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[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** Big wave of the California people coming over our house appreciated 200 grand in a year. We said we got brought in by it. And as long as we're brought in by it town and I'll fulfill what I want to do when I was a kid and become mayor. Okay. So that's what we did. Yeah, that's the fun things.

[00:00:17] **Speaker 2** That's one of the reverse. As you age coming back to Wisconsin, that's that's a rare story. Yeah. Normally be successful and then move to Arizona. Is that the order?

[00:00:27] **Speaker 1** Well, I was a storage auctioneer down there, so that put me out on the blacktop in 110 degrees all the time. Okay.

[00:00:34] **Speaker 2** See if it's all right. Can I move this new puddle?

[00:00:36] **Speaker 1** Yeah. Yeah, you can. You can take it out of here. I don't care. Do what you want to do. Except for drink it. No.

[00:00:42] **Speaker 2** No. Yeah. All right.

[00:00:44] **Speaker 1** I am ready whenever you are.

[00:00:45] **Speaker 2** All right. So were you in Storage Wars or anything like that before.

[00:00:48] **Speaker 1** We actually turned it down? Oh, really? Yeah, because I said I do. It's actually a TV show. Yeah, they base it on semi real.

[00:00:59] **Speaker 2** It's like all the reality shows.

[00:01:01] **Speaker 1** Yeah. Yeah, they. They see the units, so that way they find stuff and their buddies do there to do appraisals and yeah, when they're digging through it and they say, oh this mattress with hundred 50 bucks, there's not a mattress in any locker alive, it's worth 150 bucks. So there's a way we turn them down because we would have to lie. And that wasn't what we did. And we suffered the re the all the horror. We didn't suffer it. We realized all the fame and stuff from that, all that popularity because we sell on commission and our prices went from, you know, crappy lockers going for 20 bucks to crappy lockers going for $300. So increased our income about 15 times and we didn't have to be crooked. So we said, thank you, let them guys do it. And when we actually took over about half of their business because the people that own the storage places didn't like that they had people's trips and all around us.

[00:01:54] **Speaker 2** So anyways, so when did you move back to Wisconsin.

[00:01:58] **Speaker 1** To see June of two years ago. So. 20 over 21.

[00:02:03] **Speaker 2** Okay. And so you came back here and you're from here originally. So you knew you when you came back, you wanted to be mayor? Yes. What was that process like? And did you know what all was going to come with it?

[00:02:16] **Speaker 1** Well, the process was actually not real hard. I came back and very soon as we moved back in the June, we it took us about two months to find a house. We bought the house and within the city limits, my my network, my wife, I network is called Mayor. Mayor Jones and I proclaimed it from them. I told people I'm going to be the next mayor and and got on the ballot and then won it kind of kind of skimpily actually pretty close. Didn't put what I need to have is effort and down in Arizona I was in a lot of political stuff and I hate dirty politics. So I refused to do anything. I didn't I didn't try to cut my guy down or anything like that, that my opponent, I wanted to be positive all the time. Well, once you're mayor for six months, it's hard to be positive. No, I mean, it's it's it's it's okay. It's a B, it's different. I figured I could run it like my businesses. I had several businesses that run, so I figured I could run it like that. However, it's not even close. It's very slow. Um, however, we can't. There are there are ways to speed it up, and we've we've been doing that and, and we did some cracking of eggs right away. We had the reason on our side that we needed to put in a dissolution letter to the fire department. We did that, We formed a couple of ad hoc committees and we actually moved through that really quickly. We solved it within about two months and now we are in a situation where we are happy Fire district. Everybody is happy and we're working forward in a very positive manner. Then we will fire back up.

[00:04:02] **Speaker 2** Just yeah, go ahead. When you first got it. So I'm assuming it was April 22 that you won office.

[00:04:09] **Speaker 1** April 22, Yes.

[00:04:10] **Speaker 2** Okay. So did you know what the books looked like? Were you aware coming back to Wisconsin, how shared revenue for the locals had had declined over time? And what what was your impression when you got in as far as like what the financial or fiscal situation was?

