



# SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEKOOSA

Quarterly Newsletter

February 2020

Volume 15, Issue 3

## REFERENDUM



For several years, the Nekoosa Board of Education has been making budget reductions to address decreasing state revenues. Without voter approval to increase local school taxes, our schools will continue to cut services and programs for the foreseeable future, and will not be able to address current student and facilities needs.

### **Wisconsin Revenue Limits**

All Wisconsin school districts operate within revenue limits which cap the amount of revenue each district can receive each year from state aid and property taxes.

There are three key variables in the revenue limit calculation — enrollment, property values, and state aid. Each district is unique in these variables and therefore the revenue limit cap is different for each district.

### **How Does This Affect Nekoosa Schools?**

Since 2008, the Nekoosa School District has seen a reduction in the revenue cap of \$1,072,000. State aid and local revenues are not keeping pace with costs to maintain the current educational programs and to address emerging student needs. The projected operating shortfall is \$2M annually.

### **What Has Been Done?**

In an ongoing effort to address the problem, the Board has made budget reductions and gathered the community's opinion on possible solutions through a community-wide survey and public meetings (see page 2 for the survey results). The Board deliberated on the survey results in December and at its Board meeting on December 17, unanimously passed a resolution to place two referendum questions on the April 7 ballot. (See Referendum Questions below.)



*Nekoosa School Board members studied and discussed the survey results. Pictured from left to right: David Schmidt, Treasurer; Cody Przybylski, Vice President; Brian Giese, President; Terry Whitmore, District Administrator; Pat Resheske, Clerk; and Brian Machon, Director.*

## Referendum Questions

**Below are the questions as they will appear on the April 7, 2020 ballot.**

### **Question Number 1 (Operational Referendum)**

Shall the School District of Nekoosa, Wood County, Wisconsin, be authorized to exceed the revenue limit specified in Section 121.91, Wisconsin Statutes, by \$2,000,000 per year for the 2020-2021 school year through the 2024-2025 school year (5 years), for non-recurring purposes consisting of operational expenses, including improving and maintaining instructional programs; updating technology education equipment; and maintaining and supporting other District programs?

### **Question Number 2 (Capital Referendum)**

Shall the School District of Nekoosa, Wood County, Wisconsin, be authorized to issue pursuant to Chapter 67, Wisconsin Statutes, General Obligation Bonds in an amount not to exceed \$2,900,000 for the public purpose of paying the cost of renovations and improvements to District athletic facilities consisting of renovating the track; renovating athletic fields, including the football, soccer, and softball fields; and other athletic infrastructure improvements?

## THE SURVEY RESULTS ARE IN

In November of 2019, all Nekoosa School District residents received a letter and information to complete a survey that would help the School Board make decisions on how to create a financially stable future for our students. The District received over 800 survey responses, which accounts for approximately 16% of our households. The majority of respondents were over the age of 56 (59%); and 70% do not have children currently attending Nekoosa School District. The survey asked questions about community support for a referendum, as well as potential cuts to programs and services that would be needed if a referendum(s) were not successful.

### Operational Referendum

The Board learned that the majority of the respondents (64%) supported a \$2 million dollar operational referendum. If approved, these monies would be used to support such things as:

- Maintaining/improving current programs and services.
- Adding student services staff to help struggling students and families.
- Adding one teacher and upgrading equipment in the technical education (shop) area.
- Adding one teacher (math) to help grade K-5 students who are not meeting grade level targets.
- Maintaining and growing the Wisconsin Individualized Selected Education Virtual School (WISE Academy) to increase enrollment (in 2019 the academy nearly met maximum enrollment.)

### Capital Referendum

The Board also learned that just over 50% of respondents would support a \$3 million or less referendum to improve athletic facilities. If approved, the monies would be used to:

- Replace the track
- Replace the football/soccer field
- Update the softball field

The school board is hosting multiple public information meetings to answer any questions regarding the upcoming referendums (see dates and times below).

