



JOHNSON CREEK
Crossroads With A Future

The Creek

News from the Crossroads

March 2020

UPDATES FROM THE BOARD

By John L. Swisher & Kyle L. Ellefson



*Village President
John L. Swisher*

To start the new year, the Village Board reached an important milestone in the critical planning process that began in 2017. After working on the strategic plan over the course of more than two years, the Village Board put the final touches on the plan, and committed to the set of projects and equipment coming in the next few years. The Board truly showed their commitment and tenacity as they put in the additional work reviewing needs and opportunities across the Village and across Departments. They spent numerous hours developing a plan that meets the needs of the Village now and in the future, but also upholds the conservative financial management practices that we have placed as a cornerstone of Village fiscal policy.

The largest project, and one that has been discussed for years, is what we call the Southeast Neighborhood Project. This neighborhood, which includes South Street and the residential side streets such as Swap Street and Cora Street, has the oldest roadway infrastructure remaining in the Village. South Street has perhaps the worst pavement in the Village, and it is important to understand how the infrastructure conditions have limited our ability to address the roadway with long-lasting solutions. Our most recent road projects, like the work done a few years ago on Aztalan Street, are "mill and overlay" projects. These projects grind off the top layer of old, deteriorated asphalt, and overlay a new layer of asphalt, extending the life of the entire roadway for decades. However, when the water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure underneath the roadway has reached or is near the end of their serviceable life, it would be wasteful and expensive to put new asphalt in today that would be dug up or removed in order to replace underground infrastructure within the next few years. So, until the entire project can be done, we've been limited to treating the road with spot treatments and other less permanent solutions.

This Southeast Neighborhood Project will be a major one that will remove and replace all the asphalt, curbs, gutters, water and sewer mains, and stormwater infrastructure. The Village Board has already approved the preliminary engineering for this multi-million-dollar project, which should give us a better understanding of the impact to the roadways, sidewalks, and trees throughout this area. We're hoping to begin the project in 2021, but once started, this project could last for more than one construction season as the needed improvements are extensive. Well #4 has also been discussed for a very long time, and should come on line in the next several years. Since we have been growing faster than other cities and villages in the area, it isn't surprising that the amount of excess water supply has dwindled. We are reaching the point where we must add supply capacity to our system to continue meeting the residential, commercial,

"The Village Board we have right now is doing great things for the Village, and this plan shows how effective we've been at addressing community needs, improving services when possible, but never losing sight of our responsibility to the tax payer."

**- Village President
John L. Swisher**

industrial, and fire protection needs of our water system. On a typical day, we have no trouble meeting current water needs, but the data is beginning to point to a need for additional capacity. With unplanned risks, which if occurred at the same time, such as an existing well experiencing a major multi-day failure during a high-use time period or during a major industrial fire requiring immense amounts of water, the data suggests we would have difficulty supplying water without restricting water use or banning things like washing cars or watering lawns. The Village Board has already authorized preliminary design work to evaluate our water treatment options and get the water treatment methods approved by the DNR, so the Village is ready to take the next step when necessary.

In the near-term, the Southeast neighborhood project and Well #4 will be taking much of our attention, but there are additional items we plan to address in the next few years. We are planning to replace a snow plow truck, we will need to replace nearly every one of our public safety radios at the Police Department and Fire/EMS Department, and we know that the breathing apparatus our firefighters use to do their jobs are nearing the point where we will no longer be able to obtain service and replacement parts to keep them operating properly. These expenses are significant, but are needed to maintain service levels and keep our emergency services personnel safe. We are also planning to improve connections in our community by exploring a Gosdeck Lane Bridge, which was identified as one of the top goals of the 2017 Comprehensive Planning process.

