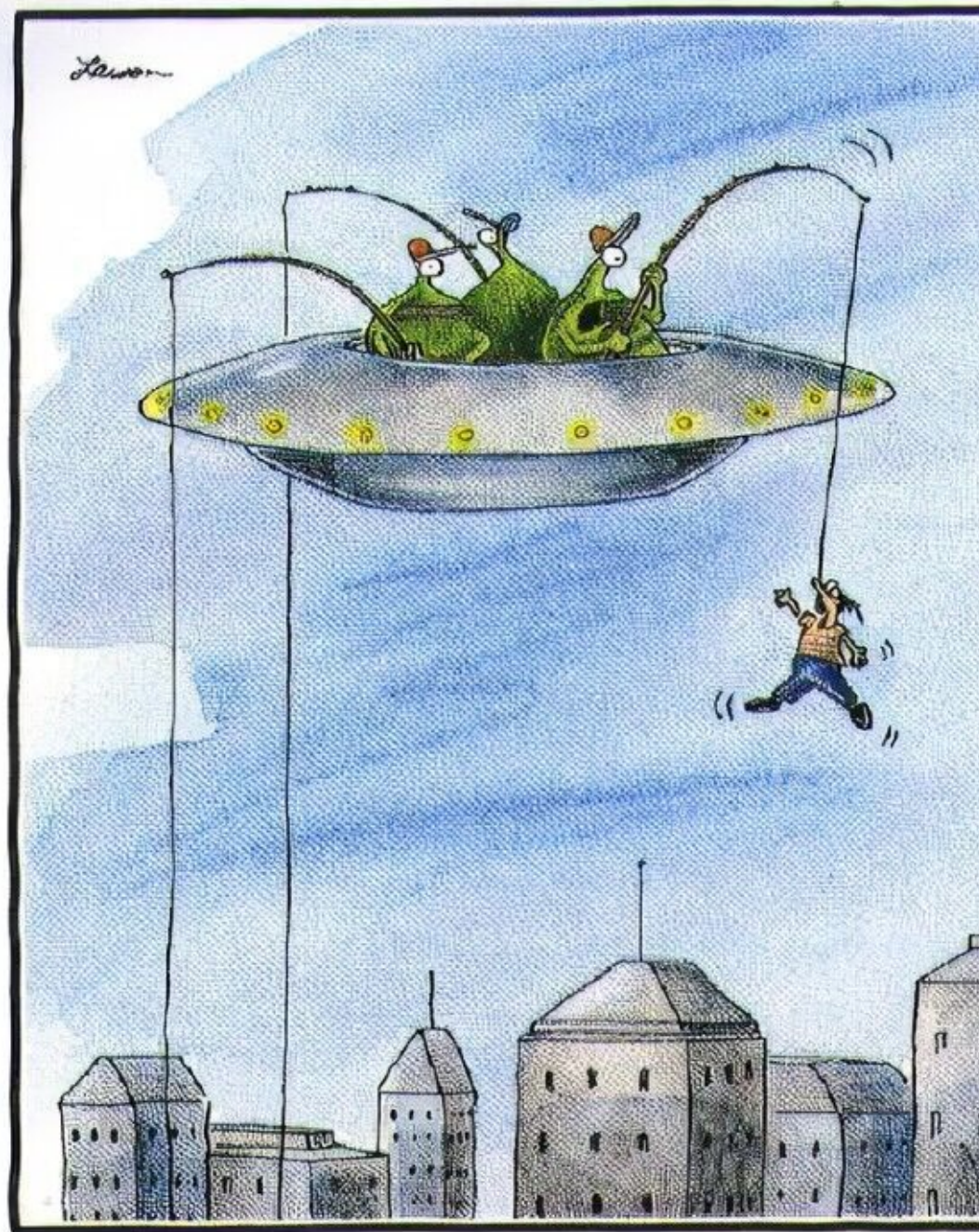


Lake Districts in Wisconsin

October 31
City of Whitewater

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Extension Lakes
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“Nerd! ... Dang!”