How will the referendum affect you? Taxpayer Cost	
Operational Referendum	\$2 million
Estimated tax increase	\$4 per year per \$100,000 property value
Capital Referendum	\$2.9 million
Estimated tax increase	\$10 per year per \$100,000 property value
If Nekoosa Voters Support BOTH Referenda Estimated total tax increase is \$14 per year per \$100,000 property value	

The full report of the survey results, a detailed Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) document, and other information regarding the referendum can be found on our website: [www.nekoosasd.net](http://www.nekoosasd.net)

Please join us for one of our  
Community Information Meetings  
Or call 715-886-8000 with questions

Humke Elementary School  
Thursday, February 20  
6:30 PM

Rome Town Hall  
Tuesday, March 10  
6:30 PM

Nekoosa High School  
Wednesday, April 1  
6:30 PM

## NEKOOSA SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

Regular Board of Education meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month in the District Office, 600 S Section Street at 6:30 PM.

**All are welcome to attend.**

Meetings are taped and can be viewed on Solarus Channel 3 and Charter Channel 985 and are streamed on Wisconsin Rapids Community Access every Thursday at 1 PM. Taped meetings can also be viewed on the district website.

## **OPERATIONAL REFERENDUM**

### ***What will the money be used for?***

#### ***Maintain/improve current programs and service offerings***

The Operational Referendum will allow us to maintain current educational programs, including retaining high quality teachers and address emerging student needs.

#### ***Add staff to help support students and families who are struggling in difficult situations***

In our community, we have families navigating through many different life experiences such as homelessness, loss of insurance, and other traumatic events. For a student to perform their best at school, we want to ensure that families have all needed supports to be successful.

This individual will work with Paul Liebherr, our current Family-School-Community Outreach Liaison, to connect families with community resources such as North Central Community Action, County Human Resources Office, and a variety of medical and mental health providers. Parent education will continue to be provided so that families get the support they need in areas such as mental health, parenting strategies, academic support, and numerous other topics. This will allow families to get access to resources sooner, therefore providing opportunities for children to be more successful at school and beyond.

#### ***Add one teacher and upgrade equipment in the technology education (shop) area to better prepare students for jobs and careers in our region***

Technology and Engineering Education (Tech. Ed.) is a field that covers a wide variety of career clusters including manufacturing, construction, high demand computer science and information technology. With new equipment and additional staff, the district will be able to offer a variety of classes that will address the growing need for workers needing Technology and Engineering Education skill sets. These additions will better help our students be prepared to meet the changing needs of today's workforce.

#### ***Add one teacher to help students in kindergarten through 5th grade who are not meeting grade-level math learning targets***

This new position will help provide intervention support for students struggling with math and provide support to our teachers to ensure that all student learning needs are met.

#### ***Add one teacher at the Wisconsin Individualized Selected Education (WISE) Virtual School to address enrollment growth***

The School District of Nekoosa has offered a virtual option to our students since 2011. We have gone from five students in 2011 to the current year cap of 150 students. By building a foundation and framework for virtual course offerings, WISE Academy staff will address the increased interest in pairing traditional classes with online learning and learning from home. The addition of a WISE Academy teacher will better support student needs in this virtual environment.



To meet the demands of today's workforce, with new equipment and additional staff, the district will be able to offer a variety of classes that will address the growing demand of Technology & Engineering Education. Pictured above senior, Hoyt Olsen, is manufacturing light fixture brackets in his Tech. Ed. class. Hoyt plans to join the Plumbers and Pipefitters Union and become a plumber after graduation.

A poster for a "Chili for Charity" event. The background is a dark, textured image of a chili bowl. The text is white and yellow. At the top, it says "Chili for Charity" in large white letters. Below that, on the right, is a red circle with "Bingo \$0.25 per game". In the center, it says "The Nekoosa High School National Honor Society invites you to Chili for Charity". Below that, it says "SATURDAY February 15th 11AM-2PM". To the right of that, it says "Location: Nekoosa High School Commons". At the bottom, it says "All You Can Eat Chili" in yellow, followed by "\$5: Chili, dessert &amp; beverage" and "\$10: Includes handcrafted bowl made by NHS Art Students". On the left side, there is a list of bullet points: "-Play Bingo for great prizes", "-Proceeds goes towards Children Miracle Network", and "-Some proceeds also goes towards National Honor Society Scholarships". At the bottom left, there is a small image of a blue and white ceramic bowl.

