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Office of the Mayor  
Doug Diny



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR SIGNALS POTENTIAL VETOES ON BUDGET & REFERENDUM CONSULTANTS**

"It is the job of a mayor to use his or her veto to curb excesses," said Wausau Mayor Doug Diny. "In addition, I hope the following vetoes will serve as a wake-up call."

The Wausau Common Council needs to face reality: the city has a spending problem, not a revenue problem. To move us toward that understanding, until there's been a serious examination of existing spending, I am going to do the following:

- Veto the city budget
- Veto any proposal to use taxpayer money on political consultants to "sell" the public a tax increase through a spring referendum.

There are responsible members of the council who understand that we are taxing ourselves out of running for new residents and new businesses. However, those members are currently in the minority. My hope is that the veto will force the spendthrift majority to incorporate some of the ideas of the minority to arrive at enough votes to override the veto.

With regard to the referendum to raise taxes beyond the levy limit, people should know that Wausau already taxes its residents 20% more than the allowable levy using an exemption for debt service and a payment in lieu of property taxes embedded in their utility bills. That should alarm citizens, and it is unacceptable!

My reason for vetoing referendum-related proposals is that the council is considering no other alternatives besides raising taxes. In Wausau, we have an eight-week budget process that starts with a draft budget being released at the end of September and ends with a vote on the budget in late November. And we could push back the vote to early December and still meet our statutory obligations.

In the first week of that budget process, without looking at any other options, the council jumped right to a referendum to raise taxes. It's like punting on first down! It gets us nowhere, and Wausau's taxpayers deserve better!

Leading up to this point, I have put forward proposals to make cuts. They were ridiculed and rebuffed without any serious consideration. I then offered ideas to have studies done to create an objective process for identifying priorities. Those too were summarily dismissed. I know my proposals are dead on arrival with most of this group; the council now owns this budget.

The reality is that we cannot keep attempting to solve problems by throwing money at them. In the last decade, we have added 40 new positions to city staff—an increase of 13%—to serve a city that has not grown in population. We cannot keep growing government faster than the tax base and local economy.

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If there is one thing that we should invest in, it is professional management that solves problems instead of just throwing more money at them.