Lake Districts are:

- **Specialized Units of Government**
- **Powers and Operations set by law**
- **Governed under Chapter 33 of State Statutes**
- **Also governed under other municipal laws (similar to other local govts)**
- **Distinct from the City- they have their own budgets with levy limits**

Forming a Lake District (Typical)

- **Petition signed by property owners whose names appear on tax role.**
- **Petition must contain statement of benefit, necessity, public welfare, description of boundaries, proposed name for district.**
- **Approval by resolution from any city or village with land to be included within the district.**
- **Government (county or town) approval.**

Forming a Lake District (City Option; 33.23)

- **City Council may by resolution establish a district if the municipality encompasses within its boundaries all the frontage of the public inland lake**
- **City Council serves as commissioners**
- **Property owners can petition the City to cause for an independently elected LD board (20% of landowners)**

Lake Districts in the Area

- **There are 4 lake districts in Jefferson County and 10 in Walworth County**
- **None of the nearby lake districts are governed by city council/village brd.**
- **Wide range of budgets in the two counties, from \$0/year to about \$200,000/year**
- **City of Oconomowoc formed a district by resolution for Fowler Lake; about \$38k/year for**

Determining Boundaries

- **lands proposed to be included within the district will benefit as a whole (Need not examine parcels individually)**
- **need not be excluded because the owner objects**
- **not required that each individual parcel of land be benefited or be located in the lake's watershed.**

A lake district is governed by:

- **The Board of Commissioners**
- **The Annual Meeting**



Board of Commissioners - 1

- **If the district is created by resolution, the city council serves as the district board of commissioners.**
- **There is still an annual meeting and all that it entails...**

Board of Commissioners - 2

- **Standard board:**
 - **3 elected commissioners**
 - **One must be a district resident**
 - **2 appointed commissioners**
- **Enlarged board:**
 - **5 elected commissioners**
 - **Can not be reversed**
 - **2 appointed commissioners**

Board of Commissioners - 3

- **Elected commissioners:**
 - **3 year staggered terms**
 - **secret ballot is required even if there is no contest**
- **Vacancies filled by appointment**
- **Are considered local government officials**
 - **May take oath of office**

Board of Commissioners - 4

2 appointed commissioners:

- **1 Appointee of the city, village or town with the largest equalized valuation**
- **1 Appointee nominated by county Land & Water Conservation Committee & appointed by county board**

Board of Commissioners - 5

Town, City, Village Appointee:

- **Can be a member of the local government's elected body**
- **If not an elected member, the appointee must be a resident of the lake district, ideally one who owns property in the district (2015 Act 25)**

Board of Commissioners - 6

Appointed Commissioners:

- do not need to be property owners or electors of the district
- have a full voice at the quarterly meetings of the board of commissioners of the district, can serve as officers too!
- can vote at the district's annual meeting only if they meet the annual meeting voting requirements (residency or property)

Duties of Commissioners

- **Chair presides at all meetings of district**
- **Treasurer shall receive and take charge of all monies**
- **Secretary keeps minutes & other district records, prepares & sends notices of meetings**
- **The board shall**
 - **meet quarterly, not including the annual meeting**
 - **manage the day-to-day activities of the district**
 - **schedule the annual meeting**
 - **propose an annual budget**

Annual & Special Meetings



Annual & Special Meetings

- **Property owners & electors have voice**
- **Notices – Open Meetings Law**
 - **Extra requirements**
- **Records – Public Records Law**
 - **Same as for commissioner meetings**
- **Time – annual meeting must occur between May 22 & September 8, unless another date is selected at the previous annual meeting**

Notice of Annual Meeting

- **14 days before meeting:**
 - **Mail to all property owners (required)**
 - **Mail to electors (who are they?)**
(Option: Commissioners may vote to publish [paid] legal notice in two successive issues of official paper)
 - **Mail notice to DNR**
- **Provide notice to any media that requests it**

33.30 Annual meeting of district.

(2)

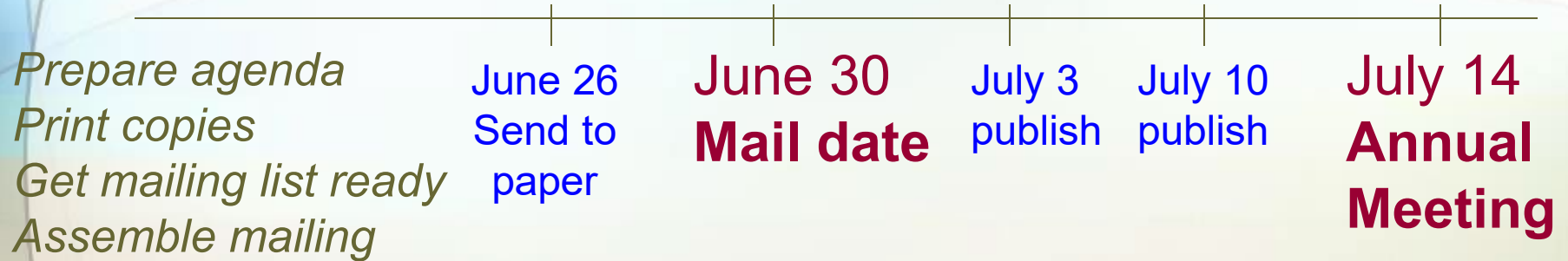
(a) The annual meeting shall be preceded by written notice mailed at least 14 days in advance of the meeting to all electors within the district whose address is known or can be ascertained with reasonable diligence, to all owners of property within the district at the owner's address as listed in the tax roll, and to the department. The district board of commissioners may substitute a class 2 notice, under ch. 985, in lieu of sending written notice to electors residing within the district.