## ***CAPITAL REFERENDUM***

### ***What will the money be used for?***

#### ***Replacing the track***



The last track meet hosted in Nekoosa was in April of 2016. The approval of the capital referendum will replace the track, improve drainage as well as include new bleachers, lighting, restrooms, and concessions.

#### ***Replacing the football/soccer field***



Passing the capital referendum will allow the football and soccer fields to be relocated to the center of the new track at Nekoosa High School. The soccer field located at Alexander Middle School would be used as a practice field.

#### ***Updating the softball fields***



The capital referendum would replace the dugouts, repair the fields and replace fencing.

**Vote on April 7, 2020**

**If Nekoosa Voters Support BOTH Referenda  
Estimated total tax increase is  
\$14 per year per \$100,000 property value**

#### ***The football/soccer field will be located inside the track***



Passing the capital referendum will allow the football, soccer, track, and softball programs access to the same concession stand, bathrooms, and storage areas. In addition, all of the facilities will be located at the Nekoosa High School and will be ADA accessible.

We would welcome your questions or comments regarding the referenda information. Please call 715-886-8000.

**Nekoosa High School Presents:**

**THE WIZARD OF OZ**

**Tickets \$10**  
Buy online at [showtix4u.com](http://showtix4u.com)  
(Beginning Feb. 19)  
Or at the NHS office

Saturday Matinee ONLY!  
Student Tickets \$5  
(College-age & under)

**Performances on Friday, March 13 @ 7:00pm  
And Saturday March 14 @ 2:00pm & 7:00pm**

**Nekoosa High School Auditorium  
500 Cedar Street**



## COMMUNITY EDUCATION COURSES

### Adult Enrichment Courses

#### Available to All Nekoosa School District Residents

The purpose of our Adult Enrichment Courses is to offer our district residents an opportunity to explore new interests, develop new skills, and enrich your life. These FREE courses offer an opportunity for you to get into "your" school district and work with our amazing staff! *Register today, space is limited!*

**Register by calling 715-886-8000 or**  
**email: [nekoosaschooldistrict@nekoosa.k12.wi.us](mailto:nekoosaschooldistrict@nekoosa.k12.wi.us)**

### NO-SEW FLEECE PILLOW

**March 7 1:00—3:00 PM HES Room 107**

Learn to make a simple fleece pillow with just material and scissors. You can make this over an old pillow or use pillow stuffing. This is a fun, easy project and a simple way to update a room!

### LEARN TO SEW

**2 Separate Sessions: March 14 and 21 10 AM—2 PM NHS Room 103**

Have you ever wanted to learn how to sew? Now is your chance! In this 4 hour sewing class we will learn the basics of sewing and make a simple creation you can use in your home!

**Limit 10 Participants for each session.**

### BEGINNER YOGA

**Wednesdays in April (1, 8, 15, 22, 29) 6—7 PM NHS Room 100**

Students will learn about the basics of proper alignment and technique. Emphasis will be placed on core strength, flexibility and balance, as well as concentration and breath control. This class is based on physical postures, deep breathing, mindfulness and listening to the body.

### NUTRITION CLASS

**April 14, and 15 5 PM—7 PM NHS Room 103**

Want to discover the myths and truths about nutrition? Join us in learning about how our society feeds the do's and don'ts of Nutrition. Discover the truth about what it means to live a healthy lifestyle with your relationship with food and make healthy food options.

### RUG MAKING WITH T-SHIRTS

**Saturday, April 4 1:00—3:00 PM HES Room 107**

Learn to make a beautiful rug using fabric from old t-shirts and a hula hoop as your loom. Each participant will leave with a colorful rug to brighten up their home. Bring your own t-shirts or use those provided.

