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Impact Fees Increase For Commercial and Industrial Developers

A new fire fee was added to the fee structure to fund a new fire station in the southwest corner of the village and renovations of existing stations.

By [Carl Engelking](#) | [Email the author](#) | September 7, 2011

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Fees for new industrial and commercial developers are set to rise in Menomonee Falls, which already has

The Village Board approved a resolution to add an additional impact fee to fund construction of a new fire station and renovate and expand existing fire stations.

Industrial developers will pay a fire fee of 37 cents per square foot, and commercial developers will pay 53 cents per square foot on projects. Combined sewer and water rates also increased from \$4,421 per rec to \$4,775 per rec. A "rec" is

The news is better for developers of new single-family residential construction. Impact fees will actually decrease the new \$1,596 fire fee. Parks, water and sewer fees were all reduced.

Impact fees are charged to new development to recover a proportionate share of the public costs associated with building. The fees cover only brick and mortar construction, and cannot be used for municipal vehicles or services.

The new fire fee is designed to recover about 42 percent of the costs associated with all the fire station projects of \$6.5 million in total costs.

However, the new increased fee structure had some worried that Menomonee Falls is too costly to develop. Impact fees are second only to the Town of Bristol on a list of 14 surrounding communities.

Village Manager Mark Fitzgerald added that direct comparison of impact fees with other communities is often difficult. Germantown doesn't assess a sewer and water impact fee; however, it does charge a connection fee. In that regard, he said.

"So all of this data is subject to variations depending upon what each community does, what their ordinances and statutes," Fitzgerald said. "Frankly, there is quite a bit of misinformation in this data."

Despite the irregularities in the data, no one wants to see the community on the top of a high cost list. And

"I don't want to get to the point where we tax ourselves out of business," said Trustee Dennis Farrell.

Jacque Sommers, a Falls resident and landowner, said the village has already priced itself out of business. High impact fees have deterred businesses from coming to the village.

"There's trouble on the south end of our village," Sommers said. "Two developers flat out told me they refuse to pay high impact fees. I don't know what's going to get things going, but the more you add on to these impact fees,

Sommers proposed a moratorium on impact fees, but that would mean the cost of providing the infrastructure would have to be paid somewhere. Village President Randy Neuman said that burden will fall on the backs of current residents.

"That just shifts the burden to the general fund for the rest of the taxpayers in town," Newman said. "So we have to be fair to people living here for people that are moving into the village? You have to balance the whole village, not just people moving in."

The difficulty for village leaders is to encourage development, but balance the cost of the new infrastructure with existing municipal tax freezes.

"Growth has impacts, and in our world of levy freezes it just gets more difficult. The true impact of growth is on the existing tax base," Village Manager Mark Fitzgerald said. "Otherwise it's a very disproportionate burden on the existing tax base, and we have to make their share for new growth."

Community Comparison of Total Residential Fees as of 2008

Bristol
Menomonee Falls (proposed)
Grafton
Jackson
Lannon
Sussex
Oconomowoc

Cedarburg

Franklin

Mukwonago

New Berlin

Hartland

Slinger

Germantown

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Nate

5:02pm on Wednesday, September 7, 2011

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