

2024 has been another exciting year in Somers.

We have had a lot of changes at the Village/Town Hall both on the campus and with our staff.

From the Village and the Town, we wish all residents a happy, healthy and prosperous 2025.



Breakfast with Santa

The Somers Fire & Rescue Association hosted its annual Breakfast with Santa on Dec. 14.

Breakfast was prepared and served by members of the Somers Fire & Rescue Association and Somers Explorers Post #463.

The event was another resounding success thanks to the support of Kwik Trip store #107, Gordon Food Service and Festival Foods of Somers.

Versiti Blood Center was back this year standing by for donors. Four units of blood were collected including one by a first-time donor which equates into the potential of 12 lives being saved.

The event raised money for the "Make the Difference" initiative for equipment or community classes like CPR, Narcan and "Stop the Bleed" training.

For more information about upcoming classes see page 7.



Isabelle Krajacic, 6, of Somers, visits with Mr. and Mrs. Claus during the annual Breakfast with Santa event at the Somers Village/Town Hall. A kindergartener at Somers Elementary School, she holds on to 'Ryan the Rhino,' her class mascot who she was taking care of for the week.

Reminders

■ **Smoke detectors are available to Somers residents.**

If interested, call the Somers Fire & Rescue Department at 262-620-3285 or email apisula@somers.org and firefighters will gladly come to your home and install a new alarm at no cost to you.

■ **Keep water systems from freezing during subzero temperatures.**

Let a faucet run. A trickle the size of a pencil lead is all that is needed.

Office News

■ Josh Sullivan was promoted to Public Works Superintendent on Dec. 10.

He has been working for Somers since 2017.

■ James Klinefelter was promoted to Foreman.

He has been working in the Public Works department for almost two years.

■ Kevin Poirier was promoted to Assistant Administrator. He started working full time for the Village and Town at the beginning of 2022 after working as a contractor for many years.

■ Josh Fugate accepted the position of Utilities Manager. He started Jan. 22.

It is a new position at the Village that was created to handle state requirements for the water, sewer and stormwater utilities in the Village.

■ Eugenia Lara accepted the position of Deputy Clerk/Treasurer.

■ Two new Public Works employees will be joining our crew.

One is a new position, the other replaces an employee who is leaving.

For additional information about available positions with the Village or Town of Somers, and the job application, check the website at somers.org/departments/employment-opportunities/.



Kenosha Heating and Cooling employees use a crane to lift a new HVAC unit to the roof of the Village/Town Hall.

Village Upgrades

Somers has done a lot of upgrades in 2024.

The Village and Town Hall Auditorium was completely remodeled and now features acoustic tiles, large screens, new dais and a brand-new audio system.

The cost of the updates was shared between the Village and the Town.

Two new rooftop HVAC units were installed, the outside of the building was repainted and a new garbage enclosure was built.

This year we plan to update the lobby of the Fire Department.

Fire Department Studies Update

McMahon Associates Inc. has completed the Somers Fire & Rescue Department Facilities Assessment study. It was presented to the board at the Sept. 3 Village Board work session.

The study supports staff assessment that Station 2, located just west of Sheridan Road on Highway E is no longer adequate. It recommends building a new station close to its current location due to the volume of calls east of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks.

The need for a third station was deemed to be several years in the future and growth dependent.

The study also suggests that Station 1 could remain at its current location and could take over the space occupied by the current Public Works Department. That department could be relocated to a new building, which could be

McMAHON
ENGINEERS ARCHITECTS

built at a lesser cost than a new fire station.

The Board has asked for additional information to assess whether Station 2 could be rebuilt behind its current location on Village-owned property, relocating Frank Fabiano Memorial Park closer to Highway E for better visibility.

The second part of the study, the Operation and Staffing Needs Assessment and Staffing Assessment, has been completed and was presented to the Village Board at the January 21 work session.

The report lists 19 recommendations, including additional staff, changes to the command structure of the department, reducing the reliance on non-fulltime staff and ordinance updates.

Important Dates

The Village/Town Hall will be closed on the following dates:

- April 18 for Good Friday
- May 26 for Memorial Day
- July 4 for Independence Day

Elections will be held on the following dates:

- Feb. 18 for Primary Elections
- April 1 for Spring General Elections



New plow trucks timely arrival

The Somers Public Works Department picked up their two new Peterbilt plow truck just in time for the snow. The 5-yard truck was delivered in October, the 10-yard in November.

Both trucks have been outfitted with 12-foot front plows and 9-foot wings and will help with snow removal this season.

They replace trucks purchased in 2009.

