

NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2022

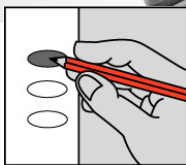
VILLAGE OF PARK RIDGE

EST. 1938 | VI.PARKRIDGE.WI.GOV

VILLAGE HALL: 24 CRESTWOOD DRIVE, STEVENS POINT, WI 54481
OFFICE OF VILLAGE CLERK / TREASURER: 715-343-1590
OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY – THURSDAY 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM



Photo courtesy Jeri McGinley



New Scanner Vote Tabulator Improves Our Elections

For the first time, Park Ridge voters will use a scanner vote tabulator when casting their ballots beginning August 9th. The purchase of the ES&S DS200 vote tabulator was made possible because of American

Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. Ballot tabulators allow election officials to accurately and quickly count voter selections from paper ballots. The DS200 is well known for its reliability, accuracy and security making it a welcome addition to the Clerk's office. All ballot tabulators are subject to extensive security protections and are certified before use to ensure that they are properly programmed to scan ballots. Anyone may attend the public test of voting equipment to be held August 3, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. at the Village Hall, 24 Crestwood Drive.

(For more information about ballot tabulators see:

<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/how-ballot-tabulators-improve-elections/>) ■

August 9th Partisan Primary Election

The August 9th Partisan Primary allows each political party to narrow down its candidates for the November ballot. For this election, you may select candidates in only one political party of your choice. Wisconsin has run its fall primary elections this way since the early 1900s.

At the polls or when casting an absentee ballot:

1. Choose one party in the party preference section at the top of your ballot.
2. Find that party's section on the ballot.
3. Select the individual candidates of your choice within that party.

Questions? Contact Village of Park Ridge Clerk Shanna Behrend at (715)-343-1590. ■



Fire Protection: important choices ahead

The topic of fire protection has been an important, and sometimes controversial, concern in the Village for quite a few years now. The Park Ridge Fire Department has a long history in the Village – over 74 years to be exact – and, as a volunteer fire department, has served the Village well during that time.

Like many communities throughout Wisconsin and the nation, however, the Village has struggled to invest in the needed equipment and space to operate a fire department at current standards. Shortly after our fire chief, Brian Lepper, and assistant chief, John Kraft announced in February their resignations effective in June, the Village hired Neenah-based McMahon & Associates to conduct an analysis of the fire department to help determine what it would take to continue operating it. Then, after learning that only a few of the PRFD firefighting crew had expressed interest in remaining with the department after June 30, the Village arranged a short-term (6-month) contract for fire protection services with the City of Stevens Point Fire Department, to allow the Village time to consider its options.

In early June, McMahon & Associates submitted their 18-page report, which can be viewed

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through a link on the following web page: <https://vi.parkridge.wi.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Park-Ridge-Fire-Department-Organizational-Analysis-2.pdf>. Village residents are strongly encouraged to view the report. Among its recommendations the report states that, if the Village wishes to continue operating its own fire department, it needs to “replace both fire engines” and also suggests “immediate replacement of the squad vehicle with a crew cab pick-up truck.” The report estimates the total cost of these three vehicles at \$885,000, and also states, “the fire station is in need of complete replacement” at an estimated cost of \$1 - \$1.5 million (current PRFD space is about 1,800 sq. ft., which falls far short of the recommended 4,000-6,000 sq. ft.). The report also states that, regardless of how fire protection is delivered, “strong consideration should be given to installing municipal water mains throughout the Village” to add hydrants.



Replacement is recommended for all 3 Park Ridge Fire Department vehicles.

Now that we have seen the level of investment we would need in order to bring the Village's fire department space and apparatus up to standards, it is clear that we have arrived at a crossroads. For the long-term, is it more cost effective to maintain our own fire department, or to contract fire protection services with a neighboring municipality?

To help answer this question, in recent months we sought advice and counsel from a statewide consulting agency (Wisconsin Policy Forum) and leaders of area municipalities – including the City of Stevens Point, Village of Whiting, Village of Plover, Village of Junction City and the Town of Hull. From those discussions we learned that the two municipalities we share borders with, the City of Stevens Point and the Town of Hull, both expressed interest in contracting their fire protection services to serve our Village in either the short-term or the long-term. As mentioned above, the Village elected to contract with the City to address the short-term need.

Where do we stand today? In addition to having the cost estimates from McMahon & Associates for upgrading and maintaining the Park Ridge Fire Department, we now also have proposals from the City (final details pending) and the Town of Hull for contracting fire protection services for the long-term. We have arrived at the crossroads, and in the coming weeks we must choose one of three paths we can take for the Village's long-term fire protection. The three choices are described below. As the Village board explores these options in the weeks ahead, residents are encouraged to take some time to review them and offer feedback to the Board.