### ZUMBA

**Thursday's in April (2, 9, 16, 23, 30) 4:15—5:15 PM AMS Multi-Purpose Room**

Zumba is a dance fitness *class* that is fun, energetic, and makes you feel amazing. We take the "work" out of workout, by mixing low-intensity and high-intensity moves for an interval-style, calorie-burning dance fitness party.

**Register by calling 715-886-8000 or**  
**email: [nekoosaschooldistrict@nekoosa.k12.wi.us](mailto:nekoosaschooldistrict@nekoosa.k12.wi.us)**

## April 7, 2020 Voting Information

### SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION NOTICE NEKOOSA SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS (Section 120.6(8)(c))

Notice is hereby given to the qualified electors of the Nekoosa School District that on Tuesday, April 7, 2020, an election for School Board Members will be held. Candidates for the Nekoosa School Board are as follows:

#### VOTE FOR NO MORE THAN (2) (Two Three-Year Term)

**Robert Shear**

**Mark Lochner**

**Patrick Resheske**

**Brian Giese**

Electors will vote in their regular polling places at the following times:

POLLING PLACES	POLLING HOURS:
City of Nekoosa—Nekoosa Community Center	7 a.m.—8 p.m.
Town of Saratoga—Town Hall	7 a.m.—8 p.m.
Town of Port Edwards—Town Hall	7 a.m.—8 p.m.
Town of Rome—Town Hall	7 a.m.—8 p.m.
Town of Armenia—Town Hall	7 a.m.—8 p.m.

### Meet the Candidates

*In alphabetical order*

#### Brian Giese

I am seeking re-election for my fourth term as a School Board Member. I have served nine years, the last three as Board President. In these last nine years we have faced some difficult challenges, however, at this time our district is on the leading edge in so many ways. We have a very dedicated staff and administration team, and their hard work and development of systems to address the needs of every child is paying great dividends.

There is still work that needs to be done! One of the most pressing issues within our district is with regards to the funding available to serve our students, teachers, and athletics. Based on feedback from our stakeholders the Board passed a resolution in December to pursue an operational referendum as well as a capital referendum. The future of our district depends upon the passing of these referendums in the spring election.

The decision to run for re-election was based upon the need to ensure that we have the utmost support for these referendums and the continuation of the hard work that is being done within the district. The current Board is functioning at a very high level and it is an absolute necessity that we stay the course. I have a passion and desire to serve and would be grateful for your support to serve another term and continue with the work that needs to be done.

#### Mark Lochner

With the referendum this year, it is more important than ever to have a strong school board providing oversight of your school operations. I believe I can help make your school board stronger.

Hello, my name is Mark Lochner and I am a candidate for your Nekoosa School Board. My wife and I have 3 sons attending Nekoosa schools. My vision of a school board is to provide the basis for the best education for all of our children. The community, residents, school staff and board all need to work together and remember we have a common goal to provide the best possible education for all students. Thank you.

#### Pat Resheske

I am seeking my second full term on the Nekoosa School Board. I was appointed to the Board in December 2015 to finish Wayne Freeman's term.

I have been, and continue to be, very active within the school district beyond being on the school board. My day usually starts with greeting students at AMS. While there I have been able to see first hand how some of our newer educational programs function. The one that impresses me the most is the co-teaching with the special education and regular class teachers working together to help integrate students. Teachers have also implemented project based group learning where students work together to solve problems and learn as a group.

After AMS, I head over to the high school to tutor math at the Academy. This is probably the most rewarding part of my day. Students use an on-line math program called ALEKS, which allows learners to work at their individual level in math. The content progresses only when the students truly understand the subject matter that they are working on.

*Continued on page 7*

### SAVE THE DATE!



**Nekoosa Spring Easter Event**  
**March 28, 2020**  
**Sponsored by the Heart of**  
**Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce**

**Watch for more information at**  
**[www.wisconsinrapidschamber.com](http://www.wisconsinrapidschamber.com)**

*Continued from page 6*

These are but a few of the changes that have taken place over the last several years. I am asking for your support to continue to move the Nekoosa School District forward in the years to come. I firmly believe that the referendums are necessary for the future of our District and the best interest of our children. I thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

### **Robert Shear**


I am running to return to the school board to use my 12 years of experience supporting rural schools and larger. The School District of Phelps showed me how a collaboration between teachers, support staff, and parents created a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence in 2004.