Highlights of the 2025 budget

The 2025 budget was adopted on Oct. 22.

The total levy is \$5,185,328, an increase of \$277,381, or 5.7 percent.

Both the Village and Town of Somers went through a full revaluation last year. The 2024 assessed value for the Village of Somers was \$1,655,934,800, a 58 percent increase from the prior year.

The 2024 assessed value for the Town of Somers was \$124,174,200, a 39 percent increase from the prior year.

Tax levy for 2025

■ Village — \$4,813,604. This is an increase of \$310,484, (or 6.7 percent) from 2024.

■ Town — \$371,725. This is an increase of \$19,368 (or 5.5 percent) from 2024.

■ Debt levy — The total debt levy is \$1,028,951. This is an increase of \$16,726 from 2024 (or 1.7 percent).

Mill rate for 2024

■ Village — \$3.62355 per thousand of assessed value

(down from \$5.3422).

■ Town — \$2.98657 per thousand of assessed value (down from \$4.54792).

Budget key points

■ The Somers Fire & Rescue Department will add one full-time Firefighter Paramedic to their roster this year.

■ The Somers Public Works Department will add one full-time position, a Utilities Manager.

■ A position of Deputy Clerk/Treasurer has also been created.

■ \$457,134 was budgeted to repave the Petrifying Springs Estates Subdivision.

■ Of the total levy, 59 percent goes to public safety, 22 percent to general government, 9 percent to both public works and waste collection. The remaining 1 percent is for planning and development.

A hard copy of the budget and information sheet is available to residents by request at the Village/Town Hall.

Where do my taxes go?

At right is the breakdown of the taxes paid by residents of the Village of Somers who live in the Kenosha Unified School District. It comes out to about:

■ 36 percent for Kenosha Unified

School District

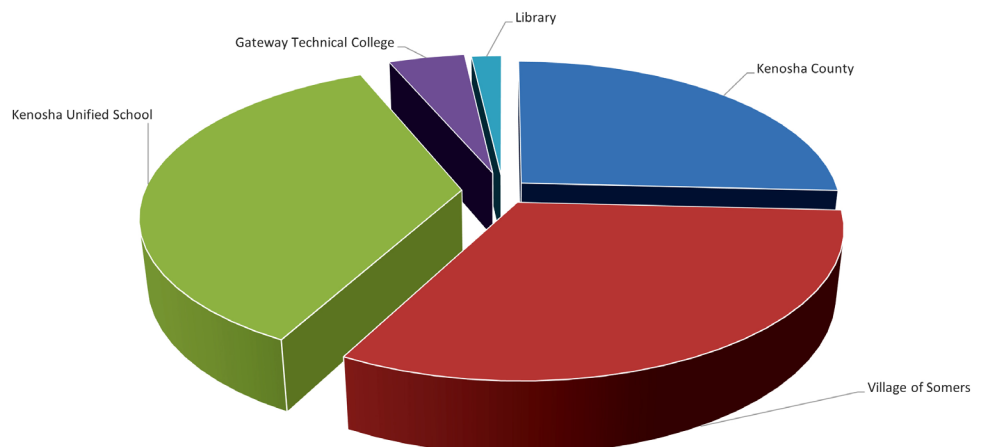
■ 32 percent for the Village of Somers

■ 26 percent for Kenosha County

■ 4.5 percent for Gateway Technical

College

■ 1.5 percent for the Library





Free Bulk Pickup added

For the first time residents will be able to drop off bulk items for pickup at the Somers Village/Town Hall, 7511 12th Street. Garbage contractor Johns Disposal will have a truck available on Oct. 25, 2025, from 8 a.m. to noon.

Residents will have the opportunity to drop off no more than what can be carried in one truck bed or single-axle trailer full (not to exceed 10 feet in length).

Only items that are typically accepted in landfills such as furniture, bagged waste, carpeting (cut into 4-foot sections rolled and bundled together), etc., will be permitted.

No appliances, automotive batteries, scrap metal or recyclable materials will be allowed.

The service is offered on a first-come first served basis and will end once the garbage truck is full.

The service is free to Somers residents. You will be asked to show proof of residence at the event.

This day was picked to coincide with the e-cycling, shredding and national DEA Drug Take Back Day that already takes place that day at the Village/Town Hall.

Resident not able to take advantage of the bulk pickup can schedule a pickup at their residence for a fee by contacting Johns Disposal directly.

The fee for 2025 is \$95.00 per scheduled collection. A list of items that can be picked up and exclusions posted here: www.johnsdisposal.com/municipalities/somers-village-town/.

How do I pay my taxes, utilities and building permit?

