

Forgive and Regret?

Tom Sladek, BCTA Treasurer

The story begins in 2009 with President Obama's plans to "transform America", when in his first year in office, he called "for every American to pursue education beyond high school."

Doubters sounded the alarm. Richard Vedder, Ohio University professor and member of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education, said at the time, "Not everyone can or should go to college. Given the dubious quality of our secondary schools as well as limited cognitive skills and motivation, many students are incapable of college-level work. Fulfillment of President Obama's goal would lead to many students failing, resources being squandered and the quality of postsecondary education being diluted."

Obama was undeterred, but his vision encountered obstacles. One was that even for students capable of college-level work, enrollment was an expensive proposition. And for those seeking to borrow for college, there were those pesky private lenders who were actually evaluating loan applications on the basis of ability and likelihood that the loan would be repaid. *Can you believe it?*

No problem. We'll just nationalize the student loan program and wash away the evaluation of borrower quality. And the government starts handing out cash while taking down the guardrails that ordinarily constrain such handouts.

So millions of young people grab billions of federal dollars and head off to college. *What could go wrong?* Who could have predicted that the sellers (colleges), faced with hordes of new buyers (applicants flush with federal cash), would respond with higher prices (tuition)?

College costs more? Just make the federal

loans bigger and use the Covid pandemic to stop the requirements to make payments!

And those millions mentioned above emerge from college (many with degrees of limited value) and a big pile of debt. And predictably, during what many consider Obama's third term, we have the obvious next step: *forgive the debt.*

President Biden declared he was canceling \$400 billion in student debt. Conservative groups like ours saw this for what it was – the executive branch ignoring that only Congress can authorize expenditures.

BCTA partnered with our allies at the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty to file suit in federal court to block the action. *For a brief period, our lawsuit was the only finger in the dike, preventing the initiation of loan forgiveness.* Ultimately actions taken by state Attorneys General, making the same arguments we did, prevailed and the Supreme Court ruled Biden's actions unconstitutional.

Now, the administration is trying again. Biden has a new scheme. His Department of Education has proposed "regulations (that) would modify the Department's existing debt collection regulations" and allow "the Secretary authority to waive all or part of any debts owed to the Department." Biden wants to give away hundreds of billions of your dollars to buy votes.

This would be a good time to contact your U.S. Senators and tell them to stop this nonsense. You could contact your US House Representative, too, if you had one.

Tom

February Meeting Notes

Guest Speaker: Seth Hoffmeister

Today's speaker was Seth Hoffmeister, Chair of the Green Bay Sustainability Commission, speaking about the Green Bay Clean Energy goals and plans. The Commission was formed in 2018 with members appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. In addition, there is one city staff member and one alder. The current goal is to reach 100% clean energy in Green Bay by 2050. Efforts began with an Energy Innovation Grant from the Public Service Commission along with support from the City of Green Bay, the Metro Transit System and Green Bay Water Utility to contract with the Madison office of Slipstream, a clean energy consulting firm. A baseline CO2 profile was determined in 2018 and the community was engaged to determine support for the goals through surveys and an open house. Interim 2030 goals for both municipal and community wide results were set in three areas: Buildings, Clean Electricity, and

Transportation. Implementation includes leveraging an internal city team, collaboration with the Sustainability Commission, developing a prioritization process, tracking systems, and ongoing community engagement. Funding is expected to come from energy and maintenance savings, state and federal grants, and other energy related incentives. Questions/concerns from the group included impacts on businesses, mandates vs voluntary compliance, consideration of nuclear power options, and economic vs governmental drivers.

Business items: Vice President Liddicoat updated the group on the voting brochure project. He encouraged members to pass out several to friends to display at work, or church, or other areas where people congregate. If candidates request them for distribution, they will be charged \$15/100. An email was sent to members asking for help in distribution. Upcoming speakers: March-Chief Matthew Knott, Green Bay Metro Fire Department, April-Allouez



Seth Hoffmeister, Green Bay Sustainability Commission

Village President Jim Rafter, speaking on the GB Correctional facility issue.