[00:04:26] **Speaker 1** Yeah, well, I actually got into, um, I got appointed to the council with in like December of 21, and I got a good look at it. Then before that, I could never figure out why they didn't have certain services and they did have others. And, and just getting the newspaper and stuff. I own the newspaper while I still lived in Arizona. I would see things that are like, why can't they do this? What you have done when you get here and you look at the numbers, it's like, okay, well, I can see why you can't do it. And it took a little bit to. Figured I'm not to too long because I'm a numbers person, so it's pretty easy. But I don't know. I think that the overall looks at things were is instead of increasing revenue, they were all about cutting. And I am an expansionist, I guess you would call it. I believe in creating more income rather than cut services and stuff like that. That's why I'm fighting so hard for the shared revenue and grant writing and all those type of things that we need to do. Fletcher We just won a, um, we just went to a grant for the University of Wisconsin Extension and the Green County Development Corporation are going to work with our economic development and setting it up in a in a really nice way. We start that in the next month, if I may. And that's this month. Wow. So anyways, that's going to teach us how to get our get our people all together, teach us better, how to get developers to come in and find find new ways to keep them and and make them want to come here. When I first came here in 2017, I bought the church to make it into a bed and breakfast. It took me nine months to get a building permit. It was absolutely horrible, horrible, horrible. Nobody wanted I can't understand why anybody would would want to come here build at that time. Now we've got it. We've made it. So we have a DG Market coming in and we've actually taken it to the level of we will have them take care of us. As far as the Planning Commission. Well, I'm talking real bad there. Somebody walked inside, lost income, lost focus a little bit, but they have. We're willing to do special meetings. Just call it get them in there and get stuff moving down the road. DG Market is going to be building out here on the north east side of town, and that's a pretty big deal. It's going to be their first one in the state of Wisconsin. DG Markets will be flagship, so that that's pretty good. Cool. So we get that done.

[00:07:18] **Speaker 2** So when you talk about you said you had the paper, you could see some things you were questioning. Why didn't they have this? What what are some of the examples of things that you were wondering about why either there wasn't enough money for things or what was on the cutting block? Right.

[00:07:31] **Speaker 1** They kept getting less and less things that you could see it in the paper. You could see the the infighting between some of the ones that wanted this and one of that. The one that I guess I would have noticed was, oh, give me a second on that, because I'm old. I forget stuff now and that. 000 like code enforcement. We don't we have codes, but we don't have any way to enforce them. We have our building inspectors hired in to do that. I was kind of wondering why that was. Seems like you're leaving some money on the table, even though now I understand that you actually you're not supposed to be making any profit off of that department, which I understand that at the time I didn't. Yeah.

[00:08:23] **Speaker 2** There's just some ministerial things of how things are working. Yeah. So how would you describe the the Broadhead budget and their fiscal situation in the last year. I'm going to take me back to like last summer. You're going into the fall again and trying to figure out what the next budget's going to look like. Well, what was that situation?

[00:08:43] **Speaker 1** It was pretty contentious and that was part of that, the solution of the fire department. Late in the year, we were surprised to have the budget of the fire district go from around 450000 to 1.25 million. So $800,000. Our share of that was about 300 and some thousand dollars. And we our budget, looking at the numbers all the way down there, was just they kept it level for probably ten, 15 years. So you can imagine our budget was 3.4 million at the time. So 10% all of a sudden is off the table. One of the things that I don't agree with, but they did anyways, was they built this huge fund balance with extra funds that they collected from the taxpayer from all years and that kind of stuff. We had about $1,000,000 over what we were statutorily required to carry last year. If we wanted to have a balanced budget, we're going to have to cut about $330,000, 10% of the budget. We knew we had to pay the fire district. We had to pay the EMS. We have to pay all these all these public safety stuff. So it gets down to what do you cut and how we've we're going to cut the Parks and Rec. And we had I actually delayed the first four months of the salary in our budget because I didn't want to I didn't want to promise a person a job for four months. And then when the referendum fails, if it failed, then, by the way, you don't have a job anymore. So we went ahead and I kind of struck on the other. Okay, great. We're going to use the fund balance for one year, $330,000 we used out of the fund balance and some ARPA funds. We got a court to where we as a balanced budget didn't have a lot of cuts, in fact, that the public here heard the budget hearing. Nobody showed up. So the year before, they had people standing at the doors and everything else screaming and yelling because they were cutting. So I said, okay, we're going to we're going to give the people a choice. They can vote on it if they vote no. Then the next year we have to cut social programs. I don't want to. I love the pool. Like when I grew up here, we had a pool. I spent a lot of time there. I think it's good for the kids. It keeps them off the streets, keeps them out of trouble, keeps our police force a little less working. Because when I saw it, especially when I was a kid, if I didn't have something to do, I'd find something to do. And sometimes I wasn't on the right side of the law. So anyways, that's that's where we came from. And then we lost the, the referendum and that's when I could have just gave up and said, okay, guys, start shopping. Instead, what we did is we we got a new police chief. Now we're looking at different ways that we can keep all the services and yet run a more efficient. Our new chief has done a great job with getting that set up and get on that way. With the dissolution of the fire department in the re formation of our stuff, in that we believe that we'll probably be able to save some money on that side by the time we get done. We should hopefully save enough and, and then get enough increased revenue from the shared revenue program and that the we can not have major cuts next year. That's that's what we're aiming for. I don't I don't like cuts. Like I said, I want to get there. I warned the people what would happen if we didn't get it. They just made it a little hard, harder for us by not giving us the money, which that's probably a good thing because it makes us work and makes us look a little harder at stuff and making sure that we don't have waste. But I really don't think we do by the by the looks of everything.

