

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO FORWARD THIS EMAIL TO YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS AND FELLOW TAXPAYERS IN KEWAUNEE COUNTY!

“The punishment which the wise suffer who refuse to take part in the government is to live under the government of worse men” Plato

Kewaunee County Board Activities Update, April 23, 2013

By: Ron Heuer, District 12 Supervisor, Kewaunee County Board

Kewaunee County Status & Wage Study Information

A snapshot of the economic status of Kewaunee County is not very encouraging. Here are some details:

- Out of 72 counties in the state, Kewaunee County **has the 5th highest tax levy** with a 2012/2013 levy of \$7.77.
- We have a **debt in excess of \$17,000,000** which totals to over **\$23,000,000 in debt and debt service.**
- With the closure of the Kewaunee Nuclear plant, the **county will be losing an estimated \$700,000 annual revenue** from that closure with no plan as to where or how that revenue shortfall will be made up.
- A comparison of our county employee’s salaries revealed about **90% of our county employees** are being paid annual **salaries averaging \$3,700 higher per employee** than employees of comparable counties.
- The consequence of losing the nuclear plant and the employment it sustained will cause a **reduction in commerce across the county going forward.** This will further erode the taxing opportunity in the county.

Given the financial circumstance we face, I ask what should be the obvious question, “Where can we find any relief to our fiscal challenges without, once again going back to the taxpayer”? After all, **we already are the 5th highest tax levied county in the state** whilst our neighboring county to the North, **Door County is number 63** and our Southern neighboring county; **Manitowoc, is number 27th** of 72 counties. Well, you have to fish where fish are, don’t you? About 80% of our counties budget is salaries and benefits, so that is the obvious place to begin looking. But, where does one begin?

Equalized Value

Like all counties, our county's ability to tax is directly linked to our "equalized value". Equalized value is a ratio of total assessed value for properties in the county to those property's true market values. This number represents the state's judgment of how closely assessed values match the market value. For example, an equalization rate of 90% would mean that, on average, the property in a community is being assessed at 90% of its market value.

So doesn't it make sense the Kewaunee County employee salaries should be, to a degree, determined by comparing Kewaunee County to comparable counties in Wisconsin? Let's put that into perspective. Kewaunee County has an equalized value of \$1.4 billion, Door County 7.1 billion, Manitowoc County \$5.1 billion and Brown County \$17 billion. It seems to me to be blatantly unfair to compare Kewaunee against those bordering counties as their ability to pay is so much greater than ours. Each year the state provides each county their "equalized value" (I have attached the State of Wisconsin, Department of Revenue Sep 5, 2012 letter to Kewaunee County below). Each county receives this exact same letter with their equalized values.

Carlson Dettmann

The Kewaunee County Personnel Committee had approved paying Carlson Dettmann, a **Madison based management consultant firm** \$5,000 for a salary comparison to determine whether or not our employees should receive salary increases for 2013. Their study was not deep and, for the most part compared private sector employees to the county employees. Carlson Dettmann was the same company that has been the advising consultant in the past years as the county continuously increased salaries 3% per annum. ***Keep this thought in mind as you continue to read this message.***

Gannett Database

If you've been reading the Green Bay Press Gazette in the past months, you may recall reading about a public sector employee survey that was conducted by Gannett. Gannett had, under the open records law, gathered salaries at cities and municipalities and county level. This study was quite comprehensive as Gannett solicited salary information for all the counties in Wisconsin. They then built a database and made that database available online for all to query.

Understanding Kewaunee County employee salaries and benefits represent 51% of the county's total budget of \$24 M, it seemed logical this would be a database that could facilitate salary comparisons by job title. That is just what I did.

My Study Results

I have attached a copy of this Salary Study in PDF format so you can see it for yourself and follow along with this narrative. There is a lot of data here, so take your time to study it. If you don't understand what I have done, email me your telephone number and I will walk you through it.

First, I compared counties with similar Equalized Value and similar population and I left in the Door and Manitowoc Counties data. On the salary study, I have color coded those employee positions that should be frozen... they are in red (By the way, the Carlson Dettman results largely parallel my findings). The yellow column are the average job salaries that I found across the 11 counties I compared Kewaunee County for a specific title. This was the hard part, because each county seems to have somehow chosen to create titles for their employees that are unique. The most difficult group of people to track were those involved in the Human Services group.

Here is what I found, **our county employees are being paid nearly \$3,700 more per employee on average compared to other comparable counties employees. In some of the employee groups this number is much higher than that.**

What is next?

The personnel committee will now be meeting to discuss what salary increases are going to be given to the County employees for the FY2013. Remember there is \$168,000 already approved in the budget for an across the board salary increase. I have little faith in the personnel committee that they will do the right thing for the county and freeze a large portion of our county employee's salaries. **I have done as much as I can, now it is up to you.** Following is the list of Board Members who comprise the personnel committee. Call them directly, let them know your position on the issue of salaries.