Note the comma...



What about email???

Annual Meeting Example Timeline



Annual Meeting Notice Includes

- **Time, date, place**
- **Agenda**
 - **List of items to be considered, be specific**
 - **Public input time suggested**
- **Proposed budget**
 - **Detail (Ch 33.29(1)(g), Stats.)**
 - **Proposed levy**
- **Board Candidates (not required)**

Who can vote?

- **A qualified voter who resides in the district (aka “electors”).**
- **A person owning property in the district whose name appears on the tax roll.**
- **A person who owns title to real property but does not appear on roll – a “spouse” may vote.**
- **One official representative of a trust or corporation in the district.**
- **Owners of multiple properties only vote once.**

The Voting Process

- **The LD board chair presides over the annual meeting**
- **Election of commissioners must be by secret ballot**
- **Other votes at the annual meeting can be by paper ballot or counting hand votes.**
- **Statute specifies some aspects of the board member election process:**

Financing Lake District Operations

- **General property tax (2.5 mill cap)**
 - For general operating expenses
- **Special charges (\$2.50/\$1000 cap)**
 - For activities with temporary benefits to individual properties, and...
- **Special assessments**
 - For very large projects – usually involves financing/bonds, rarely used.

Lake District Tax and Fee Revenue in WI

- **2020: \$10,198,000**
- **2020 total mil levy: \$6,852,000 (avg: \$49,000)**
- **2020 total charges: \$3,347,000 (avg: \$45,000)**
- **About 40 (of 242) districts in 2020 with \$0 revenue from fees and/or taxes**
- **Lake Redstone \$410,400 total tax rev. 2020 (under \$2/1000, largely for dredging)**

The Budget

- **General operating expenses**
- **Capital fund**
- **Grants and Loans**
- **Projects \$10,000 or greater**
- **Annual meeting “may consider and vote on amendments” before approving budget**

Frog Lake District
20__ Budget Summary

	Preceding Year <i>Actual</i>	Current Year Jan-June <i>Actual¹</i>	Current Year Jan-Dec <i>Estimated²</i>	Next Year <i>Proposed</i>
Revenues				
Tax Levy	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,500	\$ 5,500	\$ 3,500
Special Charges	\$25,000	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$35,000
Special Assessments	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Lake Grant Reimbursement	\$ 0	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	\$ 2,500
Carryover/Cash Balance	\$ 0	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 0
Total Revenues:	\$28,000	\$33,000	\$40,000	\$41,000
Expenditures/Appropriations				
<u>Capital Costs³</u>				
Dump Truck	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$10,000
<u>Costs of Operations</u>				
Copying/Postage/Supplies	\$ 1,000	\$ 500	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Conferences (Mileage/Expenses)	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500
Clean Boats Clean Waters	\$ 0	\$ 300	\$ 300	\$ 300
Boat Landing Watch				
Harvesting Expenses ⁴	\$18,000	\$ 5,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
New Harvester Fund (see below)	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Lake Grant	\$ 0	\$ 7,000	\$11,500	\$ 2,500
Insurance	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,700	\$ 1,700	\$ 1,700
Total Expenditures:	\$26,000	\$20,000	\$40,000	\$41,000
Balance:	\$ 2,000		\$ --	\$ --

Non-lapsible fund⁵:

	Balance at end of preceding year	Current year tax contribution	Estimated Interest	<i>Estimated</i> Balance at end of current year
New Harvester	\$25,000	\$5,000	\$1,500	\$31,500

<http://www.uwsp.edu/uwexlakes/>



**2024 Wisconsin Lakes Partnership
Convention
April 10-12**

**Lake District workshops: April 10
Afternoon workshop on budget and spending**

**Holiday Inn Hotel & Convention Center
Stevens Point**