Residents can pay their **property taxes** in person at the Somers Village/Town Hall, 7511 12th Street between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Alternatively, payments can be made at Tri City Bank, 5901 Washington Road. Branch hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, closed Sunday. The bank does not accept cash payment.

Taxes can also be paid through the Kenosha County website at: propertyinfo.kenoshacounty.org by looking up the property.

Payments for **utilities, court fees and building permits** can be made through the Somers website at: client.pointand-pay.net/web/villageofsomerswi/.

After Jan. 31, tax payments must be made at the Kenosha County Treasurer at 1010 56th Street in Kenosha.

Elections coming in February

The next elections will be the Spring Primary on February 18, followed by the Spring General Elections on April 1. Four seats will be on the ballot for the Village April 1.

Incumbents are:

- President George Stoner
- Trustee Scott Fredrick
- Trustee Jackie Nelson
- Trustee Jack Aupperle

Two seats will be on the ballot in the Town:

- Chairman Mark Molinaro Jr.
- Supervisor Richard Lesko

Sample ballots for the election are available at: www.somers.org/departments/clerk-treasurer/elections-voting-information/

Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Somers currently has two polling locations: the Village/Town Hall, 7511 12th Street and the University of Wisconsin — Parkside Sports Center, 4130 Petrifying Springs Road.

The Village and Town of Somers are still looking for poll workers to help with local elections.

Poll workers are responsible for registering voters, checking identification, issuing ballots and processing absentee ballots. More information is available at this link: elections.wi.gov/node/1012.

If interested, please contact Village/Town Clerk Wendy Burnette via email at wburnette@somers.org or phone at 262-859-2822.

Training will be required and coordinated by the Somers Clerk prior to the elections.

Town Election Audit completed

The Wisconsin Elections Commission randomly selected Wards 1-4 in the Town of Somers to conduct an audit of the Nov. 5, 2024, election.

The audit of voting equipment was completed on Nov. 26 and no discrepancies were found. Residents can be confident that votes were counted accurately in the November General Election.

During the audit, election officials check to make sure the vote totals compiled by the voting equipment on election night are accurate by conducting an independent hand count of ballots and tallying the results of the selected contests. The final hand-count tally total is compared to the election night voting system results.

Post-election audits, covering approximately 10 percent of the reporting units in the state, serve as a final check on the election results. While not every reporting unit or municipality is selected for post-election audit, state election officials ensured that at least one reporting unit per county is audited.

Proposed development and updates

■ **Oakfire Pizza** — The Neapolitan Pizza restaurant located at Market Square is splitting into two entities. The north side of the building is being converted to a Mexican restaurant called Sazon.

Oakfire is open for business during the remodel.

■ **Willow Creek** — Bear Development is working on land it owns near the southwest corner of Green Bay Road and Highway E. Bear is planning a housing development there.

A fill permit to get the site ready was granted.

■ **Savannah at Pike Creek** — Residents started moving into the first buildings in August while construction continues.

Phase two, consisting of an additional 148 units, is scheduled to start in the spring as soon as phase one is done.

The apartments have proved popular with tenants as more than 50 percent of the available units are leased.

Once fully built out, the neighborhood will consist of 42 buildings with a mix of 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom units for a total of 338 residences.

The parcels along Green Bay Road are slated to be commercial.

■ **Shoreland Lutheran High School** — The school presented a plan for expansion at the Oct. 14 Plan Commission meeting.

■ **Service center and hotel** — The Village Board approved the construction of a service center including a sit-down restaurant at the northeast corner of Highway E. The property will be operated by Golden Oil, who has corporate headquarters in Somers.

In conjunction with the service center, the property will include a hotel to the north. Grading on the south parcel has started.

■ **Tropical Smoothie** — The new restaurant was approved last year. Construction is expected to start this year.



The Oakfire Pizza restaurant is being split in two.



Soil is being brought to the Willow Creek site.



The first phase of the Savannah at Pike Creek subdivision is expected to be completed this spring.



Shoreland Lutheran High School has applied for an expansion of the building.



Grading is ongoing at the site of the proposed service center at Highway E and East Frontage Road.

ZIP Code Bill Update

Village staff, elected officials and residents have been lobbying Congress to be granted a unique Village-wide ZIP Code.

While a bill, including more than 50 other municipalities, successfully passed the House of Representatives, the 118th Congress adjourned before the bill could be brought to a vote in the U.S. Senate.

Throughout the process, our efforts gathered support from additional members of Congress all over the country. We are hopeful that the 119th Congress, that will be seated shortly, will pass a similar bill for the President to sign.