Robert Weidner	Chairman	Tel: 920-845-5463
James Barlow	Member	Tel: 920-487-3783
Kaye Schillin	Member	Tel: 920-388-2654
Chuck Hutter	Member	Tel: 920-487-2172
Bruce Heidmann	Member	Tel: 920-487-3710
David Mayer	Member	Tel: 920-360-9336
Brian Paplham	Member	Tel: 920-255-1468
Charles Wagner	Member	Tel: 920-837-7712
Linda Sinkula	Member	Tel: 920-388-3251

Here are the latest stats on the Board Members per diems and travel expenses...

<i>Board Member</i>	Month of March			Full Year, Apr 2012 - through March 2013		
	<u>Mileage & Exp</u>	<u>Wages</u>	<u>Mar Sub-TTL</u>	<u>Mileage & Exp</u>	<u>Wages</u>	<u>Year Total</u>
Abrahamson/James		\$ 450	\$ 450	\$ 211	\$ 5,040	\$ 5,251
Barlow/James	\$ 80	\$ 300	\$ 380	\$ 1,124	\$ 4,280	\$ 5,404
Cravillion/Dennis	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 245	\$ 1,520	\$ 1,765
Dax/Brian	\$ 23	\$ 260	\$ 283	\$ 470	\$ 3,800	\$ 4,270
Delebreau/Don	\$ 38	\$ 280	\$ 318	\$ 312	\$ 2,280	\$ 2,592
Garfinkel/Bob	\$ 64	\$ 540	\$ 604	\$ 629	\$ 4,350	\$ 4,979
Heidman/Bruce	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,108	\$ 4,440	\$ 5,548
Heuer/Ronald	\$ 20	\$ 260	\$ 280	\$ 213	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,313
Hutter/Charles	\$ 71	\$ 600	\$ 671	\$ 1,185	\$ 4,040	\$ 5,225
Kirchman/Larry	\$ 68	\$ 320	\$ 388	\$ 799	\$ 3,880	\$ 4,679
Koenig/LeVerle	\$ 38	\$ 130	\$ 168	\$ 617	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,717
Mayer/David	\$ 54	\$ 270	\$ 324	\$ 610	\$ 3,306	\$ 3,916
Paider/Ron	\$ 93	\$ 500	\$ 593	\$ 764	\$ 3,900	\$ 4,664
Paptham/Brian	\$ 38	\$ 410	\$ 448	\$ 369	\$ 3,700	\$ 4,069
Reckelberg/Gordy	\$ 50	\$ 300	\$ 350	\$ 323	\$ 2,210	\$ 2,533
Shillin/Kaye	\$ -	\$ 570	\$ 570	\$ 135	\$ 5,110	\$ 5,245
Sinkula/Linda	\$ 79	\$ 590	\$ 669	\$ 650	\$ 5,630	\$ 6,280
Swoboda/Jan	\$ 195	\$ 510	\$ 705	\$ 2,119	\$ 4,360	\$ 6,479
Wagner/Chuck	\$ 700	\$ 610	\$ 1,310	\$ 2,467	\$ 6,030	\$ 8,497
Weidner/Robert*	\$ 66	\$ 360	\$ 426	\$ 677	\$ 3,840	\$ 4,517
Totals	\$ 1,677	\$ 7,260	\$ 8,937	\$ 15,027	\$75,916	\$ 90,943

* Note: Weidner/Robert is the County Board Chairman and in his position receives an annual salary of \$5,867 as well as one-half the cost of the county family plan health insurance which equates to \$11,166. So the Chairman received salary, per diem and benefits of \$21,550.

This then brings the total operational expense of the board for a running year April 2012 through March 2013 to \$107,976.

In closing, how did we get to point of where our county employees are paid at levels considerably higher than their counterparts throughout the state? We should ask ourselves; is it perhaps the board and the personnel committee members taking the easy path and following the recommendations of Carlson Dettmann Consulting for years? After all, the Carlson Dettmann people have been, for years, been advising our Personnel Committee and Board as on salary matters.

The more experience I have with the Kewaunee County Board and various committees the more I am convinced; the only way to change anything in this county is with the next election. Certain board members who consistently vote in favor of spending unnecessarily or extravagantly need to be replaced.

Ron Heuer

District 12, Supervisor

Kewaunee County



State of Wisconsin • DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

DIVISION OF STATE AND LOCAL FINANCE | BUREAU OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES | MADISON, WI

ADDRESS MAIL TO

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FAX (608) 264-6887

September 5, 2012

LINDA TESKE
KEWAUNEE COUNTY
810 LINCOLN ST
KEWAUNEE WI 54216

CoMun: 31999
Taxation District: 0844

Re: Certificate of Equalized Value - Kewaunee County

I certify that I am the Director of the Bureau of Local Government Services of the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, and that the equalized value of all taxable property of Kewaunee County, Wisconsin as last determined by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue pursuant to sections 70.57 and 67.03, Wisconsin Statutes, is \$1,447,756,800 said equalized value determination being as of January 1, 2012.

This equalized value is certified each August 15th and is effective August 15th, 2012 through August 14th, 2013.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Stanley J. Hook'.

Stanley J. Hook, Acting Director
Bureau of Local Government Services