

Town of Washington Messenger

December 2025

GREETINGS FROM THE TOWN OF WASHINGTON

I appreciate the opportunity to serve as the Town Chairperson for the Town of Washington.

Our annual newsletter highlights our accomplishments for 2025.

Our residents participate actively through:

- Attending meetings
- Offering ideas and suggestions
- Sharing concerns with the Town Board and staff
- Turning out in large numbers for elections

We truly value your passion, feedback, and involvement—it's your support that helps us succeed.

Please remember to check on your neighbors, especially those who are elderly or disabled, during storms and the winter months. Also, be sure your pets are safe and well cared for.

Please try and attend our Town Board Meetings.

We encourage you to reach out to any board member should you want something added to the meeting agenda. Their contact information can be found on our Town website at town-of-washington.org

On behalf of your Town Board—Carole, Art, Nancy, Tiffany, and myself—and your Town Crew: Paul, Doug, Terry, Rich, Mike and Davey, we wish you a wonderful 2026 filled with hope, courage, and open hearts.

Respectfully,

Jim Egan

Town Chairperson

STAY INFORMED

We send a monthly electronic newsletter. Sign up on our website. town-of-washington.org

AGENDA

Board meetings are the first Monday of the month. If there are items you'd like placed on the agenda, please let any board member know.

PLACING SNOW ON TOWN ROADS

Snow blowing or shoveling snow back into the road is not legal per Wisconsin statute 346.94(5). You may not plow snow onto roads, right of way, or your neighbor's property!

ADOPT A ROAD

Many town roads are still available for adoption. Choose a nearby road to help keep our town roads clean—all materials and support are provided.

Volunteers only need to pick up litter twice yearly, in spring and fall.

To participate or learn more, email Jill at jill.adoptaroad@gmail.com or call 630-750-6563.

Adopt-A-Road applications are available on our website.

2026 ELECTIONS

February 17, 2026 – Spring primary
April 7, 2026 – Spring election
August 11, 2026 – Fall primary
November 3, 2026 – General election

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

Our 2026 grant application is submitted. Planned projects include:

- Free Home Ignition Zone assessments for west side Bass Lake residents
- Free roadside chipping for all Bass Lake residents
- Brush site maintenance

Brush site chipping is funded by our CWDC grant. Due to federal budget cuts, the maximum award for the 2026 CWPP grant is \$10,000. We hope to receive funding.

Since 2017, the WDNR has fully funded all our CWPP projects, awarding \$101,270 at no cost to the town.

Every year, we choose a part of town for

voluntary Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) Assessments. Last summer, 61 Bass Lake east side homeowners participated to learn how to reduce wildfire risk.



Specially trained firefighters from the USFS, WDNR, and EFRD, many of whom volunteer, conduct these assessments and we are grateful for their service.

Firefighters inspect the exterior of your home—building materials, maintenance, landscaping, and vegetation—and offer advice to help lower wildfire risks. The home ignition zone covers your house and everything within 100 feet.

Research links features in this area to likelihood of wildfire ignition. As a homeowner, you play a key role in safeguarding your property, since only you can make changes. Free home ignition zone assessments identify risk factors specific to your home, but completing recommendations is optional. Following each assessment, you'll receive a folder with your results and tips for reducing risk. If you're not home, it will be left at your door.

Thanks to Laura Hayes, WDNR Wildland Urban Interface Specialist, for her hard work and dedication to the Town of Washington CWPP.

This year the brush site received around 475 visits monthly. Wood chips, compost, and firewood are free to take. Our town crew pushes the brush back on a weekly basis. The site is on the same parcel as the gravel pit. Please do not take sand, as it is needed for town road maintenance.

Opening date depends on weather and will be announced online and in the monthly electronic newsletter. It closes on October 26, 2026. Hours: Friday 4PM to Monday 6AM. The site is open on Memorial Day, July 4th, and Labor Day.

Regulations are included in this newsletter. Please review and follow them.



NEW WASTE RULES FOR STR'S

Over the past several years there has been a steadily increasing number of short-term rental properties in the Town of Washington and significant increase in amount of garbage, waste, refuse and recyclables that these properties generate.

All short-term rental properties will need to provide garbage pick-up services effective January 1, 2026.

Garbage and recyclables must be stored in a secured container and properly disposed of on a weekly basis.

With the mailing of the 2025 real estate tax bills, all properties identified as a short-term rental and in receipt of a Town of Washington Short Term

Rental License, will no longer receive a transfer station permit with their property tax bill.

