

[close window](#)

## Council gives OK to impact fee

BARABOO - Tuesday Baraboo City Council members gave first approval to a fee that would generate money for Baraboo Public Library expansion or building improvements.

The \$415 fee would be tacked on to building permits for new residential dwellings. It would not apply to permits for home improvements such as the addition of a garage or porch.

Impact fees, as they're called, are only assessed on new development, Virchow Krause consultant Vicki Hellenbrand told the council. Current residents will not see any increase to their tax bills. The idea is for new residents to pay for the increased services they demand, she said.

"Impact fees are a way to fund the facilities that are needed to accommodate new growth," Hellenbrand said.

The system is already in place for city parks. The park impact fee is \$807 for a single-family home and \$475 for a multi-family home.

Impact fees can only be used for capital improvements, or one-time projects with tangible results. Library staff members' salaries and other operating costs would not apply.

Library Board members have said they do not expect to add on to the library for at least two years but it will need more space down the road. Board members have also said they would not consider an entirely new building because surveys have shown patrons love the 1903 Carnegie Library building on Fourth Avenue.

Council members briefly considered the possibility that increasing construction fees will deter people from building in Baraboo. They approved the fee unanimously, but it still needs a second reading at the next council meeting before it becomes official.

Alderman Jerry McCammond also pointed out that non-city residents use the library, but only city residents would pay the impact fee. Hellenbrand answered that city taxpayers would have to pay for a library expansion regardless. The library

receives funding from the county for its rural users, but that money only applies to operating costs, she said.

The impact fee system ensures that new Baraboo residents will bear the burden of expansion costs, Hellenbrand said.

City officials may consider additional impact fees in the future.

At a budget meeting earlier this month, council members directed Fire Chief Kevin Stieve to commission a study exploring the use of impact fees to build a new public safety complex for the police and fire departments.

[close window](#)