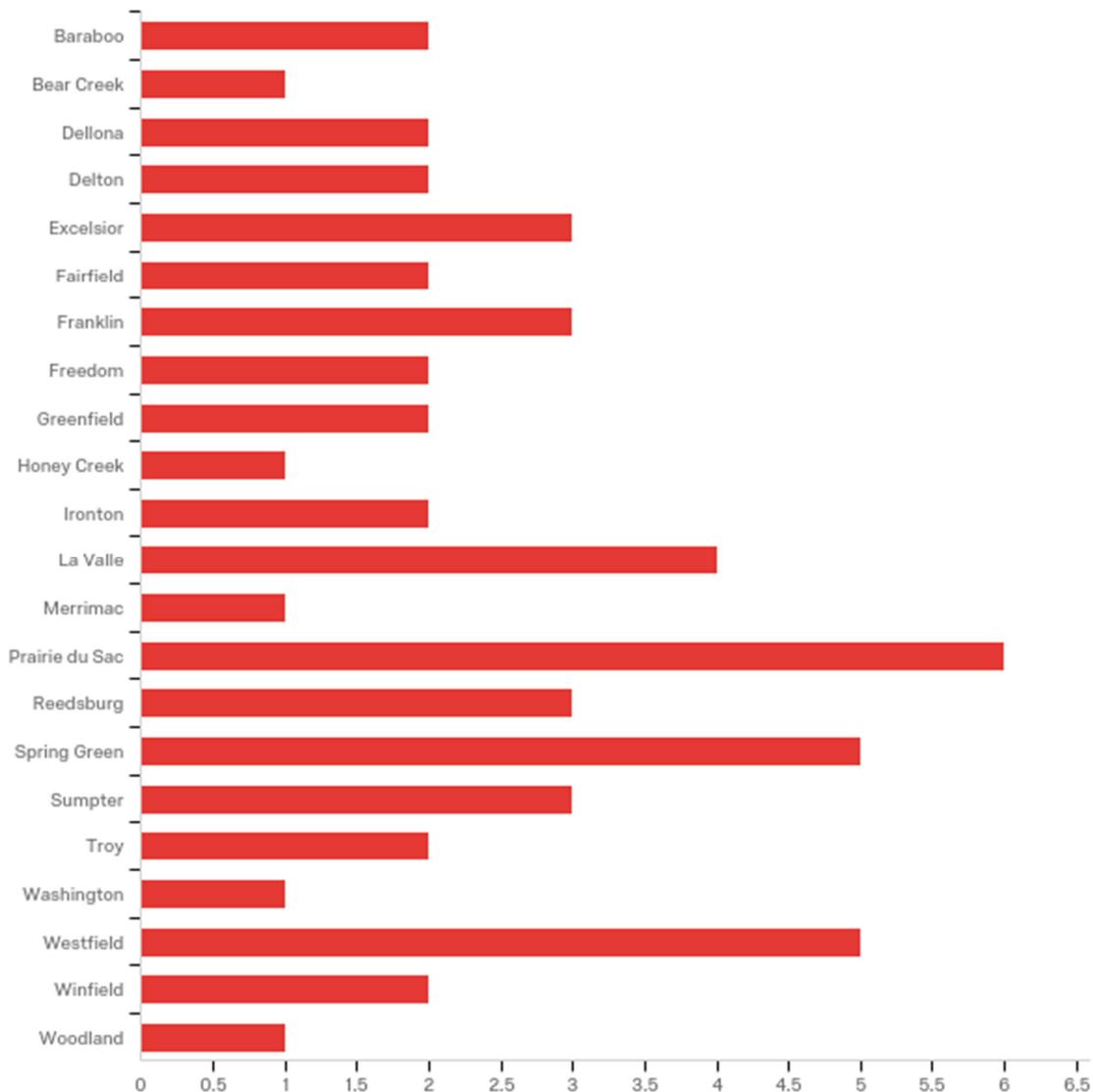


# Sauk County Town Officials Survey Report

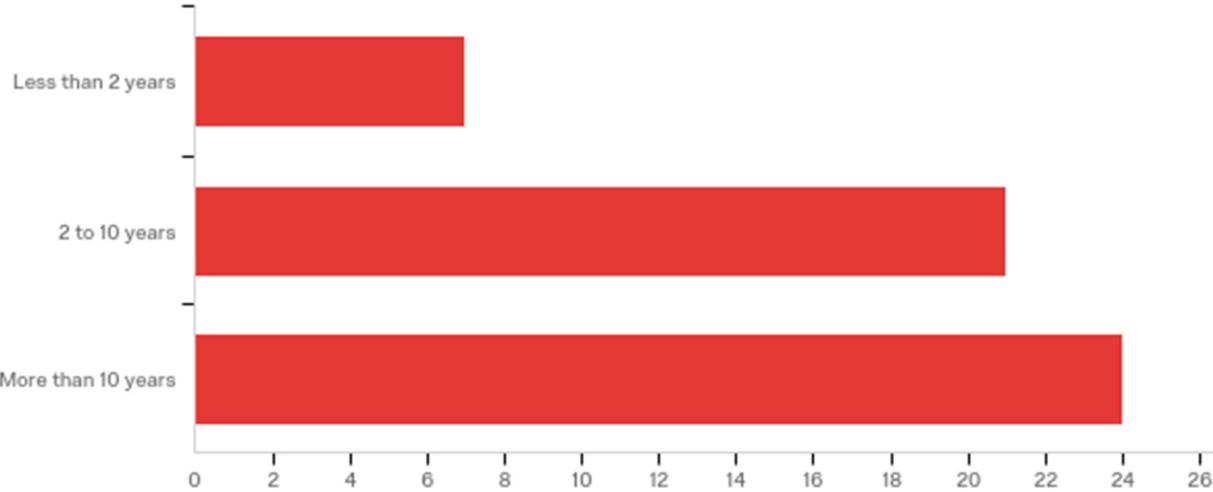
The Sauk County Towns Association in collaboration with UW-Madison Division of Extension in Sauk County conducted an online survey of town board officials (board members, treasurers and clerks) in February 2019. The survey was completed by 56 town board officials, a 43% response rate. The purpose of the survey was twofold:

- 1.) to develop a better understanding of the issues facing town government and ultimately potential strategies to address those issues; and
- 2.) to encourage more participation in the quarterly Sauk County Towns Association Unit Meetings.

