

TOWNSHIPS: GRASSROOTS GOVERNMENT



Grassroots
Government
Minnesota
Association of Townships



Town meetings are
“the wisest
invention ever
devised by the wit
of man for the
perfect exercise of
self-government.”



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- Oldest Form of Gov't in the U.S.
- Northwest Ordinance – 1787
- 6x6 sq mile units – Survey Townships



TOWNSHIP STRUCTURE

**3 - 5
Supervisors**

**1 Clerk &
1 Treasurer**

**Meet
once per
month**

**~70% of budget
spent on roads**

**Section
365.51**

**2nd Tuesday of
March**

TOWNSHIP TUESDAY

**People's
Meeting**

**Voters
determine
size of levy**

Townships are frugal and efficient!

- Over the past 10 years, revenues have grown less than 1% per year
- Less capacity for taxing
 - ~75% of revenue comes from property tax
 - Aging population
 - No other means of raising taxes





Legislative Priorities: Transportation funding

Townships maintain more than 55,500 miles of Minnesota's roads as well as about 6,000 bridges.

~63% of a township's budget is spent on roads and bridges.

Roads are vital to agriculture, local commerce, emergency vehicles and school buses.



Legislative Priorities: Transportation funding

- **Current state funding is insufficient**
- **No increase in dedicated, ongoing funding in many years. FY2022 funding was \$51 million.**
- **Projected FY2023 funding to decrease by 7% for townships without legislative action.**
- **WI has 60,000 miles of township roads. State funding is \$168 million per year in ongoing and dedicated funds.**



Legislative Priorities: Transportation funding

- **MAT advocates for a \$40 million increase yearly for township roads.**
- **MAT supports the additional dedication of transportation excise taxes (i.e., auto parts sales tax)**
- **MAT supports limiting truck weight exemptions to roads that don't have a minimum 10-ton capacity standard.**



Legislative Priorities: Annexation Fairness

Current annexation law is unfair to townships

- Cities can annex existing township land without township or landowner consent.
- MAT supports annexation by contract (orderly annexation), which requires the agreement of BOTH parties.
- Landowners should have a vote
- Detachment (5 year rule)



Legislative Priorities:

PILT – Payment in lieu of Taxes. Mandate PILT payments are equal to the taxes that would have been received had the land stayed in private hands.

Road Reversions – Require a written agreement with the township before a road can be reverted to a township.

Broadband Funding – Much progress has been made. Still, a long way to go. Maintain focus on unserved areas.

PERA – Allow an appointed township officer to participate in PERA as an elected officer would



MAT Contacts:



Executive Director: Jeff Krueger

Counsel: Steve Fenske, Graham Berg-Moberg

Contract Lobbyist: Shep Harris (Fredrikson)

Contract Advocacy &

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