November 9, 2026

Dear President Moore and Members of the Common Council,

The 2027 Budget is the result of an open and collaborative process between the City Council and Administration. Together, we strive to provide strategic city services and community partnerships that enhance the quality of life for our residents by reducing crime, increasing affordable housing opportunities, and facilitating community investment. These efforts depend on strong partnerships and our shared commitment to working toward common goals.

Across all departments and functions, we have an obligation to our residents and businesses to continue delivering excellent services. Accordingly, the 2027 Budget includes the following high-priority items that enhance and improve our service delivery.

1. Property Tax Rate – The 2027 Budget will increase the City's assessed tax rate by $0.15 per $1,000 of assessed value which is a 2.11% increase.

2. Property Tax Levy - The City's tax levy increased $549,024 or 3.97%. Under state law, the levy is allowed to increase 3.04%, plus increased debt service requirements. This levy increase is less than the maximum permitted under state law.

3. Budgeted Expenditures – Budgeted General Fund expenditures for 2027 are $21,784,950 – an increase of 5.2%. This allows the city to continually qualify for the State Expenditure Restraint Program Aid. The City has qualified every year since the inception of the program.

4. General Fund Balance – Our General Fund Balance is projected to be $6,925,383 on December 31, 2026. This fund balance exceeds the Council objective of $6,535,485 at year end, which allows the City to continue to receive excellent bond ratings resulting in lower interest rates when issuing future debt. Keeping the fund balance at 30% operating is optimal in the credit industry.

5. Level of Service and Capital Improvements – The 2027 Capital Improvement Program will see investments in our community to provide long lasting, positive effects and spur urban growth.

   As part of our Strategic Plan, we will continue to invest in our city parks. In 2027, La Follette Park will see major improvements including a three-season building which will allow us to rent out from early spring to late fall, restrooms, a storage area, and a serving kitchen area with window/counter. Other upgrades include basketball courts, walking trails and a viewing area overlooking the scenic Fox River and a reconstructed driveway/parking lot. These much-needed improvements will further enhance this neighborhood park.

   Also, in 2027 the Kaukauna Dog Park will get a face lift. Upgrades to that park will include restrooms, a dog washing station and the planting of trees to provide shade while you watch your dog play. I remain committed to improving and maintaining our city parks to provide exceptional recreational opportunities and vital green spaces for all residents.

   Our 2027 CIP also includes $9,502,000 in major infrastructure investments — including new concrete street paving, street and alley reconstruction, sanitary and storm sewer upgrades, and the replacement of defective sidewalks. These projects reflect our continued commitment to investing in vital infrastructure that will help improve the quality of life for our residents.

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6. Economic Development – The demand for additional housing continues to remain strong throughout the Fox Valley region, and Kaukauna is working to meet that demand. At High Pointe Meadows subdivision on the city's far south side, Phase 1 construction is already underway and will include 63 single-family residential lots. Once fully developed, the subdivision is expected to provide a total of 115 new single-family homes, helping address the community's growing need for additional housing options.

   Commercial and industrial development also remains strong in Kaukauna. Straightline Refrigeration, ROAM Storage, and Peters Concrete are planning new building construction, while several existing businesses continue to invest in expansions and improvements. These include Team Industries, Accurate Machine, Haen Meats, Holland Cold Storage, Profile Finishings, and Prosperity In LLC. These investments reflect continued confidence in Kaukauna's business climate, create opportunities for future job growth, strengthen our local tax base, and reinforce Kaukauna's position as a growing economic hub in the Fox Valley.

7. Statements on Budget – As a city, we continue to lead with resilience, guided by fiscal responsibility and transparency. I am extremely proud of our leadership team for preparing another thoughtful and fiscally responsible budget that meets the Council's priorities while honoring the trust placed in us by our residents.

   New or reclassified positions in the 2027 budget include:

   Firefighter/Paramedic – Making the additional Firefighter/Paramedic position permanent ensures the Kaukauna Fire Department has adequate staffing to respond to emergencies, provide timely emergency medical services, and maintain reliable fire protection for our growing community. This position strengthens daily operational coverage, reduces the strain on existing personnel, and helps maintain safe and effective emergency response capabilities while meeting the increasing demands on the department.

   Two (2) Library Positions – Increasing full-time staffing from 31.5 to 37.5 hours will provide additional employee coverage and capacity to better serve the community while supporting the library's growing programs, services, and daily operations. This investment will improve scheduling flexibility, reduce staffing gaps, and allow the library to maintain consistent service levels.

   GIS Specialist – A GIS Specialist will provide the city with accurate, centralized mapping and management of critical infrastructure, including water, sewer, stormwater, streets, and other municipal assets. This position will improve long-term infrastructure planning, support residential and commercial development, reduce reliance on outside consultants, and help identify potential cost savings through better project coordination and asset management.

   My ongoing focus is to anticipate the long-term needs of our city and make decisions that benefit Kaukauna's future. The 2027 Budget reflects this unwavering pledge to deliver the highest caliber of service to every resident and business.

   Looking ahead, we will continue to balance fiscal responsibility with the City Council's priorities — ensuring strong public safety, reliable essential services, sound infrastructure, and vibrant community programs that make Kaukauna a truly exceptional place to live.

   Sincerely,

   

   Anthony J. Penterman
   Mayor, City of Kaukauna