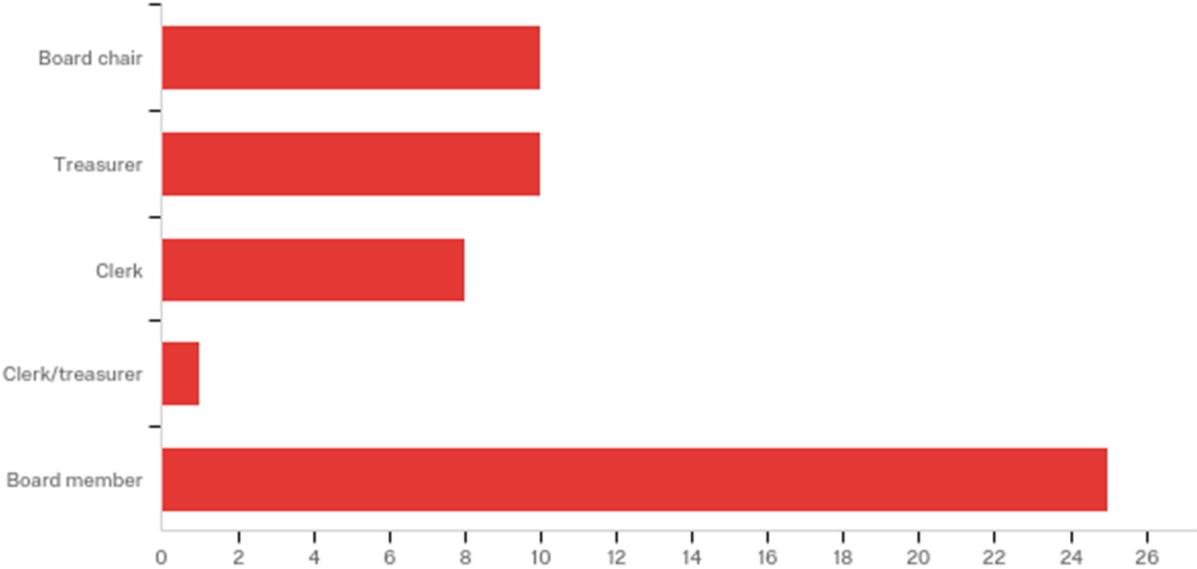
## Q1 - Which town do you represent?



**Q2 - How long have you served as a town board official?**



**Q3 - What position do you currently hold?**



**Q4 - To what extent do you participate in or utilize the following resources in your role as a town board official?**



## Q5 - What do you find most valuable about the Sauk County Unit meetings?

The updates on what is going on in the county.

The ones I have been to were very informing.

Updates on current issues and listening to problems and how they may be handled by other towns

I like the updates on what is going on in Sauk County. I like the updates from Wisconsin Towns.