Option 1: Upgrade and maintain the Park Ridge Fire Department *

The following upgrades have been recommended in the report by McMahon & Associates:

- Replace Engine 1* (current engine is 28 yrs. old)
- Replace Engine 2* (current engine is 42 yrs. old)
- Replace Squad* (current vehicle is 48 yrs. old; customized about 25 years ago)
- Construct new fire department building* (4,000-6,000 sq. ft.)

Vehicles:

Total est. cost of vehicle replacement: \$885,000*
Annual debt retirement (vehicles): \$75,000/year*

Building:

Total estimated cost of new building:
\$1,000,000 - \$1,500,000* (\$250/sq. ft.)
Annual debt retirement (building): \$75,000 - \$110,000/year*

Operations:

Estimated annual operating costs (wages, equipment, training, etc.): \$60,000/year

Total Capital Expenditure (Vehicles and Building):
\$1,885,000 - \$2,385,000

Total Annual Cost (Debt Retirement + Operations):
\$210,000 - \$270,000/year

Pros:

- Continues 74-year PRFD culture and tradition.
- Village maintains control over fire department matters (policies, staffing, activities, budget, etc.).
- Volunteer crew may assist with non-emergency tasks (storm clean-up, Village rummage sale preparation, Santa visits, Holiday decorations, flag installation/take-down, etc.).

Cons:

- Two independent consultants have advised that keeping PRFD staffed would be our biggest concern.

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- Most of the Village's investment in PRFD supports other municipalities (66% of PRFD's calls over the last 3 years were for mutual aid to other communities).*
- Annual cost (operating and debt retirement) exceeds the Village's current total tax levy of \$198,768, and would likely double the Village's share of the mill rate for property taxes.
- Capital costs approach the Village's borrowing limit of approx. \$3 million (5% of equalized value), leaving little room for other Village priorities (streets, hydrants, water mains, etc.)
- Vehicles will need to be replaced in 10-20 years.
- The new vehicles would increase insurance costs.
- The new building would increase utilities, maintenance and insurance expenses.
- The new building may detract from and devalue the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Option 2: Contract fire protection services from the City (Stevens Point Fire Department) ** +



SPFD proposes to provide the services of its firefighters, firefighting equipment, EMS staff, and EMS equipment as SPFD deems necessary, when the department is notified by the Portage County Sheriff's Department Emergency 911 system that services are required within the Village.

Terms/contingencies of initial contract:

- Length of initial term to be determined.
- Includes property inspections.
- Village must commit to installing additional hydrants.

Cost for Annual Contract:

- \$96,000 per year (est.) +

Pros:

- Paid, full-time, professionally-staffed fire department (the only one in Portage County).
- Very fast response times – likely in the range of 4 minutes from Station 1 after dispatch. (NOTE: a structure fire increases 16 times in size every 3 minutes)
- Current ISO rating: 2 (top 3% nationally).

Cons:

- Relatively high cost when compared to option 3.
- Requires a commitment to install hydrants and water mains.

Option 3: Contract fire protection services from the Town of Hull (Hull Fire Department)**



The Town of Hull Fire Department proposes to provide fire and rescue services with equipment and personnel to the Village of Park Ridge when it is notified by the Portage County Sheriff's Department Emergency 911 system, or as directed by Hull Fire Chief. HFD currently is staffed by 24 volunteer/paid-on-call firefighters, has 3 Engines, two 2100 gal. tenders, 1 rescue squad, 2 wildland brush trucks. Fire station is located 3.5 miles from the Village. HFD's Firefighting method includes use of firetruck "tenders" with dump tanks dropped on-site, using the nearest hydrant first for water supply or a tender shuttle if a hydrant is not accessible.

Terms/contingencies of initial contract:

- 2 years (continues unless terminated by either party with a 60-day notice).
- Includes property inspections.
- When necessary, HFD will utilize the Wisconsin MABAS (Mutual Aid Box Alarm System) to activate response and meet the needs of the incident.
- Santa Visits in December - HFD will actively support this long-standing Village tradition.

Cost for Annual Contract:

- \$59,741 (1 mill of equalized valuation of Village; sum to be paid in quarterly payment on the first day of January, April, July and October.)

Pros:

- Relatively low cost when compared with the other two options.
- No requirement for adding hydrants, saving a significant capital expenditure.
- Buys time to allow careful consideration of installing hydrants/municipal water and reconstructing streets.

Cons:

- Longer response times (volunteer-staffed and 3.5 mile distance from the Village).
- Dump tank method of firefighting requires heavier trucks, possibly causing more collateral damage to streets and yards than the other options.

