

**M E M O**

**TO:** Ald. Marvin E. Pratt, Common Council President  
Ald. Robert G. Donovan

**FROM:** Ted Medhin and Jim Owczarski, Legislative Reference Bureau

**DATE:** March 6, 2002

**RE:** Menomonee Falls' Citizens' Budget Advisory Committee

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The following is in response to your request for information related to the Menomonee Falls' Citizens' Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC). According to Village President Joe Greco, the committee, now 15 years old, grew out of a taxpayers' revolt when, as he put it, the Village "got caught" after it used fund reserves to offset expenses. The tax increase that resulted in the following year, and the ensuing outcry, prompted him to involve citizens more directly in the budget-creation process. The CBAC was created, by resolution, with 6 members, each of whom is appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the Village Board. In the years since, he said he has tried to be as flexible as possible with the number of board members, amending the resolution as appropriate, and the membership has been as high as 8, but is currently at 7.

The task of the CBAC is to help create the village budget and oversee village spending throughout the year. Pursuant to Village ordinance, the budget for Menomonee Falls is prepared by the Village Manager in consultation with various department heads and then submitted to the Village Board. There it is first reviewed by the members of the General Government Committee before being submitted for final approval. The CBAC provides its own administrative support (minutes, etc.) but extraordinary expenses like mailings, surveys and studies are paid for by the Village on an as-needed basis.. The committee meets on a schedule largely determined by Mayor Greco, but which is intended to track the Village's budgetary process. For example, when a particular committee meets to review the Village's 5-year capital improvement program, the CBAC is also invited to attend and provide input – as a committee, not as individuals. When salaries are reviewed or the budget itself put together, the committee is likewise invited to attend. Mayor Greco insists that no budget has been approved since the creation of the CBAC without its assent. Members need not agree with every particular of the budget, but he believes there has always been a "consensus". One particular item of recent relevance is that no elected Village official has received a pay raise without the prior, explicit consent of the CBAC.

Mayor Greco did say that there has always been, and continues to be, a measure of staff resistance to the committee, apparently in the belief that the members are meddling or interfering with the process. He points out, however, that the Hamilton School Board has created a committee on the Menomonee Falls model which serves much the same function.

-- Attachments

LRB02121