[00:12:46] **Speaker 2** So let's go back to the dissolution process. Yes. Because part of what you were was that solely a negotiating tactic, a piece of leverage, or was that was that I actually.

[00:12:57] **Speaker 1** Told you I'd have to kill you? No, I just get. Oh, anything that you you do where you're cracking eggs and you're busting or changing stuff, you have to have a backup plan. So we did have a backup plan, and it would have been a very viable backup plan. However, our first thing was to sit down and say, how do we fix what we have? Because the it was very unpopular decision to do the dissolution. Facebook lit up, but it was mostly for people that were in the surrounding areas that it lit up. Now, this gives quite interesting some of the names I learned, names that I have never been called before, so that that's okay. But we it was we knew where we wanted to go. But if you got you have to sometimes get people to sit down and pay attention. They had been threatened with the solution before. I didn't know that until after we actually served them the paper of disillusion that they had been threatened before. I don't like I told them that. And they know that I didn't threaten that. I went in and I told them, Here's your choice. If you pass that budget, we have no choice but to do a dissolution because it's a lot of money and we don't have in our budget. And it was so late in the year we couldn't get the referendum in until after the next year. Even so, I guess you could call it a, a, a tactic or whatever, but it's one that's open to just about anybody. You got to get attention and sit down. And the really good thing that we did is normally in these type of things, you have the city council on one side, you've got the fire, the rural fire on the other side, and then you've got 16 people or 11 people plus the two others wrestling back and forth to try to figure out something. You'll never get a consensus. So we had the the council agreed that myself and one of the aldermen would negotiate with the rural. They would have their chairman of the rural and their one of their guys. And we sat down and with the lawyers present on both sides and we worked it out and we worked it out real quick. We told them that, here's the deal. We we need time to do referendum stuff like that. Cities and towns run totally different when it comes to referendums and stuff like that. They basically just get a per a public notice in and 15 days later they everybody was at the meeting. The electors, whoever is there is an elector and they buy a show of hands, Hey, can we raise taxes this month much? And they were going between 80 and 100% increase in their levy. And they they had all theirs done in a matter of three weeks. We couldn't even have one until April of the next year or so. That was that was the biggest thing that we just had to make sure everybody understood. And we also took the At-Large position that we had on the board and we moved the mayor into that spot. So that way we've got three relevant officials. We got the mayor and two councilmen, so we don't have quorum and they have their three township guys and we're all elected officials. So we know what the money challenges are and we know what the process is. Whereas our a large person comes in and says, Oh, that'd be nice to have that, and they vote for it, even though it's not feasible money wise.

[00:16:20] **Speaker 2** So what was the resolution? Is it just they're spending less overall? Is this a shift away from or a delay to the paid on call?

[00:16:29] **Speaker 1** No, actually, I'm I'm in favor of the paid on call. I hope we get that and it moves forward. They're doing it with the EMS already because they're not ours is not it? EMS is not involved right now. They are a complementary business that's next door, but it's not under the same umbrella when they do that. What happened is, is they decided they were going to have all full time guys to go to a full time company. And the EMS with their board member, Derek Pino, was the one who really probably has done a lot of work on it is working on they are I think it's either a paid on premise or a paid on call, and now they're really starting to raise their level of service, the response times and their ability to get it out the door. And that's really good. Well, that's the same thing that they're probably going to be trying with the fire department, which costs a lot less than six full time guys. I mean, that's it. And you still maintain a whole force of volunteers. So I think that I like that and that it's automatically a lesser budget. And that's that's important. I think it was you know, it has to pass. So having three that are well versed on the city side, three well versed on the other side, there's no tie. I mean, it can be a tie, but that means there is no resolution. So therefore we do a little bit of our in negotiating back and forth, give and take. We know what we can afford to pay. They kind of got an idea, too. And it's good communication that that the whole thing fostered better communication between the two which brought in fire district has always been a good district too. There is nothing wrong with the district, just that volunteerism has gone down and they seem like. There is a total shift instead of maybe a halfway point. And I think that's where we're at now and that we're going to be a very strong department and everything's going to be good and we're going to be at a place where it gives us the services we need at a reasonable cost to the taxpayers.

[00:18:40] **Speaker 2** So just to make sure I understand the proposal that would have increased over $2 million was to go and hire full time firefighters. And the halfway point now is to have hopefully some paid on premise or don't call, but keep the main corps volunteer.

[00:18:56] **Speaker 1** Right. It still is still in works and we do have paid on premises started already and they're starting to starting to get that gone. Now, when we were going through the the talks of the merger and stuff like that, the dissolution put a stop to everything. So they lost about 2 to 3 months of working on stuff. We'll see how it goes. It's been a couple of months now that we've been out of the dissolution order and yeah, it should be good. I don't know for sure. You just got to weigh it out. But I really have faith in the people that are running it, and I think that all of us together on standing up for each other and doing stuff, we'll get it done.