Getting information from County personnel and state representatives.

Updates on timely matters of interest.

Good information.

I feel it is important to hear what is going on at the County level. We don't always hear what is going on.

Meeting officers from other townships and discussing similar issues

Network with other treasurers/clerks that are there. Presentations on subjects of interest

Updates from county officials.

They are always informational and update current officials from the county and what they are promoting. Like the County Board updates and the Representatives' comments on what the state is accomplishing. Then, there are the individual town issues that get discussed, heading off potential issues in the future by what someone has dealt with previously. Never enjoy the drives to northern Sauk County for meetings, but they are worth it. Would be nice to hold the majority of meetings mid county somewhere and just delegate 1 or 2 to actual town halls.

Collaboration

I like the updates provided by County Department managers on upcoming projects, or issues.

I am not able to attend very often (sometimes multiple meetings on this night). When I am able to attend, I find the countywide updates are very interesting. A town representative often attends.

Meeting other officials and finding out what they do about various problems they face.

Always have good info and updates about work being done in county.

Information from county officials. Input from other town officials.

Understanding how other towns deal with comparable issues and problems

I like hearing from the state reps and the WTA regional leaders and the county officials.

It helps keep us informed in our township.

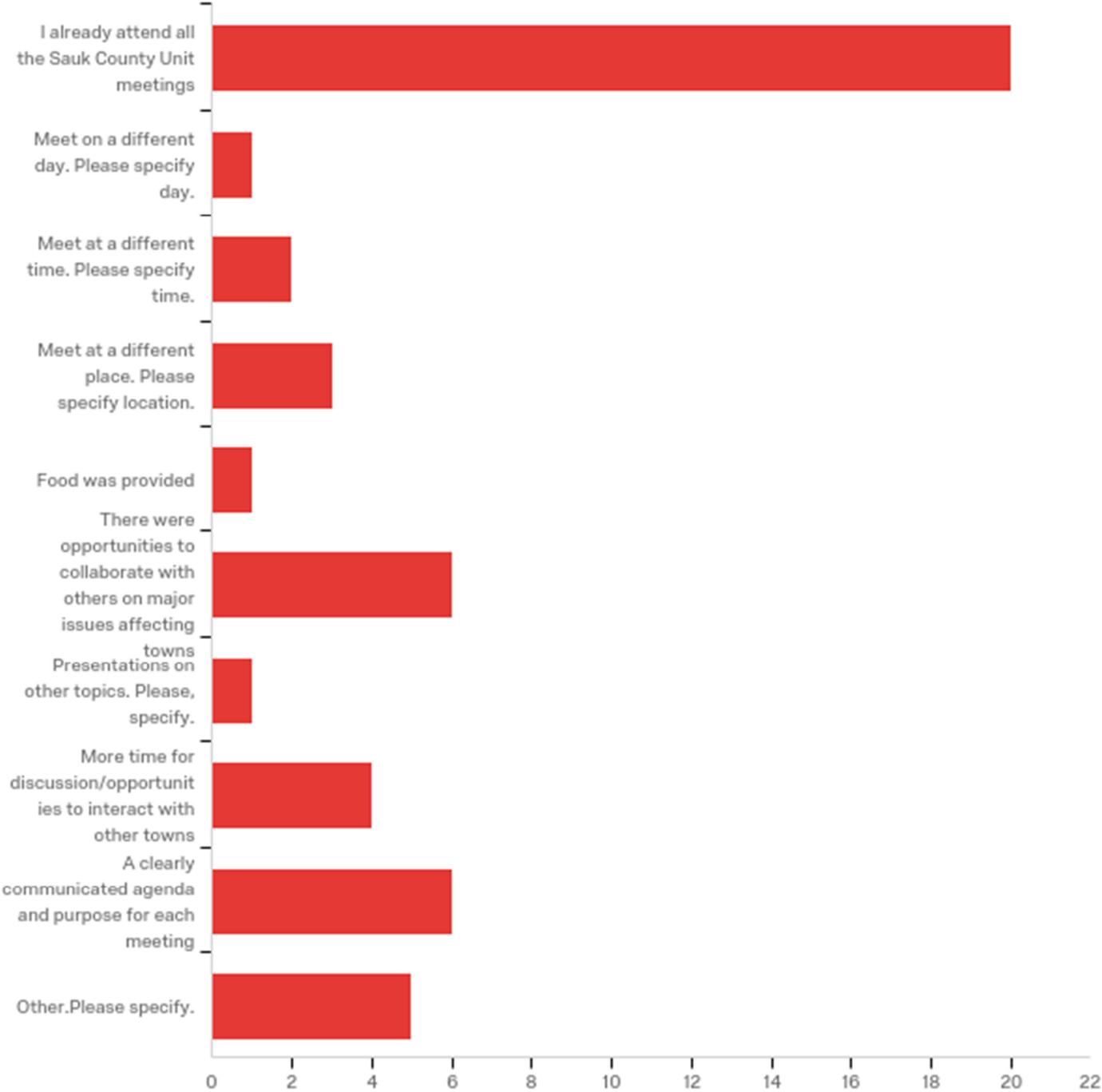
Talk over problems other towns have and our own town problems.