Garbage and recyclables generated at a property licensed as a short-term rental will no longer be disposed of at the Town of Washington Transfer Station. Garbage pickup services for the addresses licensed as short-term rentals will need to be contracted.

The Transfer Station and Short-Term Rental Ordinances were amended at the September board meeting to reflect this change.

Details of both ordinances can be found on the town website.

HELP WANTED

The Towns of Washington and Lincoln are seeking qualified candidates for the role of Animal Control Officer. Residency within either town is not a requirement. Candidates must possess an appropriate crate for animal transport.

Compensation is negotiable.

For further information or to apply, please contact Jim Egan at 715-479-2074

PAW & ORDER

Licensing your dog is required by law. According to Wisconsin State Law, all dogs aged five months or older must be licensed annually. The license period runs from January 1 through December 31.

The annual fee is \$5.00 for neutered or spayed dogs and \$10.00 for unneutered or unspayed dogs. A late fee of \$5.00 will apply to licenses obtained after April 1.

Please submit a copy of your dog's current rabies vaccination certificate along with a separate check payable to the Town of Washington for the appropriate license fee. Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope to receive your receipt and tags. Mail all documents to Tiffany Bolte, PO Box 1373, Eagle River, WI 54521. If you have any questions, please contact Tiffany Bolte, Town of Washington Treasurer, at 715-891-1271.

Please note per Ch 6 Animal Control Ordinance section 6.06, dogs are allowed out of doors on town property provided they are leashed at all times and under control of their owner.

HISTORIC BLADE REVIVAL

Perhaps you've noticed the historic old plow blade in front of the town shop is being worked upon. It's being restored!

Many years ago, an old plow blade was placed there. Previous town chairman, Jim Spring, enlisted the help of the art students at Northland Pines High School to create a "mural" representing the Town of Washington on the blade. The students captured

the essence of our town with depictions of a snowmobile, forest, lakes, deer, and the year our town was established – 1914.

Mother nature has taken a toll on the blade over the years. Town resident and artist, Mike Faulkner, has graciously offered to restore the blade! There's a lot of prep work involved, and one side of the blade has been prepped already. Next

spring and summer, watch the transformation as Mike works his magic.

We're grateful to Mike for his time and talent in preserving this important part of the history of our town!

Stop by and watch the transformation.



DRIVEWAYS AND FIRE NUMBERS

Per the Vilas County 2025 Uniform Addressing System Ordinance update, two-sided horizontal flag-style address signs are now required, as these make it easier to identify driveway locations. We must complete the costly change to flag-style fire numbers within ten years.

Prior to construction of any new driveway, you **MUST** complete a driveway permit application. To obtain a fire number, complete a fire number application on the Vilas County website.

Both the driveway permit application and link to the fire number application can be found under Forms and Permits on our website.

For more info contact Nancy Sobraliski, Town Clerk, at 715-479-8886.

BIG CHANGES AT STATION 2

You may have noticed a flurry of activity at ERAFD Station #2 in recent months.

Earlier this year, the Town donated five more acres of land to the fire department

for development as a firefighter training facility.

Additionally, a helipad was constructed on the property, which will enhance emergency medical response capabilities for the area east of Eagle River.

The site will be bordered with rock berms for added safety and structure.

The Town is proud to collaborate with the Eagle River Area Fire Department in delivering these essential services to our community.



TRANSFER STATION NOTES

■ A big thank you to Rich and Mike for an outstanding year at the transfer station. And to Davey, for always helping when needed. Your hard work, positive attitude, and attention to detail keep things running smoothly and are truly appreciated. Your dedication has made a real difference in our town.

■ We're still in the NexTrex Challenge and have earned two Trex benches this year. Since 2023, we've recycled 7,800 pounds of plastic. The program continues next year—please keep bringing your plastic bags! Benches are raffled off to transfer station users.

■ Permits are required for facility access and will be checked at each visit. Photos of permits are not accepted. PLEASE NOTE THE 2026 PERMITS FEATURE GOLD METALLIC STICKERS—REMOVING OR ALTERING THE STICKER VOIDS YOUR PERMIT! Entry is only allowed with a valid permit.

■ Take care not to lose or damage your permit. Replacement permits are subject to a \$40 replacement fee. Contact Tiffany Bolte, Town Treasurer, at tbolte.townofwashington@gmail.com for a replacement.

■ The metal dumpster, located outside the drive-thru, is for metal only. NO water heaters, lawn mowers, lawn tractors, appliances etc. All items must be placed inside the metal dumpster, not left beside or behind the dumpster.