Our efforts also caught the attention of the press and we were featured in the Kenosha News, Wisconsin

Public Radio and the Milwaukee Journal.

The Village/Town of Somers was even mentioned repeatedly on the floor of Congress during committee and when it was brought up for a vote.

We have heard from many communities facing the same issues: mail delivery issues, delays of fire and ambulance response, denial of insurance reimbursement, a potential increase in home insurance, a loss of state revenue, voter confusion and an overall disjointed sense of identity.

We need your support as we continue our efforts.

A petition is available at the Village/Town Hall or can be requested through email: kpoirier@somers.org.

Report hazardous spills

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources encourages everyone to report hazardous substance spills.

Reporting a spill or other discharge does not make a person or entity liable for the contamination.

Reportable spills of hazardous substances include those that:

- Impact or potentially impact human health
- Impact or potentially impact the environment (including to a sanitary sewer, storm sewer or surface water)
- Create a fire, explosion or safety hazard (including slippery road conditions);
- Are not immediately cleaned up or evaporated

Call the 24-hour emergency hotline for spills that require immediate reporting.

REPORT SPILLS IMMEDIATELY

1-800-943-0003



Wisconsin's 24-Hour
Spill Emergency Hotline
dnr.wi.gov - Search: "Spills"

For more information, check the Wisconsin DNR website at: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Spills>.



Signs along the former Highway KR to denote that it is now state highway 195.

Changes to Highway KR

Highway KR from Interstate 94 to Highway 32 along the Kenosha-Racine County line has become a state Highway.

Commuters will notice the new signs along the road feature the new name: Highway 195.

The jurisdiction transfer is part of a larger swap between Kenosha County, Racine County and the State of Wisconsin. Approximately seven miles of old Highway 75 was transferred to Kenosha County and approximately five miles to Racine County. The state received approximately seven miles of old Highway KR.

With the highway now under state jurisdiction, the street lights will be removed.



Somers President George Stoner and other dignitaries hold a press conference on Sheridan Road Nov. 18, the day the speed was lowered to 35 m.p.h.

Speed limit reduced for safety

Since Nov. 18, the speed limit on Sheridan Road from Highway KR south to the Carthage College campus has been reduced to 35 mph from 45 mph.

This decrease is a result of a collaborative pilot program between the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Kenosha County, the City of Kenosha and the Village of Somers, intending to enhance safety.

The new speed limit is intended to reduce crash-related fatalities and injuries within this corridor.

"Reducing the speed limit is a critical step toward improving safety on this stretch of road," said Kenosha County Sheriff David Zoerner. "Higher speeds lead to more dangerous crashes, and our goal is to reduce the risk of injuries and fatalities."

Winter salt pollutes waterways

Winter salt prematurely ages roads and bridges and degrades freshwater lakes, streams, and drinking water. It is a freshwater pollutant. Just one teaspoon of salt permanently pollutes five gallons of freshwater. Once in solution, salt is nearly impossible to remove without considerable expense.

Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network is partnering with organizations across the country to reduce winter salt pollution.



During the annual Winter Salt Week, people nation-wide are encouraged to learn more about the environmental downsides of de-icers, private industry successes, actions that states are taking and how to get involved.

Winter Salt Week will feature daily, 30-minute live streams from ecologists, public works staff and policymakers from across the United States. Topics cover winter salt issues, chloride monitoring, the problem with dilution, public works perspectives, and policy solutions.

Speakers include Abby Hileman (Izaak Walton League of America), Jess Hua (UW-Madison), Cara Hardesty (Ohio EPA), Ted Diers (New Hampshire Department of Environmental Protection), Bryan Gruidl (City of Bloomington, Minn.), and Public Works staff from across the country.

Winter Salt Week 2025 is Jan. 27 through 31. Community members are invited to join in each day's live stream beginning at 12:30 on the Salt Wise YouTube channel. Registration for the livestreams can be completed at wintersaltweek.org.

Want to learn more? Visit respectourwaters.org/ice-and-snow-control and www.wisaltwise.com.

Community members are invited to follow these smart practices:

Smart Salting Tips



Shovel!

or brush away snow often and early



Sunshine!

let the sun melt remaining snow



Scatter!

if needed, 3 inches between crystals



Switch!

to sand under 15 degrees F



Somers Fire & Rescue Department Lt. Adam Pisula helps Chantel Holden, of Somers, practice chest compressions on an infant mannequin during a CPR class. The class is part of the Make the Difference initiative, which aims to have members of the community learn the life-saving technique.

Learn life-saving skills

The Somers Fire & Rescue Department offers community classes throughout the year teaching life-saving skills such as CPR, Narcan training and new this year "Stop the Bleed" classes.