[00:19:43] **Speaker 2** So the last meeting that we were at, people read the minutes and the minutes were from that meeting for the dissolution meeting, and it was pretty quiet in there for quite a while. What what was the mood what was that like for you to sit there and like for people to realize that the last time everyone was in that room that the dissolution was a real possibility?

[00:20:01] **Speaker 1** Yeah, I think by that time, because that was one where I was already out. I mean, I went to see, oh, the last time, the minutes that we did that time was when the EMS and the fire department fighters got together. So I was actually in like December. Since that time we had to solve the dissolution part and stuff like that. They they have concerns because the way that they call it a merger, but really once a501c3 what they do is they donate equipment to the fire department and the the stuff they donate their operations to the fire department. It's not really a merger because they're going to keep their own identity as a5013 CS so they can raise money for the fire district and do other things that they would like to do. So they want some. The reality is in the fire district, if we walk away, it's a broader we get about 50% of the assets. They don't want to donate $1,000,000 worth of assets and have us go disillusion and pull it, which I understand completely. And we're going to be working on wording in our in our agreement that causes that type of a hostile dissolution to be harder to do and more costly to make it. So you really don't want to do it. So you better be communicating type of thing. I look forward to that, you know, making it so it's nobody will ever have to use that again. I think we've we've pretty much done what we need to do as far as coming to an understanding now since they started their paid peduncle, I guess what's called their paid on call and paying a little bit more and paying so much for a run and stuff like that, they're actually up to like 97% answering all the calls and stuff. And I really like that. And I with we so far where we answer all the calls on the fireside. But it is getting tight. You know, it's not as fast as we'd like sometimes, but it's still been really good and they just want to get ahead of it. And I just, you know, I think that everything's gonna work out.

[00:22:19] **Speaker 2** So we met at the Joint Finance hearing. Yeah. What was your goal of going there to testify? It was you. You sat there all day long?

[00:22:28] **Speaker 1** Yeah. Yeah, I waited. Oh, I got my 2 minutes. 2 minutes. Basically. The League of Municipalities, when I became mayor, I started going to the mayor conferences and stuff like that. And I talked with the other other lobby. They have other lobbyist groups and all the lobbyist groups got together so that way they could all have the same message to take to legislature and it's fixture revenue at the whole thing. I'm pretty good at processes and explaining mathematics and that kind of stuff. However, you would think that a joint Finance committee probably has a pretty good grasp of the mechanics of the bill, and I know that some of the other mayors talked about the mechanics and how that would work. I my goal was to tell them, without this, this is what's going to happen. We're going to have to close our. Or our police department is getting absolutely ravaged by other departments, taking our people because we can't pay them enough. You know, QuikTrip is taking people away from us because we can't pay them enough. So this is necessary for us to happen just for our city to function and just kind of put a a a personal spin on it at the legislative level. Because if they can.

[00:23:47] **Speaker 2** See.

[00:23:48] **Speaker 1** Something tangible that they can understand, here's the here's what's happening out there. Hopefully that would make them work harder to to make it go. So my goal was to go out there and tell them our story.

[00:24:03] **Speaker 2** Do you feel like that they were still listening at that point of the day?

[00:24:06] **Speaker 1** At first, the couple of them had their head down and then I said, Well, you know, since I'm a little different than the other mayors, as you can probably tell, my suit didn't fit. So I'm wearing my bib overalls for you. And then everybody looked up and had smiles on her. I had to get their attention and that was the first thing I did. And then I talked to them. And and you can tell I contact pretty well when you're standing in front of a bunch of them. And the whole time I was watching them and I mentioned the anti-inflation factor just because nobody else had at that time. And I tell them some I'm writing it down and one looking at and they were they were paying real attention at 4:00 in the afternoon when they started out at ten. To me, that was that was good. But I did do something to get their attention. And but that's what you have to do. And I really I appreciated their attention. We also Monday night, we had another one in front of the Democratic part of the Joint Finance Committee and other Democratic leaders in the legislature. And I waited and waited for that, too. It was quite a while. It was nearly as long as probably about 90 minutes waiting and then get my 2 minutes. And when it happened, then they would put up the A people that were there up on the screen right in front of you. And it was very easy to see their reactions. So I need to get a break here. Yeah. I'm probably not the stuff to drink beer jokes.

[00:25:39] **Speaker 2** But that's okay. So in terms of the proposal that's come out, yes, you've had a chance to hear some analysis, right? A chance to take a look at what it means. What's the picture look, the budget picture look like for Broadhead now, assuming this becomes law, but I mean, this proposal in mind, what would that mean here?