Rural school district's budget by asking how improvement is weighed against the costs of the taxpayers ability to pay and what goal the expenditure is trying to support. Years of neglect of District grounds and sports fields should not be fixed by a large referendum when proactive planning since 2015 could have kept the costs down making it more affordable for the taxpayers.

Watching 14 different District Administrators in different environments has shown different leadership outcomes good and bad, like my 6 years in the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

My experience coaching Volleyball in Phelps and Track and Field in a collaborative environment with the Three Lakes School District showed me how school districts can work together for athletic programs and possibly academic programs via distance learning classrooms sharing curriculum and teachers.

Coaching Special Olympics has also given me insight on how to lead and teach in a supportive manner to improve the life of others and learn life lessons from them. I feel this District has made good choices along with some bad choices that we need to sift through to prepare everyone for what the future holds.



**Nekoosa Athletic Association's  
2nd Annual Cornhole Tournament**

**Sunday, March 15, 2020  
Noon - 6pm  
at Nekoosa High School's lower gym!**

Registration forms are available at the schools or on the District Website: [nekoosasd.net](http://nekoosasd.net), upcoming community events

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## **4K Registration—Development Day**

**When: Wednesday, February 26, 2020**

**Where: Nekoosa Community Center, 4216 Crestivew Lane**

**How to Register: Call 715-886-8010 or email Tiffany Rheinschmidt at [tiffany\\_rheinschmidt@nekoosa.k12.wi.us](mailto:tiffany_rheinschmidt@nekoosa.k12.wi.us)**



4K Registration-Development Day is for those children in the Nekoosa School District who will be 4 years old by September 1, 2020. This is also a time for 5 year olds to register that did not attend a 4K class in Nekoosa.

This day-long event is held at the Nekoosa Community Center and our team looks forward to this day as much as the little ones do! Prior to the event, parents are asked to make an appointment so our team is prepared for each child. This appointment will last for an hour. Every single appointment is extra special to us as we meet and “play with” the kids. The children love this one-on-one attention and, by the time they are ready to leave, they cannot wait to start school!

We look forward to meeting your little ones ... the class of 2034!

**If voters support both referenda, the estimated total tax increase will be  
\$14 per year per \$100,000 property value**

**Community Information Meetings—Please Join Us**

Humke Elementary School  
Thursday, February 20—6:30 PM

Rome Town Hall  
Tuesday, March 10—6:30 PM

Nekoosa High School  
Wednesday, April 1—6:30 PM

**Vote on April 7, 2020**

# SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEKOOSA

## BOARD OF EDUCATION & ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

### Board of Education

Brian Giese, President  
Cody Przybylski, Vice President  
David Schmidt, Treasurer  
Pat Resheske, Clerk  
Brian Machon, Director

### Administration Office

600 South Section Street  
Nekoosa, WI 54457  
715-886-8000  
District Administrator  
Terry Whitmore  
Director of Pupil Service  
Brian Grill  
Business Manager  
Lynn Knight  
Community Outreach  
Coordinator  
Paul Liebherr

### Nekoosa High School

**Nekoosa Academy**  
Keith Johnson, Principal  
500 Cedar Street  
Nekoosa, WI 54457  
715-886-8060

### Humke Elementary School

Jon Sprehn, Principal  
500 South Section Street  
Nekoosa, WI 54457  
715-886-8010

### Alexander Middle School Central Wisconsin STEM Academy

Nathan Black, Principal  
540 Birch Street  
Nekoosa, WI 54457  
715-886-8040

### WISE Academy Virtual School

Stacey Russell, Coordinator

### NEKOOSA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Nekoosa Public School District does not discriminate against pupils on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, color, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability or other disability in its education programs or activities. Federal law prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of age, race, national origin, sex, or handicap.