The Stop the Bleed project is a national campaign to teach anyone the immediate steps to help stabilize a victim of traumatic injuries before the arrival of trained personnel.

Uncontrolled bleeding is a major cause of preventative deaths. Approximately 40 percent of trauma-related deaths worldwide are due to bleeding or its consequences, establishing hemorrhage as the most common cause of preventable death in trauma.

Participants in the class learn how to pack wounds, how to apply a tourniquet and direct pressure to wounds over the 30-minute class.

The next Stop the Bleed classes will be held May 24 at 9 a.m. and Oct. 8 at 5:30 p.m.

Hands-only CPR classes will be held Feb. 15 at 9 a.m.,

June 18 at 5:30 p.m. and Oct. 25 at 9 a.m.

Those classes are free but do not include a certification.

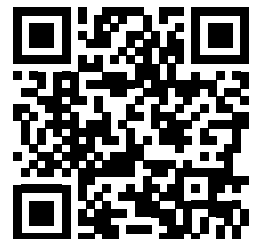
For those who want certification, \$15 American Heart Association CPR classes will be held March 15 at 9 a.m., July 16 at 5:30 p.m. and Nov. 15 at 9 a.m.

Classes are held at the Somers Fire Department, 7511 12th Street.

All CPR classes include an optional free Narcan training.

Private classes are available upon request.

Use the QR code below to reach out to the Somers Fire & Rescue Department and find out more information about upcoming classes or visit: www.somers.org/fd-requests/.



FD Request Form



Somers Public Works employees clear a path through Neumiller Park in preparation for restoration work planned this spring.

Nature restoration continues

Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network and the Village of Somers have been partnering to improve water quality and flow through the Village.

Located along Highway E, Neumiller Park and Gitzlaff Park have been identified as high priority areas in the watershed and have been the site of a multi-phase multi-year project.

Neumiller Park

Early in December, the Somers Public Works department cut a path through Neumiller Park in preparation for construction traffic for the wetland restoration. Once construction is complete, the path will provide public access to the park as well as maintenance access to Village infrastructure located on the area.

The project should go to bid this February and the work could start in the Spring of 2025.

Grant funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Great Lakes Commission's Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program, Palmer Foundation combined with Village Stormwater funds are being used convert two acres of farmland back to wetland.

Over the last five years, Neumiller Park has been slowly restored with a wetland scrape and removal of sediment.

Volunteers from Root-Pike WIN have planted native plants and removed invasive buckthorn in this area. The long-term plan is to have a boardwalk through the park so the public can experience this unique and important environment.

Gitzlaff Park

The Neumiller bid will include the creation of two new wetland ponds and a restored native prairie at Gitzlaff Park. Both projects will be conducted at the same time.

The Somers Fire & Rescue Department will conduct a prescribed burn on the north end of the property in the spring to help revitalize native plants and eradicate invasive species.

The Village and Town of Somers "Connecting With Your Community" newsletter is published by the Village/Town of Somers for public education and informational purposes. This newsletter is distributed to the residents through the Somers website in a easily printable format. Jason Peters, Village/Town Administrator, Managing Editor. Kevin Poirier, Assistant Administrator/Communications Specialist. © 2025 Village/Town of Somers, All Rights Reserved.

Somers to offer Water Rebates

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin have been working with the Village of Somers to create rebates for residents to promote water conservancy.

The rebates are currently under review but are expected to be approved early this year.

Once available, they will be posted on our website. A rebate of \$20 is expected to be offered to replace shower heads with high-efficiency WaterSense-rated ones.

Commercial and industrial building owners will be eligible for a \$100 rebate if they provide proof of replacing older, inefficient toilets with WaterSense commercial valve-type ultra-low-flush toilet.

Rebates are limited to one per year per water customer.

Proof of purchase, installation and a rebate form will need to be provided to the Village. Once accepted, a check will be mailed to the residence.



Home drug disposal pack available

Residents who need to dispose of prescription drugs safely can pick up a Drug Disposal Pouch in the lobby of the Somers Fire & Rescue Department.

The pouches provide safe, convenient and permanent disposal of unused, expired or unwanted medications.

Place the medications in the pouch and add warm water and the drugs will be deactivated to prevent any potential environmental contamination.



The pouches were brought in by the Kenosha Sheriff's Department and will be available while supplies last.

As a reminder, unused pharmaceuticals should not be flushed as the can potentially pollute the drinking water.

A disposal box is also available to dispose of unused or expired medications in the Somers Fire & Rescue Department reception area.