■ Carcasses are not permitted at the transfer station. You may bring carcasses to the Highway G Landfill at 7001 Hwy G, Eagle River. Stop by the landfill office first.

■ No oils of any kind, including cooking oil, may be deposited at the transfer station. The Highway G Landfill accepts cooking oil for a fee, and O'Reilly Auto Parts will take car oil at no charge.

■ Cardboard boxes must be flattened and measure no larger than 2'X2'.

■ If you are unsure about whether an item can be brought to the transfer station, please ask Rich or Mike before bringing it.

HELPFUL TAX INFORMATION

- When paying taxes by mail indicate your telephone number on the check. This will ensure payment is properly applied. It also ensures we have a way to contact you if necessary.
- Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your payment if you would like a receipt. Receipts cannot be mailed without the self-addressed, stamped envelope.
- Postmark governs the payment date.
- Mail payments to PO Box 1373, Eagle River, WI 54521
- Payment by credit card is available (for a fee) for the 2025-2026 tax season. Details are available on our town website Taxes page.
- Tax payments for the exact amount only may be made in person via cashier's check, personal check, or money order at the Peoples State Bank located at 1011 E Wall St.
- Visit the Vilas County website at <https://ascend.vilascountywi.gov/LandRecords/> for payment amount, tax receipt, or copy of your tax bill.
- 2025 tax payments are posted on the Vilas County Treasurer's website.
- Pay taxes with a personal check, cashier's check or money order payable to the Town of Washington.
- Personal property taxes are due in full by January 31, 2026.
- Real estate taxes are due as follows:
 - Full payment or first installment by January 31, 2026 to the Town of Washington Treasurer.
 - Second installment due by July 31, 2026 to the Vilas County Treasurer
- Each year we receive escrow checks more than tax due. The town policy regarding these payments is we will refund checks at our next regularly scheduled meeting. The Treasurer cannot endorse an escrow check and return it to the taxpayer. Escrow checks must be used for the payment of taxes only.
- If your mailing address is incorrect, send a signed address change request along with your tax payment.

THE CASE FOR DREDGING

The Deerskin River once flowed freely, offering rich fishing grounds, scenic beauty, and a healthy aquatic ecosystem for residents and visitors alike. Today the river tells a different story.

In 2001, despite unanimous public opposition, Dam #WP767 on the Deerskin River was removed by the DNR. This resulted in large amounts of legacy sediment being transported down the river and deposited in the lower river between Rangeline Road and Scattering Rice Lake.

This has created navigational issues and makes it difficult for riparians to access their docks and lifts. Fish spawning areas are buried, water temperatures have risen, biodiversity has declined, and the natural balance of the ecosystem has been disturbed.

In October 2023, after three years of contacting the DNR, a department biologist came to look at the situation. His conclusion was, it's the Department's water and our problem.

Nothing could be done to rectify the situation without a study. With donations from the Eagle River Chain of Lakes Association and the Town of Washington, an engineering firm was hired to conduct a geomorphic study in July of 2024. The ecologist who conducted the study determined the best method for remediation would be hydraulic dredging.

In October 2024, Senator Mary Felzkowski and Representative Rob Swearingen proposed \$1.75 million for the project in the 2025-2026 state budget. Although it passed legislative committees, the Governor vetoed it, citing the legislature's failure to renew the Knowles/Nelson Stewardship Fund.

After further discussions, Senator Felzkowski and Representative Swearingen

agreed to submit a stand-alone bill, which is currently in progress. If successful in Finance, the bill will likely require a public hearing, and we encourage residents and supporters to testify. Should it proceed through committee and the Legislature, we will put out a call to action to contact the Governor asking not to veto it.



Public support and advocacy are vital to advancing this project for the benefit of nature, our residents, and visitors. For more information, please reach out to Larry Springer at larrandar@gmail.com or 715-572-0881.

TOWN CONTACT INFO

Jim Egan	Town Chairperson	715-479-2074
Art Granat	Town Supervisor	715-891-2683
Carole Linn	Town Supervisor	715-479-6873
Tiffany Bolte	Town Treasurer	715-891-1271
Nancy Sobralski	Town Clerk	715-479-8886

Town Shop		715-477-2024
Paul Chlapecka	Town Foreman	715-891-4833
Hoffman Appraisal	Town Assessor	715-536-6236
VACANT	Animal Control	
RC Inspection	Building Inspector	715-439-4222