Chance to interact with other town officials and how they are dealing with common issues.

Networking with other town officials.

The updates from the county and the state representatives.

**Q6 - What would encourage you to attend the Sauk County Towns Association Unit meetings more often? Select all that apply.**



**Meet at a different time. Please specify time.**

- 6pm

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- Daytime meetings

**Meet at a different place. Please specify location.**

More central location

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More centrally located or near Baraboo

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Central location

**Presentations on other topics. Please, specify.**

Training on form CT needed/updates to etc.

**Other-Please specify.**

Usually have other commitments.

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Other Board members attend

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Not sure. Just not in the habit of attending.

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Has usually conflicted with my work schedule

**Q7 - What are the top three issues affecting your town? Please be specific.**

The following responses have been grouped into categories. The number in parentheses indicates the number of similar responses.

**Roads**

- Roads (15), road repair/maintenance/reconstruction (14), limited funding for roads (12), roads and bridges, highway maintenance funding (6)
- Amish causing damage to roads from the horseshoes (2)
- I think the Town is doing a good job of maintaining its roads, as it the county. But continued resources are critical.
- Infrastructure funding particularly town roads.

**Land Use**

- Zoning (2)
- Ag/ non Ag issues
- Balancing the needs of our agriculture community, natural resources, with economic growth and affordable living is always a topic of discussion
- Organized and planned development. It is critical that work continues with our Comprehensive Plan and meshing that seamlessly with the county.
- Controlling growth of building to maintain " Country life" vs village
- Future Hwy 12
- Land use
- Affordable smart growth. We work well with the Villages, the school district, and many intergovernmental cooperative committees, and will continue to do so.
- Village Development

- Encroachment by city
- Limiting Development
- PRD
- Growth both housing and commercial

### **Ordinances/Oversight**

- Constant updating of the ordinances to keep up with the County and state.
- County oversight
- The working relationship with County Planning and Zoning. Currently many residents are sour on Planning and Zoning, so I think work has to be done in terms of improving that relationship.
- State placing restrictions on local government.
- Permit coordination dysfunction with the County
- Revamping Town Ordinances and Zoning Ordinance
- Building permits issuance

### **Funding for Infrastructure/Equipment/Services**

- Replacing town equipment, on limited budgets, trucks, tractors, grader, etc. (2)
- REPLACE 120 CULVERTS THAT ARE 50 YEARS OLD
- REPAIR PUBLIC BOAT LANDINGS
- 2018 flood repairs and FEMA paperwork
- Funding for town hall repairs on an aged building
- Keeping what we have in the best possible repair, funding repairs
- Having enough money in budget to pay health insurance

### **Resident Related Issues**

- Fewer farmers, more city folks moving to rural areas, with higher expectations of road maintenance and improvements.
- Citizens having no patience for any kind of road work to be completed
- Generating interest in residents on town issues (attending annual meeting, caucus, board meetings),
- Not any involvement from town people.
- Getting people to comply with town and county ordinances

### **Broadband**

- Need for Reliable broadband(internet/cell service in not good) (4)
- Affordable broadband access in the bluff areas

### **Emergency Management (staffing & budget)**

- Trying to keep our fire department manned with people and equipment.
- Cost of fire and ambulance service
- Emergency management
- Growing cost of emergency services
- Fire and ambulance costs and keeping department staffed appropriately.

### **ATV**

- ATV/ UTV/UTV Routes (3)
- ATV ORDINANCE-IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE STATE

- Proposed ATV/UTV Ordinance designating all town roads as routes.
- Pressure from ATV Clubs to open Town Roads for ATVs

### **Changing Demographics**

- Declining population of young couples / families / school enrollment
- Retention of youth in AG/farming

### **Levy limits/Taxes/Expenditures**

- Revenue, expenditures & taxes (2)
- Money!!!
- Overall budget
- Keeping costs of services affordable

### **Safety Issues**

- CAN THE TOWN DO WITHOUT A POLICE OFFICER AND BOAT PATROL?
- Speed/Safety of Hwy 12 and the inability to access the road. Speeds are at 70 mph regularly and with the increased traffic getting on to Hwy 12 with a vehicle, especially with a camper/boat/horse trailer, is getting very difficult. Need to slow down the Hwy 12 traffic for safety at Bluffview.
- The condition of the housing at Bluffview Village and Bluffview Estates. No county resources available to assist.

