



NEWS FROM THE CROSSROADS - NOVEMBER 2025



John L. Swisher
Village President

2026 Budget Balances Essential Services with Long-Term Community Improvements

The Village Board finalized the 2026 Budget on November 10th after several months of review. Working within levy limits, the Board prioritized public safety, infrastructure, staff retention, and the upkeep of community facilities. With limited resources and many competing needs, the Village will collect the same General Fund tax levy in 2026 as in 2025.

The budget aims to fully fund essential and mandated expenses first, then strategically allocate remaining resources to cover as many additional needs as possible, including the long-term care and maintenance of past improvements.



Kyle Ellefson
Village Administrator

Public safety remains a major focus. In 2026, the Board is adding another 120 patrol hours—its fourth consecutive year of increasing coverage or staffing. The Police Department will also continue updating critical equipment, including computers, a new body camera, and other electronics.

A key initiative is adding a third full-time Firefighter/Paramedic. Due to limited new revenue and recent capital investments—such as fire engines, air packs, and a UTV—the position will begin in April 2026 to reduce first-year cost. Other long-term expenses conclude in the following years, allowing the position to be sustainably funded.

The Public Works Department will replace its 2002 pickup truck and upgrade its fleet and key locations with new radios. Several years ago, Jefferson County upgraded its radio system, requiring Police, Fire, and EMS to replace their units to remain compatible. At that time, budget constraints meant that Public Works radios—used primarily for internal communication—were not replaced.

As a result, Public Works can currently communicate only within its own team, not with Police, Fire, EMS, or County Dispatch. While usually not an issue, this gap could pose challenges during major storms or emergencies. With funding now dedicated to replacing these radios, the Village will significantly strengthen its emergency response capabilities.

Park improvements continue in 2026. After refreshing much of the woodchip base under playground equipment last year, the Village will finish the process with additional manufactured woodchips.

Several structured recreational facilities are also slated for upgrades:

- **Centennial Park ball diamonds:** Both existing diamonds will be resurfaced—an improvement not made in several years.
- **Potential third ball diamond:** A local organization has proposed partnering with the Village on constructing a third diamond. Funds have been set aside to support this partnership if needed.
- **Tennis/Pickleball courts:** The courts will be resurfaced to improve safety and extend their life, especially with increased use due to pickleball's growing popularity.
- **Centennial Park Flagpole project:** Improvements continue with the addition of a sidewalk linking the flagpole to the main concession area, improving accessibility. A concrete base and seating area are also planned to create a space for reflection. Donations toward the project are still welcome—those interested may contact Cameron Day, Director of Tourism, Marketing, and Promotion, at jctourism@vi.johnsoncreek.wi.gov.

Major utility infrastructure work will occur outside the tax levy in 2026. The sludge dewatering project is underway, although early stages primarily involve manufacturing equipment and scheduling, so visible work is limited for now. Once equipment arrives, on-site activity will increase significantly, and the progress will move forward quickly.

Well #4 is nearing final design, with construction expected in 2026. The Public Service Commission will likely require a full “rate case”—the first since 1997—which may result in utility rate adjustments.

While the Village has implemented only small increases over the years, major projects now make larger changes likely. A consulting firm is helping evaluate rate options and model phased increases for the Board’s review.

Budgeting is never easy. The Village Board has one opportunity each year to allocate the bulk of available resources toward public safety, infrastructure, and community amenities. While there are always additional projects or improvements the Board would like to fund, the responsibility to residents and taxpayers requires careful balancing of needs, wants, and obligations.

With the communitywide revaluation in 2025, most property values increased, and the Village’s tax rate decreased accordingly. Commercial assessments increased by about 10% on average, while residential properties increased by more than 25%, meaning homeowners will carry a larger share of the levy overall. So, while the Village restricted its levy again, most homeowners may see a small increase, while most commercial properties may see a decrease. If you have any questions about the budget, please feel free to contact me at villageadministrator@vi.johnsoncreek.wi.gov.

TRUSTEE TRANSITIONS

The Village of Johnson Creek extends its gratitude to Trustee David Rousayne, who served on the Village Board from April 2017 to October 2025. During his tenure, David contributed to several committees, including Tourism & Promotion, Personnel & Finance, Protection & Welfare, and Improvements & Services. At the October 27, 2025 Board meeting, he was recognized with a Certificate of Appreciation and a Village Challenge Coin for his dedicated service. Thank you, David, for your commitment to the Johnson Creek community.



