

REFERENDUM QUESTION

Under state law, the increase in the levy of the City of De Pere for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year, 2019, is limited to .23%* which results in a levy of \$12,228,378.00*. Shall the City of De Pere be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year, 2019, and on an ongoing basis, for improving and transforming the pools located at VFW Park and at Legion Park into aquatic facilities and for operating those aquatic facilities, by a total of \$900,000.00, which results in a levy of \$13,128,378.00*? A “YES” vote allows the Common Council to exceed the State imposed levy limits for improving and transforming the pools located at VFW Park and at Legion Park into aquatic facilities and for operating those aquatic facilities. A “NO” vote does not allow the Common Council to exceed the State imposed levy limits for improving and transforming the pools located at VFW Park and at Legion Park into aquatic facilities and for operating those aquatic facilities.

The highlighted portion is the only part of the referendum verbiage that we controlled. The rest of the verbiage is mandated by state statute.

The verbiage that was chosen was carefully thought out and was chosen for very specific reasons. This will hopefully explain the verbiage and answer questions people may have.

“next fiscal year, 2019, and on an ongoing basis”

- With a binding referendum, we only have two choices - exceed the limit for one year or exceed the limit on an ongoing basis. We cannot limit it to a certain number of years. That would have to be done by future City Councils.
- We chose not to go with exceeding the limit for only one year. The tax impact would have been much greater. We did not have enough information to come up with the amount of money we would have needed as we have not yet designed either facility. Finally, we want to make sure there is money set aside for operating the facility every year.

“for improving and transforming”

- This language makes it clear that we are not going to just repair the existing facilities and we also are not going to build facilities exactly identical to what exists today. We are going to improve and transform what exists today. Even if we wanted to keep things exactly the same, we could not because once we make any improvements we must make the pool and facilities ADA compliant.

“the pools located at VFW Park and at Legion Park”

- This makes it very clear the aquatic facilities will go at VFW Park and Legion Park. Had we not specified this, and the referendum passed, we could have put the facilities at any park.

“into aquatic facilities”

- For us, this was the most important language. We wanted to ensure we have the flexibility we need to design facilities that meet the community’s needs, ensure operational efficiencies, and allow the city to properly manage the facilities. It also was important that the language be broad enough to include other things that we want – locker rooms, concession stands, etc. Had we used the word “pool,” those things would not have been a part of this referendum and may not have been built.
- This language allows us to start with a clean slate as we design the entire facility. It will allow us to get public input into the design. It will give us flexibility to, possibly, put something in one park and something different in another park. The biggest thing, again, is it gives us the flexibility to meet the community’s needs.

“and for operating those aquatic facilities”

- Again, this is very important language. We currently subsidize the operations of the pools each year. If it passes, the referendum allows us to use funds specifically targeted for the operation of the facilities as opposed to relying on finding funds in the city budget.

“\$900,000.00”

- It is important to know that the referendum, if approved, simply allows us to exceed the levy limit up to a maximum of \$900,000. We are not required to exceed it by that amount. We do not have to exceed the levy limit at all, we can exceed it by some amount less than \$900,000, or we can exceed it by \$900,000. It is up to the City Council each year to determine how much the city will need.
- All of the great options for funding this project are still in consideration and need to be explored. Any amount we raise to help offset the cost of the project helps us lower the amount we need to take from the \$900,000, which means less of a tax impact. I fully anticipate some years not needing the full \$900,000. That means in those years the impact to property owners is that their taxes go down from the previous year. If the city does use all \$900,000 in a year, taxes would go up. If the city again uses \$900,000 the following year, taxes would not go up because it was already figured into the tax rate from the previous year.
- We believe this number will allow the city to build two facilities that definitely meet the community’s needs and allow for continued operations of the facilities. In addition, should a facility need repairs or improvements in the future, this gives the city access to funds.