### **Environmental Issues**

- Environmental issues (2)
- A high water table affecting lots and roads
- Large farm operations that are overusing our resources
- Water quality both surface water and ground water. Specifically current lax farm waste disposal practices that are jeopardizing our water resources.

### **MISC.**

- CREATING A SHORT-TERM RENTAL ORDINANCE AND PROCEDURE
- Lack of qualifications of our clerk. We need to hold a referendum to change to an appointed clerk instead of elected.
- Littering
- Increasing collection of recyclables
- Productivity of officials
- Illegal campers
- Maintaining common sense governing- not fads
- Elections
- Economic growth
- Education
- Lawsuits

**Q8 - As you look ten years into the future, what do you anticipate will be the top issues affecting your town?**

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High Speed Internet / Declining young families / school population

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Public apathy for involvement in town government. Agricultural land use by large farm with a growing constituency of non-farmers Highway maintenance funding

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State removing town rights

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Road maintenance multiple family dwellings

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Road conditions

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Anticipate the same.

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Roads, Lawsuits & Taxes

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Development of roads and other infrastructure to meet general development of area. Fire and ambulance costs.

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Roads

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Road maintenance high water table increasing traffic

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I expect the same problems then.

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Roads, fire and EMS protection, Getting internet to all residents

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Roads, taxes and expenses

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Roadwork Upkeep / Limiting Development / More Support for Ag Community

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Maintaining our rural character will be an issue. As more families move to the country, there will be pressure on the township to relax some of the standards for Farmland Preservation. Then there will be a greater demand for more services found now in mostly urban areas.

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Cost of road maintenance

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Money for road work

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Roads

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Villages extending into Town

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Land development, especially building of homes and developments and controlling costs for roads, fire, emergencies.

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Highway expenditures

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roads

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Roads

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Striking a balance between agricultural and residential needs (i.e. water and air quality issues, flood management, zoning, etc.)

Roads sewer system grants

1. Preserving rural character while allowing home based businesses. How to manage this issue to allow residents to earn an income without negatively impacting neighbors, traffic safety, etc. 2. Adequate funding to maintain and improve roads. 3. What activities and facilities will be added to the abandoned Sauk County Landfill property that will impact adjacent properties. How the Town can mitigate the reduction in property values adjacent to the landfill because of environmental contamination. 4. Updating the Towns Comprehensive Plan.

Same.

Funding of our schools

Same as above + Attracting personnel for various Town positions

Probably the same as above

1. Problems with the industry on the Ho-Chunk Nation land. Already the noise levels are increasing during testing periods. There is no opportunity for tax base, but we have the exposure to noise that can rattle the windows. If this continues, it will devalue the properties along Hwy 12. 2. The deteriorating condition of the DNR properties in the Badger Lands and the increased trespass and vandalism from lack of DNR oversight. 3. The continued problems at Bluffview regarding housing and the amount of issues for safety. Sauk County law enforcement already makes many visits to the community and if the property continues to get worse, the problems will intensify.

Same as above and short term rentals

Same as above.

Water quality Road funding Residential land use

Most town roads will need major re-construction due to larger and heavier loads and higher volumes of traffic. Replacing big ticket items, equipment and hall repairs, loss of tax base due to annexation

Roads land use we have several in our township who don't like people from the Amish community buying land and starting business's using conditional use permits

Same as above & getting town residents involved in local gov.

Growth in the township of young families. We have become a retirement community.

The same as above.

Road maintenance.

Road care and where the money will come from

Same as above - it is only going to get worse as far as the roads are concerned. Larger farm equipment travelling on roads that were not designed for the weight.

2018 flood repeated if this is the new weather pattern. Road maintenance if funding don't increase or the construction that is going on now stops.

1. SHOULD THE TOWN KEEP THE POLICE OFFICER AND BOAT PATROL OR SHOULD THE LAKE PROTECTION DISTRICT BE FUNDING THE BOAT PATROL 2. HOW TO FIND A GRANT TO DREDGE THE LAKE FOR THE LAKE PROTECTION DISTRICT CONTINUE TO KEEP THE BOAT LANDINGS SAFE AND POSSIBLY INSTALL BATHROOMS 3. ROADS THAT NEED TO BE RESURFACED. 4. REPLACEMENT OF CULVERTS ON A SCHEDULE EACH YEAR

Zoning

**Q9 - What specific topics would your town board like to learn more about? Please consider external issues like broadband resources, etc. as well as internal board operations/functions like conflict management, etc.**

Broadband

County board procedures

Broadband is always a concern in this area.

