

## **MEDIA RELEASE – UPDATED**

*For more information, please contact:*

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **VILLAGE OF WESTON TO HOST COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSIONS IN ADVANCE OF APRIL 7, 2026, REFERENDUM**

(February 13, 2026) WESTON, WI – At its January 19, 2026, meeting, the Village of Weston Board of Trustees approved placing a referendum question on the April 7, 2026, spring election ballot regarding staffing needs for the South Area Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER) District.

The SAFER District was created in 2014, as a partnership between the Village of Weston and Village of Rib Mountain. Since creation, the department's staffing numbers have remained consistent, while the call volume has significantly increased.

#### **MEDIA UPDATE**

Following the January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, questions were submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) regarding, if the referendum was approved and the 2027 Budget process determined less than the authorized \$600,000 was needed, could the levy limit exemption be reduced for a lower amount. The DOR's responses are included in the FAQs on the **April 2026 Referendum** webpage.

During its review, the DOR noted that the debt service levy was not specifically referenced in the referendum question and advised the Village that it should be included. The DOR provided the option to redo the resolution to correct referendum question language, following the Village discussing it with the County Clerk and Municipal Attorney. Neither had an issue with proceeding as notice of the referendum was provided timely, the purpose & impact of the question is unchanged, and given the technicality of the error. An updated question will appear on the Monday, February 16<sup>th</sup> Board of Trustees Meeting agenda as Resolution 2026-006. Again, the purpose of the referendum and \$600,000 total dollar amount are unchanged.

Under current state law, the Village's levy increase for the 2027 fiscal year is limited to 0% or net new construction, which for 2025 was 2.293%, resulting in a maximum allowable levy of \$8,670,828, with debt service levy included. The referendum will ask voters whether the Village should be permitted to exceed this limit and increase the levy by a total of 6.92% for fiscal year 2027, resulting in a levy of \$9,270,282, as noted above with debt service levy included.

The proposed increase would be used to fund the Village of Weston's share of SAFER costs to hire and retain six additional full-time firefighter/paramedics. If approved, the levy would include an ongoing increase of \$600,000 annually in each future fiscal year.



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**The updated proposed Referendum Question is as follows:**

*Under state law, the increase in the levy of the Village of Weston for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year, 2027, is limited to 2.293%, which results in a levy of \$8,670,828. Shall the Village of Weston be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year, 2027, for the purpose of paying the Village of Weston's share of the cost for SAFER to hire and retain six additional full-time firefighters/paramedics, by a total of 6.92%, which results in a levy of \$9,270,828 and on an ongoing basis, include the increase of \$600,000 for each fiscal year going forward?*

**If a Majority Vote “Yes”**

If approved, a \$600,000 increase to the property tax levy would allow the Village to pay its share of the cost for SAFER to hire and retain six additional full-time firefighters/paramedics.

For a home assessed at \$250,000, this amounts to \$85.00 per year, based on 2025 assessed values.

**If a Majority Vote “No”**

If the referendum is rejected, the Village would not be able to increase the property tax levy and the Board of Trustees may alter current fire protection staffing/services or other municipal services, as necessary, to balance the budget.

**Community Information Sessions**

In advance of the spring election, the Village will host a series of educational opportunities for residents to learn more about the referendum and ask questions. *The below informational sessions schedule remains unchanged.*

**Informational Sessions (with presentation):**

The Informational Presentations portion of the sessions will have a virtual option for participation and will be recorded and made available following the event.

- **Wednesday, March 4, 2026** | 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

*Informational Presentation at 12:00 p.m.*

- **Thursday, March 19, 2026** | 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

*Informational Presentation at 6:00 p.m.*

**Facilitated Question & Answer Sessions:**

These sessions will be open, moderated discussions where Village of Weston and SAFER officials will be available to answer questions regarding the referendum.

- **Tuesday, March 31, 2026** | 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

- **Thursday, April 2, 2026** | 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Additional information regarding the referendum, including frequently asked questions, is available on the Village website at: <https://www.westonwi.gov/969/Village-of-Weston-April-2026-Referendum>.

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