officer Kosnopfal!

From Local Graduate to Dedicated Police Officer

Congratulations to our part-time police officer, Cedric Kosnopfal, who graduated from the police academy on December 14! He will begin with us full-time in January when he starts his officer field training.

Cedric Kosnopfal is a 2019 graduate of Ellsworth High School. He recently achieved a significant milestone, completing his Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice with minors in Psychology, Homeland Security, and Theology from Marian University in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

We're thrilled to have Cedric return to Ellsworth and serve his home town community in this way. What a great addition to our department and the community!

Cedric was the first participant in our new "police officer sponsorship program", an initiative where a municipality or law enforcement agency covers the costs of an individual's training at a Po-



lice Officer Academy. It benefits both the aspiring officers, who gain the necessary training, and the municipality, which gains qualified individuals to enhance public safety. It's a win-win! And thanks to a program through the Department of Justice, when the officer successfully graduates from the Academy, the Village will be reimbursed the cost of tuition.

Welcome, Sergeant Van Nocker!

A Wonderful Addition to the Ellsworth Police Force

On December 14, we proudly inaugurated Sergeant Eric Van Nocker as the newest member of our Ellsworth Police Department. Eric comes to us with a distinguished background, having served with the Pierce County Sheriff's Department for 9-1/2 years in roles such as a DARE Officer, Parole Duty personnel, and investigator.

His roots run deep within the Ellsworth community, and he eagerly anticipates contributing to the town that he considers an extension of his own family. Eric's foremost aspiration is to actively engage in mentoring and guiding the next wave of officers while directly involving himself in the local community.

With a wealth of experience, dedication, and a profound commitment to



serving our community, Eric brings invaluable assets to the Ellsworth Police Department. We're genuinely excited to extend a warm welcome to him as a wonderful addition to our force.

Check Out our New Wheels!

You'll soon be seeing Chevy pick-up trucks patrolling our streets here in Ellsworth. We've been trying to secure new Ford Interceptor (typical police sedan) squads through Ford for almost two years now with no luck. We were falling further and further behind with squads that are in desperate need for replacement. We are converting a previous Village fleet truck into being an unmarked vehicle. In addition, we purchased two Chevy pick-up trucks through Quinn Motors for \$43,000 (2023) and \$49,000 (2024). Fun Fact: These new pick-up trucks actually get better gas mileage than our current squads.



FAQs

Here's What You've Been Asking

What is the latest on the biogas digester project?

The Village Board is still in negotiations with Bigadan regarding the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Once the negotiations are complete the Village Board will schedule a Special Board Meeting to discuss the project and potentially vote to approve or deny the Special Use Permit.

It's worth noting that approval of a Special Use Permit will not automatically greenlight the project. This is just one step in a lengthy process of studies, plans, and other approvals.