Roundtable discussions with other Towns on how they deal with issues such as fencing.

Updating current ordinances and assuring all needed ordinances are in place.

Fence law. Large farm moratoriums.

Getting internet to all residents

Dealing with conflicts with our residents

Information on how to be a good employer. Many times they have no clue on employment law and the process for having good communication with they employee and the process should there be conflict.

Certainly broadband expansion, but also a way to maintain roads longer and more cost effective. I think the conflict mgt is overblown, especially when accurate facts are presented and the logical decisions far outweigh your political beliefs. We have a very split political local board, yet we are open to discussion, respectful, and the right decision ultimately becomes common sense.

Broadband infrastructure development in challenging terrain. State-of-the-art solutions for ag and septic-related water and air quality problems. Grants and other funding programs for implementation of these solutions.

How can we enhance the Town's public information program by enhancing the content on our website and start to use social media. Strategies for reducing the amount of garbage, furniture and appliances being dumped along roads.

Updates as needed on changes in State Law that may impact Towns, including but not limited to Extraterritorial Zoning, Boundary Agreements, Farmland Preservation, etc.

Resources for requiring the buildings in Bluffview Village to be brought into liveable conditions -- get rid of the black mold, the leaking roofs, ceilings that are falling down on residents, etc. Where can we go for assistance (County Dept of Public Health has already turned us down.)

Zoning laws

Our town may need to look into having a website soon, Leasing vs. purchasing equipment when replacing equipment

We do have poor broadband in many parts of our township but I think we lack the economic development to qualify for grants. Would be great to be made aware of any opportunities for our situation

How deal with issues that are asked about, but brushed away and not addressed.

Broadband is a good one.

What is happening at the County level, zoning, highway department, what resources are available for our residents form social services thru UW-ETX etc. Also changes at the state level and what their local impact will be.

Mitigation or large projects throw the us core of engineers, flood control on a large scale. if this is the new norm there are going to have to be some changes.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT WOULD BE GOOD, BOARD MEMBER ETHICS.

**Q10 - What specific topics would your town committee/commission(s) benefit from learning more about?**

How the state will affect local governments

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Functions of Sauk County Planning & Zoning

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Not sure

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Analysis of road conditions and future projected costs to maintain.

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Mobile cell towers

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Broadband - Limiting Cell Towers State Mandates that may occur

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Plan use, we have a plan developed years ago and the new board doesn't have a clue on the plan or what is new and on the horizon. Those two items need to be studied as a whole so they understand why our exclusive ag exists and how to go forward

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Future Hwy 12 development.

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Always good to hear of other situations boards have had to deal with that may end up on our agenda in the future. Could really take the hurt, time and effort out of a situation previously experienced good or bad. Always good to know of programs designed to promote jobs and people interested in filling those opportunities in our County especially.

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Energy conservation and renewable energy education.

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How the Town can recoup the lost revenues from 49% of the land being tax-exempt. The lack of privately held land due to Badger and Nature Conservancy limits the Town's ability to provide the services needed for residents. Who will provide fire protection to HCN lands since they do not pay any assessments to the Sauk Fire District. What about the industry on HCN land, how do they pay for fire protection?

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Same

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Grants that might available.

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Please see above

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clear definitions on what is commercial, what is cottage and what is home based industry

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See previous remarks

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I have no specific topic.

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TOWN BOARD MEMBERS TO KNOW WHAT THE DUTIES OF THE POLICE COMMISSION MEMBERS ARE.

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**Q11 - What specific topics would your town residents benefit from learning more about?**

Broadband

How the town government works.

Not sure

The distribution of property tax dollars.

Relationship building as a means of improving the community

Functions of Town Government and limited funds to carry out Town functions such as road upkeep

Many residents are unable to understand the time and cost involved in maintaining town infrastructure.

Land use issues with ATV information as well.

Recycling, and how they can help promote our town as a place to live and work and play

Same as the above two boxes.

Driveway safety issues as they relate to intersections and water runoff.

Tenant rights.

