

REFERENDUM



VOTE TUESDAY, APRIL 7

The Somers Fire Department must increase full-time staffing to meet increasing demand for services. To fund those additional staff and improve services, the Village Board placed a referendum question on the April 7, 2026 ballot.

Voters will be asked whether they support a permanent \$1,300,000 increase in the property tax levy to fund **eight additional full-time Firefighter / Paramedics** and ongoing Fire Department operations. If approved, the Department would have enough full-time staff to **respond immediately to emergencies** and **operate all three ambulances at any given moment**.

FEDERAL FUNDS SECURED

Recognizing its need for additional Firefighter / Paramedics, the Village applied for and received the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) SAFER grant. The grant will cover **75% of costs for eight additional full-time staff in 2026 and 2027, and 35% of costs for those staff in 2028**.

The Village is required to cover the remaining costs for compensation and for all necessary equipment for the duration of the grant. After June 3, 2029, the Village is responsible for 100% of costs to maintain the eight additional full-time Firefighter / Paramedics.

SAFER grants are not easy to obtain — around 10% of applicants ultimately receive grant funding. The Village was awarded a SAFER grant in 2006 and has applied for, but not received, additional SAFER grants every year since.

WHY REFERENDUM?

Other sources of revenue are not enough or are not viable options. Besides property taxes, the Village's other major revenue source is "shared revenue" from the State. This has not kept up with inflation and is not enough to make investments to improve services. The Village also explored a potential wheel tax and other fees, as well as potential cuts to other services and programs. None are solutions.

Per state law, municipalities are permitted to increase property taxes only up to the amount necessary to repay loans or by an amount tied to "net new construction." In order to exceed the levy limit, Somers needs voter approval through a community-wide referendum.

HIGH EMERGENCY CALL VOLUME, CRITICAL NEED FOR INCREASED STAFFING

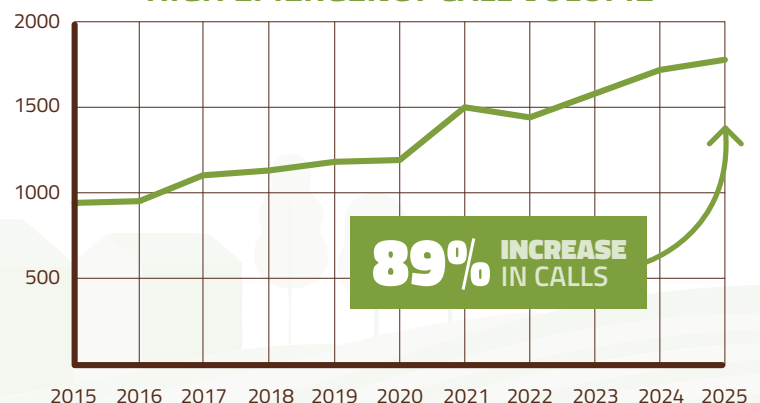
The need for additional full-time Firefighter / Paramedics comes after **years of consistently high emergency service demand**.

Somers has seen a significant increase in calls for emergency medical services. In 2025, the Somers Fire Department responded to **1,778 calls — a record high** — and received overlapping calls for service 728 times.

Currently, **the Department can only guarantee operation of two ambulances at any given time**. Not all staff are paramedics, so patients can only *sometimes* receive the highest-quality, timely service.

By adding eight full-time, fully trained Firefighter / Paramedics, the Department can **increase daily staffing, guarantee paramedic-level service and guarantee the deployment of all three ambulances at once** to meet growing community needs.

HIGH EMERGENCY CALL VOLUME



IF A MAJORITY VOTE "YES"

If Somers voters approve the referendum, the Village will be able to permanently increase its property tax levy by \$1,300,000, beginning with property tax bills issued in December 2026.

PROPERTY TAX IMPACT \$1.3 MILLION TOTAL INCREASE

ASSESSED PROPERTY VALUE*	ESTIMATED TAX IMPACT	
	PER YEAR	PER MONTH
PER \$100,000	\$115	\$9.58
\$355,000 (MEDIAN HOME)	\$405	\$33.75

*In Somers, an assessor sets assessed property values annually.

IF A MAJORITY VOTE "NO"

If the referendum is rejected by a majority of voters, the Village would not be able to increase the property tax levy to fund the additional Firefighter / Paramedic positions.



Trustees would need to make a decision about how to fund its portion of costs for the duration of the SAFER grant, **potentially pulling funding from reserves or borrowing.**



Without additional revenue, the Village **would not have long-term funding** to maintain the eight additional full-time Firefighter / Paramedics and **would likely experience additional strain** as the community continues to grow.

CUTS ARE NOT ENOUGH

The Village has explored whether there are potential budget cuts that could be made to other services to free up funding for additional public safety staff. Given that public safety services represent approximately 59% of the general fund budget, funding for other essential operations is already limited. Additionally, many non-public safety services are state-mandated and may not be cut.

Cuts alone can't fund additional public safety staffing and would reduce the availability and quality of the other essential services residents receive.

VOTE APRIL 7

EARLY VOTING

In-person early voting will take place at Village Hall (7511 12th St.) on weekdays March 24 – April 3 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. On the final day of in-person early voting (Friday, April 3), early voting hours are extended from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Note: The final day of in-person early voting (Friday, April 3) is Good Friday. Village Hall will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Deadline for regular or overseas voters to request an absentee ballot online, by fax or by mail: **Thursday, April 2 at 5 p.m.**

ELECTION DAY

Polling places will be open 7 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Wisconsin voters are required to show an acceptable photo ID to vote.

ATTEND AN INFORMATION SESSION

The Village will hold public information sessions for residents to learn more about the referendum and ask questions of local officials.

- **Thursday, March 5 at 5:30 p.m.**
Village Hall (7511 12th St.)
- **Saturday, March 28 at 2:30 p.m.**
Village Hall (7511 12th St.)
- **Tuesday, March 31 at 5:30 p.m.**
Village Hall (7511 12th St.)

A recorded information session presentation will be available online for those who cannot attend in person.



SCAN HERE!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT

www.somerswi.gov/public-safety or email questions to Fire Chief Ben Andersen at bandersen@somerswi.gov