We've spoken a lot about the improvements we plan to make and equipment we plan to buy, but we haven't talked a lot about how the finances will work, and how we can afford everything. The Village Board's strategic plan incorporates all of these expenses, but does so in a way that should have no impact on the tax rate you pay today. Incorporating recommendations from our financial advisor, we have found a way to take advantage of the Tax Increment Districts expiring in the coming years along with leveraging the existing debt service load to keep our overall expenditures in line with our revenues, taking on these important projects without increasing your tax rate. On top of

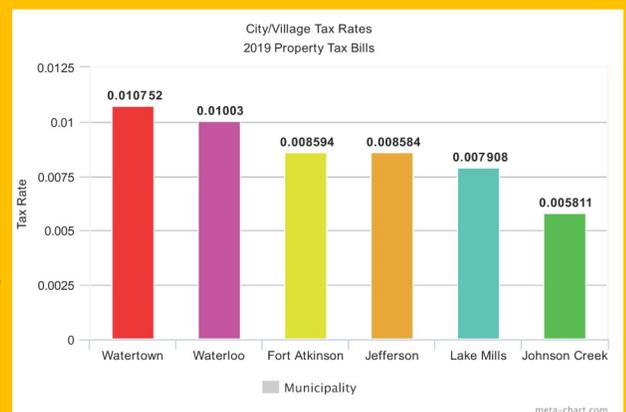
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*Village Administrator
Kyle L. Ellefson*

Municipal Tax Savings if You Lived in Johnson Creek (\$200,000 property)

A breakdown of savings for residents of Johnson Creek verses nearby communities ranges from \$419-\$988.



RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: SALLY ALBERTZ – CORRECTED AS 3/9/2020



Fred & Sally Albertz

Sally Albertz and her late husband Fred grew up in Johnson Creek and met in first grade. “Fred used to say he was so smart that he skipped kindergarten,” Albertz smiled.

The two became sweethearts in the sixth grade when their then-Johnson Creek Elementary School principal reformatted the school to include a junior high. “When we were labeled a junior high school, we started to have dances and that’s when Fred and I started to notice each other as more than friends,” Albertz shared.

“In high school, my friends and I would hang out on the fire escape of the old dance hall in downtown Johnson Creek to catch glimpses of the UW-Whitewater fraternity parties that would happen on the second floor. That was a great memory of a time growing up in Johnson Creek,” Albertz happily recalled.

The couple married in 1970 and stayed in Johnson Creek to raise their children Ryan and Karissa. And while both were busy with work and family, both became involved with the community.

Sally went back to school at MATC for accounting in 1997 after already spending many years working as a bookkeeper for Hartwig Poultry Farm and later the Gobbler Supper Club & Motel. And during it all, she was supportive of Fred’s efforts to serve Johnson Creek.

Fred provided support as a Village Trustee multiple years starting in 1973, including two terms as Village President in 1976-1978 and again 2003-2007. He continued to serve as a Village Trustee until 2017 when he passed away from cancer.

“Fred was always interested in helping the community and wanted to be a part of making things happen,” Albertz shared. “He liked being a part of the work. And he was always respectful and ethical with the position. He kept confidences and that’s what made him good at what he did and earned the respect of so many,” Albertz continued.

And Fred’s legacy continues to be seen throughout Johnson Creek.

He was part of the work that vastly improved the reliability of Village utility and street infrastructures; created attractive, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, nature trails, and subdivisions; established a Village-operated and responsive Fire-EMS Department; forged heightened intergovernmental cooperation and communication with municipalities throughout Jefferson County, including the formation of the Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium and Joint Smart Growth Planning Initiative; formatted the Park and Recreation Committee; and formulated a comprehensive park and open space plan that resulted in a new Community Center and restoration of Veterans Park, Firemans Park, Centennial Park and Bell Park.

And not only does Sally continue her family’s legacy to serve Johnson Creek by being on the Village’s Planning and Tourism Commissions, her father was one of the Village’s first full-time employees.

“My dad, Walter Becker, was one of only two DPW workers for the Village,” Sally recalled. “Back then the two of them did all the snow removal, garbage pick up, street sweeping, and water meters.”

“Sally is an integral part of our tourism commission,” cited Johnson Creek Tourism Director Katie Newcomb. “Sally brings a depth of history and experience that proves so valuable as the Village continues to grow,” Newcomb continued.