Committee/other reports: President Schwalbach reported that the recent flurry of bills being debated continues as the legislature approaches the end of their session. Several deal with tax code issues. Another significant issue is the redistricting maps and their impact on current legislators. Rank Order Voting does not appear to be progressing. There was discussion concerning us hosting an informational session to educate voters if it resurfaces. Secretary Goldhahn shared that the Green Bay Area Public School District was conducting a survey concerning district operations, results, and strategic planning. If members had not received a card to take part, they should contact the District office. Several questions arose about the suspension of the Superintendent, but the information available in the press was limited.

President Schwalbach reported on a presentation of the WI Voters Alliance dealing with lawsuits they were representing on voting integrity issues. He also announced an upcoming Brown County Supervisor candidate forum hosted by the NEW Patriots.

Meeting Notes by Rod Goldhahn, Secretary

March Meeting Notes

Guest Speaker: Chief Mathew Knott

Visitors were welcomed to introduce themselves and share information with the group. Visitors included Alex Mineau, candidate for GBAPS board, a representative for Adrian Liddicoat, candidate for GB City Council, Jim Fitzpatrick, chair of NEW Values PAC, and Bill Morgan, GB City Council member.

Today’s speaker was Green Bay Metro Fire Department (GBMFD) Chief Matthew Knott. Chief Knot has led the department for the past 14 months, having previously served in the Rockford, Illinois Fire Department where he rose through the ranks to Division Chief. GBMFD is the third largest Fire Department in the state, with 9 stations serving the City of Green Bay and the Villages of Allouez and Bellevue. Divisions include Operations, Training, and the Fire Marshall office. There are 5 specialty teams: Hazardous Materials Response, Urban Search & Rescue, Tactical EMS, Drone, and Marine Response. 24/7 staffed apparatus include 8 engines, 2 aerial trucks, 6 medical units, 2 Battalion Chiefs, and an on-call Fire Marshall. Total staffing is 212 sworn employees and 5 non-sworn. Key projects for 2024 are Accreditation, Alternative medical responses (cost & efficiency savings), and construction of a new fire station to replace the 2 oldest (nearly 100 years) facilities. The department has successfully sought multiple grants to help ease the burden on local taxpayers. This past year a Foundation was created, enabling donors to provide funding for special projects. A community based strategic planning process is scheduled to commence in the next few weeks.

Business items: Vice President Liddicoat updated the group on the voting brochure project. Distributions were



Chief Mathew Knott, Green Bay Metro Fire Department

going well and members were encouraged to continue passing them out and placing them in high public traffic areas. Treasurer Sladek shared a resolution and proposed press release supporting “yes” votes on the State Election referenda. The resolution was passed unanimously. Next month’s speaker will be Allouez Village President Jim Rafter, speaking about the proposal to close and replace the Green Bay Correctional Institution.

Committee/other reports: Director Fletcher reminded the group of the need for poll watchers for the coming elections. President Schwalbach provided a written report noting that the Governor had vetoed the bill to exempt the first \$75k from state tax for retirees, and on 3/18, the Legislature sent 46 bills to the Governor covering a wide range of topics. Director Parins shared concerns over redistricting. Secretary Goldhahn reviewed the school board races and school referenda across the districts within Brown County. He also shared highlights of the school data available on the Wisconsin Institute of Law and Liberty (WILL) website and encouraged members to check it out.

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

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
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Meeting Location

The Village Grille, Allouez

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday - May 16, 2024 BCTA Monthly Meeting.
12:00 at The Village Grille, Allouez

Thursday - Jun 20, 2024 BCTA Monthly Meeting.
12:00 at The Village Grille, Allouez

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.

May-Jun 2024



\$ 1.7 Trillion
Student Load Debt

www.BCTAxpayers.com