The Village of Johnson Creek welcomes Neil Vandenhouten, appointed to serve on the Village Board through April 2026. A resident since 2020, Neil currently serves on the Planning Commission and is eager to further support the community in this new role. His background includes 10 years as an educator, extensive youth coaching and board service in local fastpitch leagues, retail management experience, and leadership roles within his church. Neil looks forward to serving the residents of Johnson Creek. *“We thank David for his years of dedicated service and welcome Neil as he brings his experience and commitment to the Village Board.” — Village President John L. Swisher*

TOURISM & COMMUNITY PROMOTION





HOLIDAYS IN THE CREEK: CELEBRATE THE SEASON!


Holidays in the Creek is a festive weekend celebration in Johnson Creek, featuring multiple community events, including the Tree Lighting, Christmas in the Village, and the Holiday Fair.

Thanks to a strong partnership between the Village of Johnson Creek, local organizations, and Comfort Suites, these events bring the community and visitors together to celebrate the holiday season with hometown charm, local shopping, and family fun.


JOHNSON CREEK HISTORICAL SOCIETY – CHRISTMAS IN THE VILLAGE


 Date/Time: Friday, November 28 (4:00 - 6:00 PM) - Saturday, November 29 (9:00 AM - 2:00 PM)


 Location: Johnson Creek Historical Society, 110 Aztalan St.

 Highlights: Fresh-cut Christmas trees, fire truck rides, holiday snacks


FRIENDS OF THE JOHNSON CREEK PUBLIC LIBRARY – HOLIDAY FAIR


 Date/Time: Saturday, November 29 | 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM


 Location: Johnson Creek Middle/High School, 455 Aztalan St.

 Highlights: 75+ vendors featuring local authors, artisans, food producers, and craft makers

VILLAGE OF JOHNSON CREEK – TREE LIGHTING CELEBRATION

 Date/Time: Sunday, November 30 | 3:00 - 5:00 PM

 Location: Veteran’s Park, 121 Lincoln St.

 Highlights: Santa visits, horse-drawn wagon rides, caroling, free gifts, and more!

Special thanks to these organizations for their support of the Tree Lighting: Badger Bank, Compeer Financial, Doosan Bobcat, Gallitz Grading, J&L Tire and Service Center, JPAL LLC, MasterMold, Orthopaedic Associates of Wisconsin, Pine Cone, Premier Bank, Trapp Real Estate REMAX Preferred

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 11/21: Live Music at Hi-Way Harry’s
- 11/28-11/29: Black Friday & Saturday Rummage Sale at The Crossroads Church
- 12/7: Breakfast With Santa at Milford Hills
- 12/13: Santa at Badger Bank
- 12/13: Grandma’s Bakery at Johnson Creek Historical Society
- 12/19: Live Music at Hi-Way Harry’s
- 12/31: New Year’s Eve Dinner at Milford Hills



[VisitJohnsonCreek.org](https://www.visitjohnsoncreek.org)



DETAILS FROM PUBLIC WORKS



NEW PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

Jason Warner brings more than 25 years of experience in the construction trades, including 13 years as a self-employed contractor. For the past five years, he worked for a large school district with a population more than twice that of the Village, where he served in several custodial and maintenance roles. Most recently, he was the Supervisor of Facilities and Safety, overseeing operations, maintenance, and safety initiatives.

Outside of work, Jason enjoys spending time with his family, cheering on his sons at football games or demolition derbies. When he's not at the field, he can often be found in his shop building projects or working on a classic car.

If you see Jason out in the Village, be sure to stop and say hi!

CLERK'S CORNER

LOCAL OFFICES UP FOR ELECTION IN 2025

The offices of three Village Trustees are up for election next spring. The term of office for all positions is two years and will run from the third Tuesday in April 2026 through the third Tuesday in April 2028. The Spring Election date is April 7, 2026 and if a primary is necessary it will be held on February 17, 2026.

All necessary forms to run for office are available on the Village website www.vi.johnsoncreek.wi.gov or can be picked up at Village Hall. The first day to circulate nomination papers is December 1, 2025 and they must be returned to the Village Clerk by January 6, 2026 at 5pm. Questions? Contact the Village Clerk at elissaf@vi.johnsoncreek.wi.gov or 920-699-2296, ext. 102.

2026 DOG TAGS AVAILABLE DECEMBER 8TH

Dogs over 5 months of age must be licensed annually. To license a dog, provide rabies vaccination copy, proof of spay/neuter (if applicable), and license fee: \$10 spayed or neutered, \$15 unaltered. License forms are available on the Village web site. Village ordinances limit the number of dogs per household to two. To exceed this limit, a multiple dog statement is required (forms available at Village Hall) and a fee of \$25 per dog is added to the license fee.