Because Sally has seen and been a part of the growth of Johnson Creek, she is encouraged for the future. “The Village is going the way it should with smart controlled growth,” Albertz noted. “We are in a position to pick and choose what projects move forward and manage them responsibly to not invade on our small-town-charm. Fred would say it’s good growth and I know he would be pleased with how that growth is continuing” Albertz continued.

Both Sally and Fred were also very active in their church, St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran. Fred served for several years on their church council and as congregation president. Sally continues to serve on the church council and has been their treasurer for the last 20 years.

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GET TO KNOW THE PEOPLE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Shaping the Future of
YOUR
Johnson Creek



The Village of Johnson Creek has dedicated and giving residents who have a love for our community and the desire to make it the wonderful place to live, work, and play that it is. Our residents’ generosity and commitment to our community are what makes Johnson Creek so unique. The investments of time, talent, and treasure of so many help ensure the continued success and growth of our community. We want to thank and remind such individuals of how important they are to the Village.

Heidi Hartz

- “CHIC” Creek Healthy Initiative Coalition member promoting physical & mental health through community activities.
- Johnson Creek School Board clerk/policy chair.
- “Wellness Club” at Johnson Creek Schools organizing year-round activities for area youth.
- Johnson Creek Historical Society member.
- Johnson Creek Joint Recreation Committee member

Paula Constable

- “4 Our Kids” community action group—organizational administrator/steering committee member.
- Johnson Creek School District “One Team One Dream” athletic field capital campaign chairperson and event chair.
- Volunteer coordinator and adult education facilitator at Trinity Lutheran Church in Lake Mills

REWARDING JOBS WITH THE JOHNSON CREEK FIRE & EMS DEPARTMENT



The Johnson Creek Fire/EMS Department provides emergency medical response coverage to a population of approximately 5,500 people in the Village of Johnson Creek and portions of the Townships of Aztalan, Farmington, Milford, and Watertown. We are looking for dependable team members who are inspired by challenging and meaningful work to join our team.



Our emergency medical service team are certified at levels ranging from EMT to Paramedic, and earn up to \$20.00 to \$23.00/hour. Those interested in becoming an EMT are encouraged to contact the station as well. Johnson Creek Fire/EMS offers tuition compensation after training and successfully acquiring an EMT license. And for those who don't live in the immediate response area, there is a "Ready House" adjacent to the station for employees to comfortably stay during their shift. All this and flexible scheduling are available to our team members. Call (920)699-3456 or stop in at Station 1 at 120 S Watertown St to learn more and get an application!

TOURISM UPDATES



The Johnson Creek tourism department is working on marketing projects for 2020. We will again promote the Village with our successful *Be Unique in Johnson Creek* campaign, including commercials airing with Spectrum. They will run in both the summer and winter to coincide with the influx of DNC and Ryder Cup visitors to the area, as well as our summer and winter events. We are also undergoing a direct marketing campaign targeted towards event and wedding planners called, *Let's Meet in Johnson Creek*. Both campaigns are to share all the great things Johnson Creek has to offer visitors.

Our **Discover Wisconsin** episode is quickly approaching! It will air on *Fox Sports* on Saturday, April 25 at 10 a.m. and again on Sunday, April 26 at 6:30 p.m. We will also post the episode on our tourism website. It is shaping up to be a wonderful program highlighting what makes Johnson Creek a great place to visit, live, and work. See our Facebook page for updates!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please send info to Tourism Director Katie Newcomb, katien@johnsoncreekwi.org for inclusion in the newsletter and tourism website

- **March 7:** Whiskey & Wild Game Dinner at Milford Hills
- **March 7:** Jerrod Niemann at Gobbler Theater
- **March 14:** Let's Make A Laugh Comedy Night at Comfort Suites benefitting Johnson Creek Schools
- **April 4:** Breakfast with the Bunny Community Egg Hunt
- **April 12:** Easter Brunch at Milford Hills
- **April 17:** Roseanne Barr at Gobbler Theater
- **April 24 & 25:** Johnson Creek Rummage-O-Rama
- **April 25 & 26:** Discover Wisconsin Johnson Creek episode airs (check your local listings)
- **April 26:** Johnson Creek Fire Department Breakfast