Our town residents would benefit from a website for the town. Much of the info residents are looking for could be located here. Election dates, ordinances, permit requirements, garbage collections, clean sweep dates, and so on

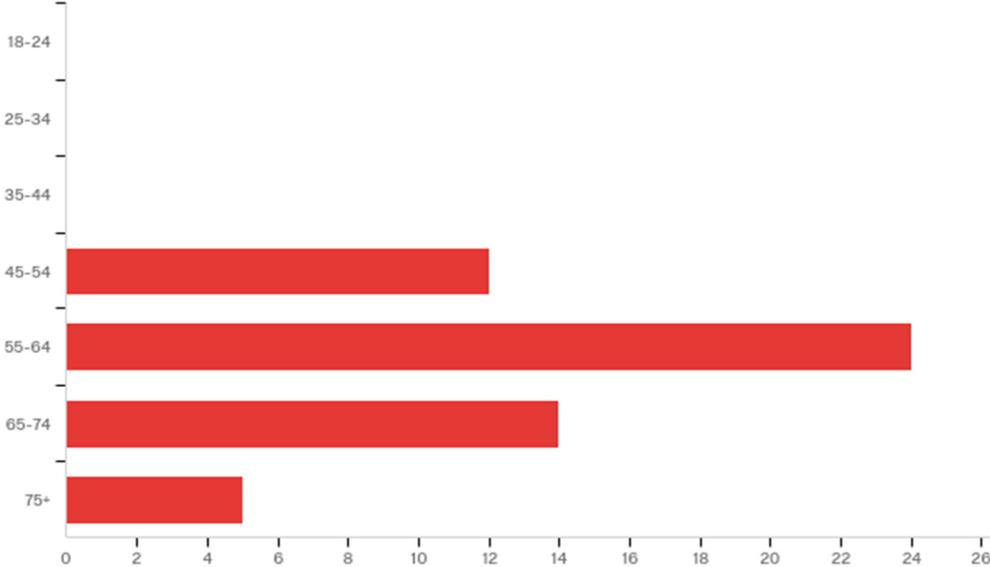
We have very few people at our meetings; the only time they come is if they have a problem.

see previous remarks

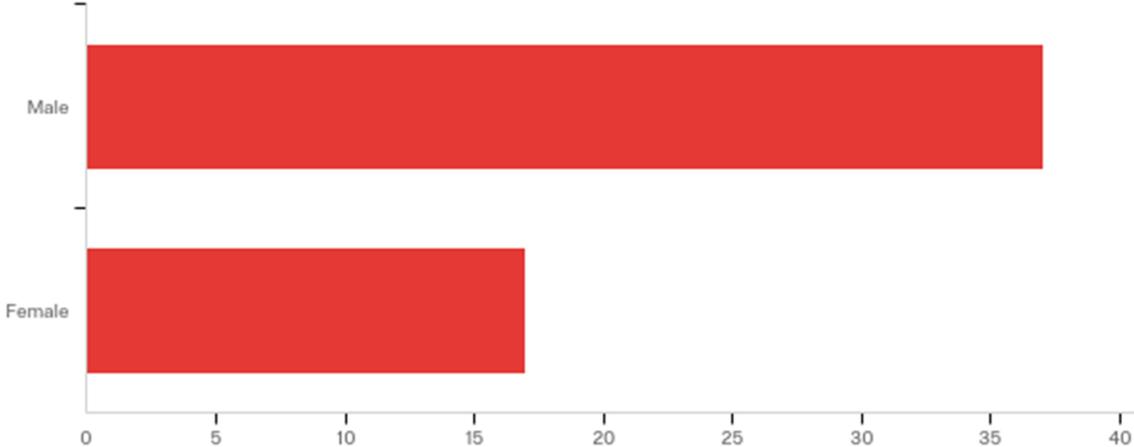
They would have to become engaged first, they all have their pet peeves, but most don't give you any solutions. My theory is if you don't have some ideas on how to fix your complaint that is reasonable there is no reason to attract the problem. The solution needs to be practical and cost effective.

HOW TO READ THEIR TAX BILLS UNDERSTANDING THEIR ASSESSMENTS UNDERSTANDING WHAT AG LAND IS VERSUS RECREATIONAL LAND SNOW OFF THE PLOW VS THEIR MAILBOX PLOWING ROADS TIMELINE