[00:25:57] **Speaker 1** Right. Well, an extra $84,000 plus the other reorganization we have, and that the possibility of getting more because they held the the one time ones which I don't like one time ones, but I'll take them because that's what you need to have. I think at the very least we can delay some of the things for for a while down the road. We'll see how it all pans out. There's also a provision in there where they're going to get rid of the property tax and having a first like take the personal property tax. Yeah, that's that's kind of a pain because we're sending out bills to people that are getting a a dollar do doesn't take much to figure out that up a letter with having somebody write it package it put stamp on it it's another thing probably cost you almost that to send out they're going to replace it with a flat. Okay. Here's what your cities get. This is what this is like the ten year average here. There's each year you don't have to collect. You don't have to to send letters out to them to get them. They have them fill out their little papers. That's going to help. I think by the time we get finished, or at least we can at least build a attitude in the city that we are doing all the things that we need to do and doing right things and things are moving in the right direction. And perhaps later on down the road we can revisit a referendum later and it'll be looked as favorable because they'll look at and see the the work that we did do, which is great. So it's going to be very, very good. It's going to help with the budget process and hopefully keep people's attitudes proper.

[00:27:41] **Speaker 2** But even with your 11.6% increase that's been proposed, that 84,000 doesn't fix a 300,000 or $4,000 budget gaps. I mean, that doesn't solve all the issues.

[00:27:53] **Speaker 1** No, it doesn't. But it's a start. And that's you got to take a little victories that along with oh, like I said, the police is going to be a lot more efficient. The fire district is will become more efficient budget wise. Those are things that that people won't notice, but they will notice that they still have the pool the most this this year. In fact, I we had a meeting Monday last week. I asked the park and recs director I said pools about an $80,000 drain. Tell me, can we be without it this year? And that did not go over well when I hit Facebook, that's for sure. But we looked at it and basically 30,000 of it, we've already paid to have that opening up. And you know, all the things you do to get prep. So this year it's going to going to happen anyway. We're going to do it. It's in the budget. Let's go ahead and do it. But next year we have to really think about it and go from there. And maybe it'll be will this'll all kick up some new revenue sources. I think that we have been under utilizing grants and this is got people I told the council leases instead of looking at the budget now which we the first thing I want to do is I want to give my department heads all the time up until July to look at their budget, come to us when we get done and we'll put it all together. We don't have to cut it. If it's already there, we'll just say, okay, this looks good. Make it nice and easy. However, if they don't get the job done, then we can start looking then. But it doesn't do any good to look before then in that. In the meantime I watch them out looking for grants, looking for money sources. How can we do it more? Our fee schedules are very antiquated. A lot of our services we charge for at the city level don't cover the cost of the service, so we have to work on that, make it more of a use tax and not rely on our property taxes. Nobody should be penalized for for being owning property by paying an unfair share of the operating expense of the city. So those are things that we we're looking at and trying to get done. And I think that of course, maybe I'm Mr. Optimistic, but that's that's the way I'd prefer to look at stuff.

[00:30:28] **Speaker 2** So the pool's saved for this year. But yes, that there is that there is. A lot. There are decades where every school district in Wisconsin would threaten to cut sports if the budget if the referendum didn't pass. The money would come through is the pool. That version is like the noticeable thing that people actually do care about. Even if they don't mean you can't. Threatened to cut the streets department to the.

[00:30:51] **Speaker 1** Right where you can't. I mean you have government things that say there is no government requirement to have a pool. So it's a very extra thing. Now the other part, the Park Parks and Rec programs there, they actually generate income a little bit, you know, so they cover their costs anyway. So they know there is no outside cost. Cutting down would not help our budget. So we have that that we can we can keep. It's just getting there's not a lot of other things to cut anymore is those things. I mean you can cut a library to a certain point, but then the county says, no, you got to finance this part or we're going to take the money from you anyways, which is really kind of interesting to learn about. And I didn't know that's kind of a thing. And we have a new library director who I'm very happy in the direction he's going. He is opening it up to more programs, getting more programs for the kids because a library without programs can be replaced by this. You can look up anything in the world on this. Why would you go to the library unless there's programs and stuff that you can interact with? So I thought that was very important. And the new director is really all about programs and things like that and doing it in a budget efficient manner. And we have a good board for the library. So those are things that I don't want to cut. And, you know, I don't want to cut anything but. When it comes to the pool, and it's an $80,000 drain that can be fixed by not opening it. And if we're $80,000 short on the budget, which do I do? Do I get rid of some police officers? Do I get rid of the pool? In my mind, the pool would go first because my officers are needed.

[00:32:46] **Speaker 2** So when we were when you were in that phase leading up to the referendum in April, were you campaigning for it? Were was there any kind of movement to get people invested in it to understand what they were voting for?