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT

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Sally shared the following quotes from Paul Moderacki, Johnson Creek's former administrator who worked with Fred. These were made as a Facebook post shortly after Fred's passing in 2017. "What impressed me most about Fred was the way he approached his responsibilities. He learned as much as he could, asked questions, always looked for the best solution...As proud as he was about what he and the Village had been able to accomplish, he remained humble. It was this quality that singled him out and brought him notice."

The couple's outreach continued with Fred serving nine years on the Watertown Hospital Board and Sally is, and has been, the co-coordinator for the Red Cross Blood Drive the past three years.

"As not only president of board, but as a Johnson Creek resident, I am indebted to Fred for his years of service to the Village, and celebrate Sally's commitment to give of her time and talents," said Village Board President John L. Swisher. "The Albertz's represent wonderful examples of the power of community activism and how we all benefit from their commitment to serve. Thank you to Fred and Sally for all that they do for the Village," admired Swisher.

UPDATES FROM THE BOARD

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that, we are already funding capital equipment like squad cars and reserving money for routine road maintenance from our operational funds instead of borrowing the funds. Take a minute to consider all of the projects we are tackling and all of the equipment we are purchasing, and then take a look at how our municipal tax rate for Village operations compares to other communities in our area. Our tax rate is the lowest among area communities by far, with the next closest tax rate being 47% higher than Johnson Creek's. That means that our residents pay hundreds of dollars less every year than they would in neighboring communities, placing these impressive results in line with a Village President and Village Board that remain committed to the taxpayers and residents. This is all great news to start 2020, and I expect we will continue to have great things to share throughout the year!

YOUR LIBRARY UPDATES & NEWS

Bring Your Grandparents to the Library!

an intergenerational storytime and dementia learning session

Saturday, March 21
10:00 - 11:30 a.m.



Schedule of Events

- 10:00 - family storytime
- 10:30 - learn about memory loss and where to find resources
- 10:45 to 11:30 - snacks with family games and activities

Join us for this inter-generational storytime and dementia learning session!

Presented by the Johnson Creek Public Library in collaboration with



NEW

The Johnson Creek Public Library is the recipient of a \$1,000 TalkReadPlay Accelerator Grant!

The money will help the library integrate TalkReadPlay principles and will go towards purchasing enriching toys and other items for the children's area and Brilliant Babies program.

talkreadplay
with your child every day

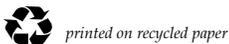


talkreadplaywi.com



Village of Johnson Creek

www.johnsoncreek-wi.us



IMPORTANT REMINDERS

PICKING UP AFTER YOUR DOG

As we enter into warmer weather and melting snow, please be a friendly neighbor and pick up after your dog.

Picking up after
YOUR DOG
IS SIMPLE AND
RESPONSIBLE



Dog waste transmits disease and is therefore prohibited. Violations can result in penalties ranging from \$10.00 to \$250.00 for a first offense.

ELECTIONS 2020

As many of you already know, 2020 is going to be a busy election year in the State of Wisconsin! To help you prepare, we want to share some resources and tips.

IMPORTANT REMINDER:

If you recently moved (even if it's to another home within the Village of Johnson Creek) or your name has changed, you **MUST** reregister to vote. You can find a voter registration form and more at the **Wisconsin Election Commission's** online Voter Information Center at www.elections.wi.gov/voters. The website provides resources for everything you need to know about voting in Wisconsin via a convenient menu listing numerous election subjects from which you can choose (*see right*).

VOTER INFORMATION CENTER

www.elections.wi.gov/voters

- Find your polling place
- Voting absentee (early voting)
- Info on registering to vote
- Acceptable photo IDs
- See what's on your ballot
- Check your voting history
- Voting as a college student
- Military or Overseas Voting
- ...and more

