

## The Minimum Wage: Initiative Is Needed, Not Legislation

Scott Liddicoat, BCTA Vice President

Politicians pushing for minimum wage increases should take real initiative instead.

Worker productivity doesn't increase from raising the minimum wage. But the cost of doing business increases, so prices increase instead. You don't have to interview a business owner or economist to figure this out. Angry consumers are making this clear as they endure, or walk away from, the resulting price increases. It's hard to claim that increased prices for everyone—especially the poor—is a good thing.

Many low wage workers and working poor fear a minimum wage increase, and for good reason. Minimum wage increases normally result in employee layoffs, fewer shifts, and shorter hours. Why? In an effort to absorb the increased cost, employers reduce services, cut hours of operation, automate, and "streamline" their workforce. Fewer customers willing to pay higher prices usually means fewer workers are needed. And finally, business closures can result from raising the minimum wage. This is especially true of small businesses that have no place to absorb the added cost. It's hard to claim that unemployment is good for low wage workers and the working poor.

Some talkers make the silly claim that raising the minimum wage does not affect prices or unemployment. If not, why are they only

proposing \$15/hour as their rate? Why not \$150/hour? Or \$1500? We can have as much price inflation and unemployment as their wild imaginations will allow.

Politicians should stop pushing for destructive minimum wage increases. Instead it's time for them to start businesses with the same—or better—products and prices as the fast food, big box, and small businesses they dislike. Then they can prove with their own money and effort that "minimum wage increases don't increase costs." Or, "everyone should be paid a living wage." Or whatever the latest trendy mantra is this week.

If they can run their own businesses the way they want everyone else to run theirs—and stay above water—employees and consumers will flock to their doors. More poor people will have jobs and they'll be wealthier, too. Prices and unemployment will drop. Everyone will be better off.

No legislation is needed. Talkers just have to get to work...and prove up.

*Scott*

### October Meeting Notes

**OCTOBER CORRECTION:** In item 5 of the October meeting notes, the statement “The GB Assessors office declined our offer to work with them concerning improvements to their website”, was a misunderstanding. Upon further discussion the office is open to any suggestions that may help property owners better understand the assessment process and steps they can take if they are concerned about the accuracy of their assessment.

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### December Meeting Notes

Guest Speaker: Andre Jacque

Today’s speaker was State Senator Andre Jacque. Senator Jacque noted there has been a lot of recent activity in Madison as legislators are working to get their bills passed before the projected recess at the end of February. Despite that, there have been very few bills that have made it to votes in both houses. The Senator contrasted this to last session where he had 25 bills signed into law. Highlights of this session include repeal of the personal property tax, and income tax cuts in the budget which were later vetoed. Senator Jacque is proposing eliminating the sales tax on utilities year-round rather than just in the winter to provide broad based tax relief. Three major cases will be argued at the Supreme Court: Redistricting, Act 10, and School Choice. The Governor has also sued the legislature over traditional powers like the Joint Committee for Review of Administrative rules, which would enable the Executive branch to create laws through administrative rules and guidance documents, bypassing the legislature. The Senator further reported on the agreement with the UW system concerning DEI, professional licensing, surplus of Federal aid funds, the Transportation Fund, the excess state building footprint, and simply the lack of support for cutting spending. The Senator opposed the Milwaukee bailout, the Brewer Stadium bailout, and the Omnibus

Liquor Bill. Several BCTA members expressed concern to the Senator about the lack of action on the Elections Board and their violation of state laws.

Business items: Vice President Liddicoat shared a handout he created to educate citizens in the various voting methods available to us. This was part of an effort to maximize voter turnout in our elections. Several suggestions were made concerning how to best distribute these. A motion was unanimously passed to allocate up to \$1300 to print 10,000 copies and the Executive Committee was directed to create and execute a distribution plan, including a copy in the January issue of the Tax Times. There was active discussion about the property assessment process and methods and opportunities to challenge your assessment. A concern was noted about how many property owners do not know how they can challenge their assessment. No action was taken. Future speakers/topics being considered include the Brown County Sustainability Commission, the East River Collaborative, Green Bay Metro Fire Chief, and the Green Bay Correctional Institute future.

Committee/other reports: Director Parins shared information about discussions across the state to consider creation of local Transportation Utilities to pay for road maintenance. Secretary Goldhahn updated the group on proposed referendums in the De Pere and Green Bay School districts. De Pere is considering \$4.75M for 5 years for technology upgrades and security in April. This would be followed by \$22M over 20 years for maintenance in November and another referendum in April 2026 to build a new high school. Green Bay is considering \$150M in November for a new elementary school, renovations, maintenance, and security upgrades.