[00:32:59] **Speaker 1** Yes, we had several several meetings where we invited the people. We had our first meeting. So we had we had like five, ten people at each meeting. One of them we ended up with like 30 people. And and we explained and most of the people that left the left, the area, when we finished explaining it were, yeah, okay, we understand why we're then we know basically in the last ten years I show McGrath that, okay, we're $400,000 behind inflation now like that, but our budget is actually lower same every year. And then we added 350,000. We operated at $350,000 budget deficit. How do you how do you how do you want to help us get there? We don't have a choice. It was a it was a glo. It was within 100 votes of passing, but it didn't, which I totally understand. The challenge that we had is the year before the city did a reevaluation. The city had not done a revaluation for 11 years. House prices have doubled. Easy. What happens? All these people are getting this bigger piece of the pie. At the same time last year, the school passed a $400,000 referendum. So I'm telling them, okay, here's the deal. If you look at your taxes in a vacuum, if the overall our whole city went up by 42%. So if you are going up, if your taxes went up, your assessment went up by over 42%, then you can expect a small increase in your taxes. If it's below 42%, expect that your piece of the pie is going to be smaller. That got blown right out of the water with with the revaluation. But besides the revaluation, put that 400,000 to school district because we were part of a bigger pie and we increased 42%, which made us a huge piece of that pie. And our school taxes went up to two, four, $500 a property based on just, just that part. And people didn't understand that. And then we had a lot of people that their taxes went up $1,000 a year on mine with the properties I own, I had about a $10,000 increase in my taxes. It's not for added benefits either, because I don't use some of the services for funding. I'd still voted for it. We railed for it. We explained to people and they thought that that extra $3,000 they paid went to the city. They didn't understand that the whole pie is still the whole pie. We still collected $2 million in taxes from them. However, the part they paid was bigger and other places were smaller, and especially in the school district, because all the other ones around didn't revaluate. So it just we had that to fight with, too. It was a it was an uphill battle. I was surprised. Became as close as we did for you.

[00:35:59] **Speaker 2** One of the things that struck me is looking at the result is that this area went for Janet Porter sequence and almost by a similar margin defeat of the referendum. Mm hmm. And you would almost expect that to be flip flop, that people that would be more likely to support the liberal in the Supreme Court race, you think would be slightly more likely to vote in favor of a referendum for city services? Am I reading that wrong?

[00:36:26] **Speaker 1** I the the thing that would skew that is everybody's thoughts or feelings about the abortion issue. That was 100% of every every commercial you saw. That was the whole thing. One guy was a was a person who hated called people, murderers and all kind of guy. They were pretty proud of that. And the people that allowed abortion were compassionate things like this. It was that was just clever marketing.

[00:36:54] **Speaker 2** So you don't think that the two win in line, that there was a big enough difference of people where they were guess the split ticket in the sense of they were looking at those two line items separately?

[00:37:04] **Speaker 1** Yes, I believe so. The probably the ones that voted for the Supreme Court justice. I think if you look at the the total votes, I don't think they even got close to 800 total votes that were cast in the judge race, whereas, in fact, our our city council vote. Only 500 people voted for city council members out of 880. The rest of them just didn't even bother that they were voting straight for the. The referendum had 880. Yeah, I don't think so. I think it was their personal experience of having to pay out an extra thousand dollars a year on taxes or or $50 a month or whatever it is when you're on a fixed income. Our our population is is very fixed income orientated. That's that's just our demographics where we're at with.

[00:37:57] **Speaker 2** Inflation and everything else. Yes. I mean, you can understand why people said no.

[00:38:01] **Speaker 1** I totally respect their decision. I Denver, I told them, whatever you do, here's the deal. If you vote no, then I will have to do this or we will have to do this. And I'd like I said, I don't make threats and they they labeled me the the mayor that cried wolf because we can get by. Well, what we're gonna do is we're going to prove we can get by, but it's because we're getting our butts out there and we're working hard to find more money. Not that we're trying to cut everything in sight. And if that if I've been called worse than than that. So I have no challenge with that myself.

[00:38:37] **Speaker 2** One other thing that I want to look at it, especially with the numbers coming from joint Finance in this new proposal, is the other rural townships that are part of the fire district saw dramatic percentage increases and some pretty solid real number increases compared to their budgets. Will that change or should that change the calculation of how much they be able to contribute to the fire district? No.

[00:39:01] **Speaker 1** No, that's not even a consideration.

[00:39:03] **Speaker 2** And you can still pitch in a little more.

[00:39:05] **Speaker 1** No, it's based on the it'll make it easier for them, which is fine. That's that's no problem. Because then they can start working on some of the roads and stuff with their other money. They have just to townships tend to have roads and fire protection. Those are public safety, I guess you would call it. That's that's it. They don't really have the departments that we have, the extra things, the libraries and stuff like that. So they have been getting by with $16,000 a year, $18,000 a year, and now they're going to get $75,000 a year. 85,000 I. Hey, great. Let's let's have it, have it, whatever we get. So it's no longer sitting up in Madison in the in the. Instead of revenue hoarding like they've been doing and revenue sharing that that that's fine by me because they actually the people that live out there they actually do a lot of their shopping here they come into town here they spend money here and they use our services and and pay our fees and stuff like that. So I have no challenge with that whatsoever. I like to have better roads out in the country when I'm driving around and stuff. So to me, as long as it's not sitting in the sitting in Madison and it's down here working, I'm good, but I wouldn't be jealous of it.