* Information and cost estimates based on the report, "Fire Department Organizational Analysis" by McMahon & Associates (June 2022)

** Proposals are estimates, subject to final negotiations between the two partners.

+ Details are based on current 6-month contract. Final terms are pending. ■

Building Permits

Many Village property owners may be considering building projects this spring and summer. Here are some general guidelines:



A permit IS REQUIRED to change or add structures:

- Enlarging a concrete or asphalt slab.
- Replacing windows with larger windows.
- Changing a roofline when repairing a roof.
- Changing a screened patio into one that is weatherproof, heated or has electrical outlets.
- Replacing an existing furnace, air conditioner or water heater if: changing from gas to electric or vice versa; or changing the location of electrical, plumbing or ventilation to the new unit.
- Installation of a new fence or repairing/replacing more than 40% of an existing fence's length.
- Replacing doors with new, wider ones.
- Building a new interior wall or moving a wall when doing siding.
- Building any new structure (Ordinance 11.13)
- Anytime electrical, plumbing, or HVAC systems are modified or added to.

Permits must be obtained before work begins and displayed so they are visible from the street. Failure to obtain a permit may result in additional fees and fines. Always remember to adhere to setback requirements for all structures or additions.

NO PERMIT is required to replace or repair existing structures–

- Repairing a cracked concrete or asphalt slab in the same area as before.
- Replacing old windows with new ones of the same size.
- Replacing siding or roofing with no changes made to the structure or roofline.
- Replacing patio screens with new screens.
- Replacing an existing furnace, air conditioner or water heater with the same type without any electrical, plumbing or ventilation changes.
- Repairing or replacing less than 40% of an existing fence's length. Replacing doors with new ones of the same size.

For permits or more information, contact: Jim Zepp, Village Building Inspector, at jzepp55@gmail.com or 715-310-3156. ■

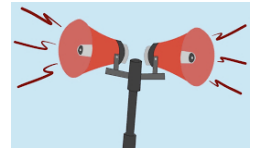
Reminders to pet owners

- Please clean up after your pets. Do not leave animal droppings in another resident's yard. (Ord. 10.03, sect. 13)
- Please do not allow your cats (or other pets) to roam off your premises. The leash law applies to cats, too! (Ord. 10.03, sect. 7)
- Noisy animals or fowl are prohibited in the Village. (Ord. 10.05, sect. 10) ■



Emergency siren de-activated pending repairs

A malfunctioning weather/emergency siren located at the Park Ridge Village Hall has been temporarily de-activated until it can be repaired to work properly with the Portage County Emergency Dispatch Center and coordinated emergency alert systems. The work has been delayed due to supply chain issues for the parts needed to install the necessary updates and repairs. Village and nearby residents are strongly encouraged to observe other local warning systems in place, including nearby sirens, local television and radio broadcasts, and other emergency alert systems. Citizens are also urged to sign up for the Portage County Community Alert System that sends notifications to your home phone, mobile phone, and emails. To sign up for this free service, visit the following link, or call 715-346-1400:



<https://www.co.portage.wi.us/departments/sheriff-s-office/operations-division/communications-center/>

Large item pick-up – Sept. 29

This is the time for Village residents to clean out the basement and garage, and dispose of those non-recyclable items such as furniture, carpeting, mattresses, box springs, etc. All items to be picked up must be placed at the end of the driveway or street-side by 8 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 29th. No appliances, building/demolition materials, electronics, tires or toxic materials (paint thinners, pesticides, fertilizers, insecticides, etc.) will be picked up. There will be only one “run” by Harter’s through the Village, so items put out later in the day will not be picked up. Don’t miss this opportunity to dispose of non-recyclable items which is offered only once/year! To arrange for an individual large item pick-up throughout the year please contact Harter: 715-253-2619. ■

Yard Waste

The Village has an agreement with the City of Stevens Point to allow Village residents to drop off yard waste – leaves, grass clippings, plant stalks, flowers, twigs/sticks, and brush up to 6” diameter – at the City’s drop-off site at the City Garage near Bukolt Park, 100 Sixth Avenue. Please visit the website for a list of hours. <https://stevenspoint.com/368/Drop-Off>. ■

Recycle / Reuse

For all your recycling and solid waste disposal questions, contact the Portage County Solid Waste Department at 715-343-6297.