Meeting Notes by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary

## January Meeting Notes

Guest Speaker: Kari Hagenow

Today's speaker was Kari Hagenow of the Nature Conservancy, one of the largest nonprofit conservation organizations in the world. Kari is the Northeast WI Conservation Coordinator. Her subject was the East River Resilience Project which is intended to improve flood resilience in the East River. Her presentation was very detailed and thorough. The main takeaways are that this is a very complex issue, involving public and private lands, both rural and urban, throughout the entire watershed. Positive action in one segment could negatively impact another, so it requires a wholistic and cooperative approach. Multiple organizations, both public and private, are involved in funding and addressing solutions. These include, but not limited to: eight watershed municipalities, the Nature Conservancy, the UW Sea Grant Institute, NEW Water, WI Coastal Management Program, NOAH, Lake MI Fund, National Fish & Wildlife Service, Brown County Port & Resource Recovery and Land & Water Conservation Dept, Fox River NDA, Army Corp of Engineers, FEMA, ARPA funds, DNR, Ducks Unlimited, and many other private entities. All told, the East River Collaborative Partnership has over 200 stakeholders. They want the ultimate solution to be nature based and not only control flooding, but provide productive agricultural, business, and recreational use of the watershed.

Business items: Vice President Liddicoat requested assistance from members in attendance to distribute the "How to Vote" brochures. Suggested locations included city, village, and town halls, libraries, political party headquarters, churches, businesses, and any other locations with significant traffic. A letter is also going out to all members asking for help. These will be distributed free as a public service. It was noted that if a candidate for office requested copies, we could make them available at cost so it would not be considered an endorsement or campaign contribution. VP Liddicoat also updated the



Kari Hagenow presents on the East River

group on his recent testimony in Madison against "Rank Choice" voting. He made it clear he was speaking as a private citizen, not representing the BCTA as we have not taken a position on the concept. It was discussed that we should do further research on the matter and establish a position in the future, as this appears to be moving very fast. President Schwalbach confirmed that Seth Hoffmeister, Chair of the Green Bay Sustainability Commission would be our February speaker, and Matthew Knott, Green Bay Metro Fire Chief would present in March. It was discussed whether we should have a standing committee on property taxes but decided that would be redundant to our County & Local committee. Director Verheyden was recommended to lead any future efforts on this subject based on his past roles and experience.

Committee/other reports: President Schwalbach reported that there has been a recent flurry of bills in the state legislature with authors trying to get them passed before the end of this session. Many them are election related. A recent count noted that 86 bills had been passed. Director Heidel reported on news that a WI Supreme Court challenge over Act 10 was mounting, with the WI Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL) working to oppose that challenge. It was noted this would be a major taxpayer issue and we should consult with WILL to better understand their approach in the event we are asked to be involved.

Meeting Notes by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary

### Monthly Meetings @ The Village Grille

Monthly meetings are held at **The Village Grille, corner of Hoffman and East River Drive**, Allouez. The location has no stairs or steps, convenient parking, and a room to better accommodate speakers and conversation. There will be three selections from which to choose lunch - each one will be priced at **\$15 (includes tax and tip)**. Lunch is at 12:00 noon with monthly speakers presenting.

### SUPPORT THE BCTA

New Members Welcome

[www.BCTaxpayers.com](http://www.BCTaxpayers.com)

The Brown County Taxpayers Association is a local group working to bring information and awareness to issues that affect tax policy or impose regulatory burdens.

# The TAX TIMES

Brown County Taxpayers Association  
P. O. Box 684  
Green Bay, WI 54305-0684

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### Meeting Location

**The Village Grille, Allouez**

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## **BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.**

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**Thursday - Mar 21, 2024** BCTA Monthly Meeting.  
12:00 at The Village Grille, Allouez  
**Chief Knott, Green Bay Metro Fire**

**Tuesday - Apr 2, 2024** Spring Elections

**Thursday - Apr 18, 2024** BCTA Monthly Meeting.  
12:00 at The Village Grille, Allouez  
**James Rafter, Allouez Village President**

BCTA monthly meetings are held the Third Thursday of each month, 12:00 Noon, at , at The Village Grille, Allouez.

Meetings are open to the public. BCTA Members, their guests and other interested parties are cordially invited to attend and participate in our open discussions.

**COST: \$15.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.**  
**Call Tom Sladek – 499-7701 for information or to leave message.**

Mar - Apr 2024



[www.BCTAxpayers.com](http://www.BCTAxpayers.com)

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