[00:40:22] **Speaker 2** Well, part of the other element of this is that, you know, Milwaukee and Milwaukee County have their own separate proposals involved with all this. And there are some people that are up in arms about who gets what. And, you know, rural areas percentagewise are getting a big hall. And some you know, maybe rural cities aren't actually doing as well because you're a city. So your formula almost gets you treated like a bigger city. So, you know, as it seems in some cases, you might almost be better off being a rural village than a rural city in some capacity.

[00:40:54] **Speaker 1** So they set up the things and it's it's municipalities under 5000 and they didn't actually put whether it was a village, city or town, it doesn't really matter. It's it's your population wise. We fall in that sometimes it's a double edged sword where too big to be treated like the townships and we're too small to be treated like Beloit and Janesville. That's fine. We have a different lifestyle than all of them, and that's what we we like. I would hate it if they treated everybody the same as far as Milwaukee and stuff like that. They need to be on their own because the actual reality of bailing out a city of a million people or whatever their population is from bankruptcy or insolvency, that will eat up a whole bunch of money in our in our taxes that we put in, and we'll get no help on that. So taking it upfront and preventing it from going bankrupt is a smarter play than waiting for it to go bankrupt and repairing it.

[00:41:57] **Speaker 2** What would you say to people in this area, your constituents who may read the full story and then go, Oh, you know, I'm glad we're getting something, but boy, it's a shame that all that money is going to go anywhere else. I mean, judging and comparing all the different the townships versus the cities, small versus big.

[00:42:15] **Speaker 1** Yeah, I think they need to be thankful for what they get. I mean, that's that's the whole works. Reality is, if you look at it, we're getting $800,000. Dictator's not even getting 100,000. Well, I don't know if there's that big of a difference in population. So are we getting more per capita? I don't I didn't study that. I just think that we've been getting it for a while more than they have, and they've been growing. We've been growing very slow that you just got to figure it's going to equalize sooner or later anyways. So I don't mathematically it's it's not a it's not a challenge to me. I would have liked to have what they had as our first estimate, but we didn't get it. But we're getting something and it's going to help.

[00:43:06] **Speaker 2** So one of the other elements of this bill includes money for looking at mergers or cooperative services. You guys are already talking about merging with EMC or doing something. So I'm assuming that could potentially fall under there. And you also had a public hearing. Well, after Bill had a hearing where some of you went to to look at and listen. Are those real possibilities? I mean, certainly EMC is something you're looking at, but, you know, could that money on the table be enough to put something over the edge, over the finish line?

[00:43:34] **Speaker 1** That I would. I think there's some differing ways of looking at stuff right now. And I don't know who's right or who's wrong. Sometimes it works. For some, sometimes it doesn't. I offered went through a full time fire department fire district, and the fire district kind of broke up over it. So that's their dynamic that they have to try to figure out. They've got they were also very specific in the wording of their referendum. They said they were going to give six positions full time. So they have to deliver six positions full time in order to use that money. Well, that's not going to happen because they can't get that and they're not getting that money because the other part of it is falling off. I think Avon, if I remember or not, Avon of Newark was like 28% of the fire district as 28% of the money that's gone now or will be gone soon. There they have the they have the still the mindset even from that meeting is that they need to have a full time staff, full time thing. And ours is now going towards paid on premise, keep a bunch of volunteers and stuff like this. So there's a difference in philosophy and I don't know if that bridge can be capped. So I can't say that that I don't think it's money that's going to solve that. I think it's a difference of philosophy.

[00:44:59] **Speaker 2** Do you think that's the kind of thing that'll end up playing out in a lot of communities across the state? Or do you think at least the possibility of some money from the state being available may look may encourage some places to explore something that in the past they might not have talked about?

[00:45:13] **Speaker 1** Oh, I think so, yeah. I mean, money is a motivating factor for a lot of things. I like creativity. I have no problem looking at stop. I'm trying to figure out how to make it better. The way you challenge we have is trying to figure out which program to apply for, to get the proper, you know, Band-Aid for the problem, which I don't even want a Band-Aid. What's the proper cure for the problem? But it's it's hard to say. Every time I think I've got it figured out, I get surprised. So I really just keep plugging along, doing the best that I can do for the city that elected me a mayor. And hopefully we can come up with cooperation and collaboration with other communities on things that we need to collaborate on to help us all get through everything we need to get through.

[00:46:06] **Speaker 2** Is there any other obvious category besides EMS or fire that would be a possibility for some sort of collaboration?

[00:46:15] **Speaker 1** Just about any of them, I guess you could. I guess you could share building inspectors. You could do at almost any level. You could share public works stuff with the water and light. You could do water and light stuff for the other. We there's I think I haven't read it totally enough to know exactly what the possibilities are just to myself. Any any place you can get somebody with a like philosophy, you can cooperate. Just finding the person with the like philosophy and and the right the right timing. And that would be the best thing that you can hope for.