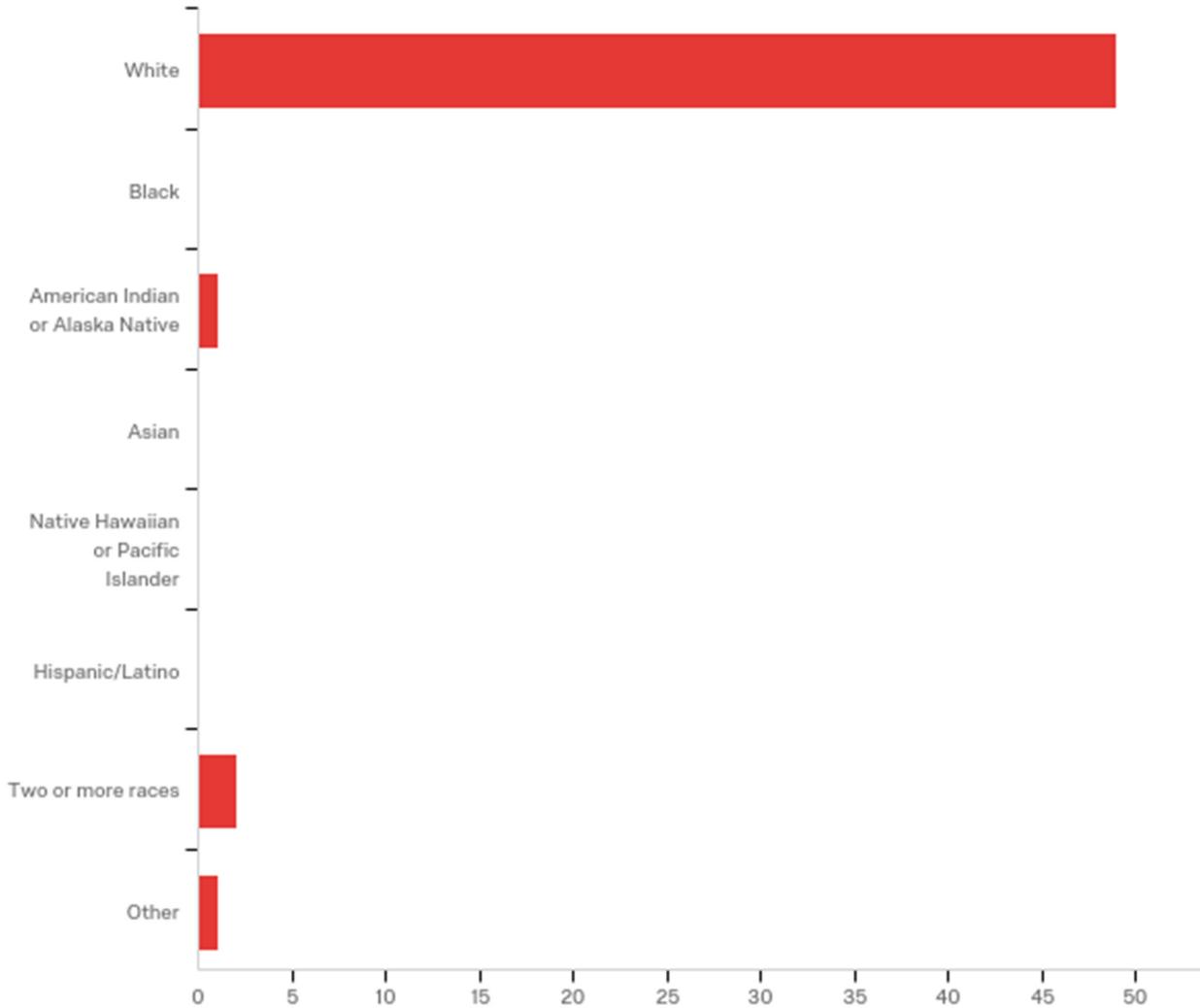
**Q12 - What is your age?**



**Q13 - How do you identify yourself?**



### Q14 - How do you identify yourself?



### Q15 - Please list any additional comments.

Thanks for taking the time to put this together. I hope it will prove successful to grow attendance at these meetings.

We attend almost every meeting. Can't understand why more don't attend.

I find that these meetings can become too partisan, always on the other side of the county, late at night and provide little valuable information to the town.

The Unit meeting agendas seem to encompass various subjects - but the meetings always seem to be in the one area of the County - a long drive from Baraboo - I would recommend either a more central location or picking other meeting spots though out the county- would encourage members to attend maybe at least one meeting a year because it is close to where they live

Don't keep reintroducing programs with a different name every couple years just to maintain a government job. Stick to basics and COMMON sense governing. Oh yeh, encourage the DOT to act like the money they are

spending on projects was like their own. Quit spending needless dollars on cosmetics, bike trails, and always bid projects fairly to control costs.

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We are lucky to have the U.W. Extension and the WTA good work, good advice, great training classes.

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Our Town regularly attends county unit meetings as well as District meetings put on by WTA, it is concerning that some towns are never present.

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I am an American, and all the people filling this out should be to so why the ethnic question. If we do not work as a team nothing is going to get done. Race does matter. I will work with anyone that wants to move this country forward and quite bring up the past, we have all made mistakes including me. I believe the constitution starts, We the People.

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