TAX BILLS & PAYMENTS

Property tax bills will be mailed no later than the third Monday in December, though we hope to have them out a bit before then. The entire tax bill or first installment is due by January 31, 2026 to avoid interest and penalties. Payments by check are accepted at Village Hall in person, by mail or drop box. *Tax payments must be on a separate check from any other Village payment such as a dog license or utility bill and no post-dated checks are accepted.* If you wish to pay by credit card, visit www.allpaid.com and use code a000tp. An additional processing fee of at least 2.95% applies to card payments.

TRASH & RECYCLING COLLECTION DAY CHANGING JANUARY 7th

The Village recently contracted with GFL for collection of trash and recycling for Village residents. GFL acquired LRS in 2025. Effective January 7, 2026 the normal collection date for trash and recycling will change to WEDNESDAY. Bulk item collection will occur with the first scheduled pickup date of the month. Some practices for bulk collection are changing:

- Calling ahead for bulk pickup is required at least 48 hours in advance, 920-387-0987
- Items must be <50 pounds and manageable by one person
- One bulk item per month
- Items normally in a set or pair are one item – ex: mattress & box spring)

VILLAGE HALL CLOSURES/TRASH COLLECTION DELAYS

November 27-28, 2025 all day,
Trash/recycling pickup November 29
December 24-25, 2025 all day,
Trash/recycling pickup December 27
December 31, 2025 closing at noon
January 1, 2026 all day,
Trash/recycling pickup January 3

POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS

SNOW REMOVAL

As winter weather approaches, the Johnson Creek Police Department reminds residents that anytime there is one inch or more of snow accumulation, vehicles must not be parked on Village streets or alleys. This helps snowplows and Public Works crews safely and efficiently clear roads and apply salt or sand as needed. Vehicles left parked on the street during snowfall make it difficult for crews to plow curb to curb and may be subject to citation or towing.

Residents are also reminded that sidewalks must be cleared of snow and ice within 48 hours after a snowfall ends. Keeping sidewalks clear ensures safe passage for pedestrians, mail carriers, and schoolchildren throughout the Village.

Your cooperation helps keep Johnson Creek's streets and sidewalks safe and accessible for everyone during the winter months.





VILLAGE OF

Johnson Creek

WISCONSIN

LIBRARY HAPPENINGS

Welcome Jacki & Ella!

Jacki and Ella both joined the library team in October, and we're excited to have them on board! Be sure to stop by the library to say hello and introduce yourself!

Puzzle Race

Saturday, December 6 - 10:00am - 12:00pm

Race against other teams to complete a 500 piece puzzle. Each member of the winning team receives a Jersey Mike's gift card! Register your team of up to four people through the website

www.johnsoncreeklibrary.org or call the library 920-699-3741.

Red Cross Blood Drive

NEW Day & Time!

Monday, November 24 - 12:00pm - 4:00pm

Give blood & rake in the rewards for helping save lives! Come to give blood or platelets and receive: A FREE pie, FREE pint of Culver's custard, and FREE Red Cross & PAC MAN socks! Schedule a time at redcross.org/give-blood. Walk-ins are always welcome!

Legos

3rd Monday of every month from

3:30-4:30

December 15 - Wish List

January 19 - Challenge to use only 26 bricks

Family Fun at the Library

2nd Saturday of the month
10:00-11:00am

December 13 - Holiday Sensory Play

January 10 - Winter Wonderland



Library Assistant, Jacki is a retired teacher and lives in Jefferson.



Circulation Clerk, Ella holds a degree from UW-La Crosse and lives in Madison.

Friends of the JCPL

Meets the second Tuesday of January, April, July, & October beginning at 5:30pm with refreshments followed by a regular meeting. Next meeting: January 13

Storytime - every Thursday at 10:00am

Johnson Creek Village Hall

920-699-2296 | 125 Depot Street

Monday to Friday: 8 am — 4 pm

vi.johnsoncreek.wi.gov

Plan Commission: December 8 @ 5 pm

Committee of the Whole:

December 8 @ 5:30 pm

Board Meeting:

December 22 @ 5:30 pm

Johnson Creek Public Library

920-699-3741 | 125 Lincoln Street

www.johnsoncreeklibrary.org

Library Board Meeting:

December 16 @ 4 pm

LIBRARY HOURS:

Monday to Wednesday: 10 am — 5 pm

Thursday: 10 am — 7 pm

Friday: 10 am — 5 pm

Saturday: 9 am — 12 pm

Sunday: CLOSED

November 26: Close Early at 2 pm

November 27-29: Closed

JC FOOD PANTRY

129 N. Watertown St.

JohnsonCreekFoodPantry@gmail.com

Open Monday and Thursday from 10 am to 12 pm and every fourth Thursday of the month from 4 pm to 5pm.

DIAPER CLOSET

Penelope's Diaper Closet | 111 South Street

Open the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month from 1-6pm

penelopesclosetjc@gmail.com