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**VILLAGE OF GERMANTOWN VOTES TO PLACE PUBLIC SAFETY REFERENDUM  
ON APRIL BALLOT**

*Village voters to consider increase in property tax levy to fund additional full-time fire and police staff*

**GERMANTOWN, Wis.** — The Germantown Village Board has voted to include a referendum question on the April 2, 2024 ballots. Voters will be asked whether or not they support an increase in the property tax levy to fund ten additional firefighter-paramedics and four additional police officers.

Increasing calls for service are driving the Germantown Fire Department's need for additional staff. Between 2016 and 2023, the department experienced a nearly 41% increase in calls for emergency services, and nearly 20% of the 2,452 calls for service in 2023 occurred simultaneously. With just five personnel on-duty per shift, there are not enough staff to adequately respond to multiple emergencies.

“The demand for emergency responses from the Germantown Fire Department has grown faster than our staffing levels ,” said Fire Chief John Delain. “Insufficient staff to do more work puts pressure on our personnel, forces us to make our staff work long hours and rely more often on neighboring communities – all of which can compromise outcomes for those experiencing an emergency.”

If approved by referendum, the Fire Department will add 10 firefighter-paramedics, which would allow for 7-8 personnel to be on-duty per shift. With that staffing level, four-member crews in fire apparatus could immediately depart a fire station and enter a burning structure, rather than having to wait for the arrival of backup from a neighboring community or from paid-on-call staff who may be responding from home or their day job. Additional staff would also enable GFD to dispatch up to three ambulances at once and meet the growing need in Germantown for emergency medical services.

The Germantown Police Department is experiencing continued staffing challenges as the community continues to grow. The type of calls for service by GPD has shifted over time, with an increase in drug-related calls – including overdoses – and retail theft. Drug and property-related calls often require multiple officers to respond and necessitate more officer time from the point of a call to the completion of paperwork.

With few patrol officers on duty at any given time, when multiple officers are called to respond to the same incident, few, if any officers remain available to respond to additional emergencies or provide proactive policing services.

“The Germantown Police Department is grateful for the ongoing support of the Germantown community,” said Police Chief Mike Snow. “Our department has worked with available resources to meet the increasing demands of a growing community. Over the past decade the change in the nature of calls for service have increased the need for a response by multiple officers to individual calls. Staffing levels have remained constant while the demand for police response has increased. We continue to explore cost saving measures to fund stop-gap measures which will allow us to immediately bolster our Department while we continue important conversations with our neighbors about the need for additional staffing to ensure GPD can truly meet the public safety needs and expectations of our community.”

If approved by referendum, the Police Department will add four police officers, which would allow for two additional patrol officers on first and second shifts – the busiest shifts of the day. With this increase, GPD will be able to effectively respond to simultaneous calls for service and provide proactive police services that are critical to ensuring the continued safety of the entire community.

The referendum will ask Germantown voters whether or not they support an approximately \$1,449,468 increase in the property tax levy going forward to add the necessary ten additional firefighter-paramedics and four additional police officers. This translates to a property tax increase of an estimated \$51 annually, or about \$1 per week, per \$100,000 in assessed property value. The impact to an average Germantown home valued at \$350,000 would be \$178.13 annually, or about \$3.43 per week.

The referendum question will appear on the Tuesday, April 2, 2024 ballot as follows:

*Under state law, the increase in the levy of the Village of Germantown for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year, 2025, is limited to 2.97%, which results in a levy of \$16,212,166. Shall the Village of Germantown be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year, 2025, and on an ongoing basis, for the purpose of hiring four (4) new police officers and ten (10) new firefighter-paramedics, by a total of 8.941%, which results in a levy of \$17,661,634?*

The Village of Germantown will share more information with residents online, through direct mail and by holding information sessions in advance of the referendum on April 2, 2024. More information will be available at [germantownwi.gov/743/Public-Safety-Referendum](https://germantownwi.gov/743/Public-Safety-Referendum) in the coming weeks.

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