The Portage County Transfer Facility & Recycling site is located at 650 Moore Road, east of I-39 off of County Hwy B in Plover. Turn north onto Apache Drive. Stop at the scale speaker and the attendant will direct you from there. When done, weigh out and go to the scale office in the MRF (Material Recovery Facility) to make payment. The facility is open Mon-Fri 7:30 am – 3:30 pm and Sat 7:30 am – 11:00 am. Arrive at least 30 minutes before closing. Fees vary and some restrictions apply, so call 715-343-6297 for more information or go to the Portage County Solid Waste Department website. Rates for Residential, Commercial and Construction/Demolition: \$20 minimum charge for any load of 600 lbs. or less. Loads weighing more than 600 lbs. are subject to a standard rate of \$65.75 per ton.. ■

Want to stay connected? Sign up for:

- **Village notifications**

Want to keep up with what's happening in Village Hall? Sign up to receive notifications from the Village website for postings relating to Village board and committee meetings, agendas, minutes, meeting packets, news and notices. To subscribe, go to: <https://vi.parkridge.wi.gov/subscribe-to-updates> ■

- **Community Alert**

To receive emergency notifications from the Village of Park Ridge please sign up for Community Alert at:

<https://portagecountycommunityalert.bbcportal.com>

Click "Sign Me Up"; provide your contact information and subscribe to receive your preferred types of messages; Download the "Blackboard MyConnect" app. ■

Mark your calendar...

- August 9, 2022 - Partisan Primary
- November 8, 2022 - General Election



Burning regulations

Per Village Ordinance, the Fire Chief, Fire Inspector, any appointed Fire Officer, or Law Enforcement Officer may order and/or cause to be extinguished any fire that may, in their singular opinion, be threatening the safety of persons or property in the Village. Non-compliance with regulations or orders of a Fire Department Official may result in a citation.

- Burning hours: Tuesday - Friday 4 pm – 9 pm and Saturday noon – 9 pm
- Size of piles: No larger than 4'x4'x3'
- Fire location: No burning shall take place in any street right-of-way. Approved burning shall take place 30 ft. or more from any structure, flammable liquid, or other material which constitutes a potential fire hazard.



Wind regulation: No burning shall take place when the wind velocity exceeds 9 MPH as indicated by a credible source or during periods when either the Fire Chief or the Department of Natural Resources has issued a burning ban.

Fire prevention: ALL fires must be attended at all times, by a responsible person equipped with either an operable garden hose or fire extinguisher. All fires must be extinguished before such a person leaves the site. Fully extinguished means no heat can be felt emitting from the remains of the fire. ■

Alleys and areas near stop signs: keep clear

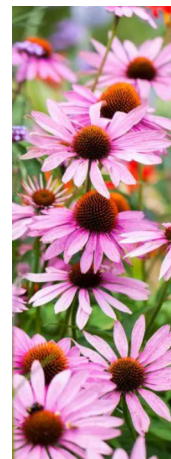
- Please keep the alleys mowed and open to emergency vehicles.
- The alleys may also be used by all residences that are located on an alley. However, please do not block any alley entrances or exits.
- If you have a stop sign on your property, it is your responsibility to cut back any branches that prevent a clear vision of the stop sign. Village Ordinance 10.08, Section V states: *"No shrub, hedge or other growth exceeding thirty-six (36) inches in height above street grade shall be permitted in any clear vision triangle extending 25 feet from any street corner within the Village. Trees that are located in a clear vision triangle shall be kept trimmed so that the lowest branches projecting over the public street or right-of-way provide a clearance of not less than sixteen (16) feet."* ■



Village of Park Ridge
 24 Crestwood Dr.
 Stevens Point, WI 54481
<https://vi.parkridge.wi.gov>

Village Board and Staff Contact Information

President:	Steve Menzel	smenzel@vi.parkridge.wi.gov	715-341-7882
Trustees:	Barbara Freidrich	bfriedrich@vi.parkridge.wi.gov	715-572-1563
	Daniel Holloway	dholloway@vi.parkridge.wi.gov	715-459-2882
	Gord Renfert	grenfert@vi.parkridge.wi.gov	715-252-9139
	Kristin Paulson	kpaulson@vi.parkridge.wi.gov	715-209-7417
	Shanna Behrend	clerk@vi.parkridge.wi.gov	715-343-1590
Clerk/Treasurer:	JB Moody	Non-Emergency	715-344-1833
Fire Chief (SPFD):		Emergency	911
Building Inspector:	Jim Zepp	jzepp55@gmail.com	715-310-3156
Zoning Administrator:	J.D. Manville	jadeco@charter.net	715-498-1111
Diggers Hotline:	John Kraft	krafty605@charter.net	715-498-7700
Crossing Guard:	Lois Miller	clerk@vi.parkridge.wi.gov	715-343-1590



Volunteers Wanted

Please consider serving your Village by volunteering your time for one of the following:

- **Zoning Board of Appeals** - alternate member needed.
- **Ordinance updating** - we need two good proofreaders to update/reconcile our Village Ordinance binder.
- **School crossing guard alternates** needed.
- **Election Inspectors (Poll Workers)** - paid positions

Please contact the Village Clerk at clerk@vi.parkridge.wi.gov to volunteer. ■