[00:46:51] **Speaker 2** But in reality, it's really only your neighbors that I mean, it's not like you're going to talk to someone over in Grant County. No, no. I mean, it's going to be within 10 to 15 miles.

[00:47:00] **Speaker 1** It has to be. Yeah. Yeah. The only challenge and it's not a huge challenge with with doing a lot with or Fruitvale or out in those areas there is the of we are county lines right here. I mean nine blocks that way is what county we're in Green county there have different rules. It's not a huge though you can go back and forth. The the duplexes that we have for senior citizens is actually in Rock County but it's city of brought it or the dollar DG market's going in is actually city of Broadway but it's also Rock County so it's not a it's not impossible. Situation is just makes it a little bit more difficult. But I said, like right there you got two people with the same philosophy. And until either we figure out that they're on call doesn't work or they figure out that they just don't have a hope of of doing full time until we get closer to center. I think that that no amount of money can change that.

[00:48:02] **Speaker 2** But you hope to be able to get some money for any merger you might do with EMS.

[00:48:07] **Speaker 1** If it qualifies. I don't know why we wouldn't.

[00:48:11] **Speaker 2** Is that might be lawyer fees or actually.

[00:48:14] **Speaker 1** It's it's kind of I haven't looked that hard into it to be. I can't speak intelligently on it right now. I just know that that's what they said was available. I was listening mostly to the shared revenue part of it. But then then I introduced the other two pieces and they actually gleaned over that pretty fast in in the meeting. Um, let's see, tomorrow I'm going to be spending the day up in Madison for the League of the League of Municipalities. Um, I guess they used to call lobby day type of thing. They call it something else now, but I'm going to go up there and listen and learn as much as I can about any program and try to get that all figured out. And then on the 17th and 18th, we have one up in Wisconsin Dells with our insurance company, which is sponsored by the League of Nations, kind of telling us all this stuff that they can do. Our insurance company this year and this is one place where we actually did well. We saved $28,000 on our insurance premiums this coming year by switching companies. Plus we also were reimbursed for some of the services we had already paid for. We were paying separate different things with the police department. There are some of those that we got rebates on at the end of the year. We get a rebate on based on our claims, the claims of the whole section, so we get part of that back. I guess they got a profit sharing, but that's that's all we get and that'll be a good meeting because there will be a lot of a lot of people and, and we are getting more and more mayor summits or we get together in a roundtable. Those have been really helpful for me to try to learn the difference between running my own companies and and getting up there to running running a city.

[00:50:04] **Speaker 2** So you said that you first ran for mayor at age 18. Yep. Is this what you thought it would be back then?

[00:50:11] **Speaker 1** Back then. I did it because I was full of myself as a young kid and I thought, Now I'm going to do this. There's four candidates and I got second place. But my campaign car was a 1971 Buick Le Saber that I had painted with exterior or interior house paint.

[00:50:30] **Speaker 2** Paint.

[00:50:31] **Speaker 1** And put black graffiti down the sides of it. And my campaign was to drive around the streets of Broadway in the heart and vote for Daisy. So there's probably a reason I didn't win that at this level of maturity, wasn't there? So no problem. No, But that that was that was what we did back then. And and.

[00:50:48] **Speaker 2** With that 18 year old have threatened to shut the pool down.

[00:50:53] **Speaker 1** And. No, probably not. I was probably still there wearing little Mac hockey trophies, so you never know. But yeah, I back then, yeah, I was I was actually I had my own business when I was 12 years old and it started going from there. So I've always had businesses and I've always been entrepreneurial like. So I probably would have tried to try to run the city like a business and I would have been shut down real quick, didn't it? Didn't I didn't get I wasn't mature enough to handle it, looking back, but hey, it was something to do. Um.

[00:51:25] **Speaker 2** So I've seen some places online that they put the casing in quotation marks. Is that more of the Grateful Dead Casey or that that kind of Casey Jones is that match the the the outfit?

[00:51:38] **Speaker 1** Oh, no, no, no, no, no. The outfit is you know, we're farmers around here. The outfit is is that my body shape doesn't allow me to. If I were a belt and I moved the wrong way, my pants dropped. So that's at least keeps my pants up. It's more comfortable than suspenders.

[00:51:53] **Speaker 2** I wasn't sure if it was the train engineer from Casey Jones.

[00:51:55] **Speaker 1** Well, Casey Jones is my real name is Edward Jones. And my mom in them, they knew me, Casey, before I was born, and it was probably because of that. So Casey Jones has always been I've had the engineer staff traveled to the Casey Jones Museum, done all that. So I do play on it, but it's not it's not an identity thing or anything like that, that we have four generations of Edward Joneses in our family and we all have different middle names, and none of us are called Edward. So it's it's just one of them weird things a family does. Oh.

[00:52:29] **Speaker 2** Okay.