

**OATHS OF OFFICE - A NEW WELCOME, SOME WELCOME BACKS & A FAREWELL:** Wisconsin's April elections provide the fulcrum for changes in our local governments. Here in the Village of Amherst, we extend a warm welcome to Pat Strelitzer for her commitment to serve as she becomes our newest Village Trustee. We offer our continued thanks and support to re-elected Trustees Bob Rausch and Christine Hodges for their dedication to serve another term on the Village Board. We also note our sincere appreciation for the contributions and work of Trustee Paul Peterson as he has completed his term in office.

**LOOKING AHEAD THIS YEAR FOR OUR NEXT VILLAGE PRESIDENT:** Since I was first elected in 1985, serving our residents on the Amherst Village Board has been a fulfilling role for me. Through your support, I have been able to work side-by-side with many skilled staff members and dedicated village trustees. But I feel the time has come for me to retire from the Amherst Village Board, and I plan to step aside as Village President at the end of this term next April. Since the nomination process for the 2023 spring elections begins in November, it is important for us to think about handing the gavel over to our next Village President. Therefore, I would ask you, my fellow residents, to explore the talent, experience, and spirit of leadership found within our village, and then to strongly encourage candidates to step forward to serve on the Village Board as our next Village President. I hope to be a resource to those considering this position and I look forward to support their efforts to build upon the 123 years of growth and progress that is indicative of the Village of Amherst.

**FREE TREES OFFERED TO VILLAGE RESIDENTS THIS WEEKEND:** During the TRBA's Swap-A-Rama the Village Tree Board will celebrate both of the Arbor Day anniversaries on Saturday, May 7 by distributing 50 trees free of charge to residents and businesses within the Village of Amherst. Various species will be available to select from, and the trees can be picked up at the Amherst Opera House Saturday morning from 8:00 to 12:00 . There will be information as to the kind of tree, planting, and care instructions provided. Village residents or businesses selecting a tree for planting should provide some form of proof of residency, and there will be a limit of one tree per resident or business parcel. Participants may pick up a tree for their property only, as requests for multiple trees will not be honored.

**CHICKENS, DUCKS, RABBITS & BEE HIVES IN THE VILLAGE:** The work of the Public Safety Committee continues as it considers ordinance language modifications to permit and regulate chickens, ducks, rabbits and bee hives to be housed on properties within the Village of Amherst. Discussion among trustees and residents during the April 12 board meeting centered on the effects on neighboring properties and the methods or means of ordinance enforcement by the village. Because of the minimal amount of public input, village trustees would welcome more comments from our village residents on these proposed changes. I would ask that you state your thoughts on allowing chickens, ducks, rabbits and bee hives on residential or business properties be sent along in written form. Your statements can be dropped off in the clerk's office, placed in the village hall drop-box, mailed to the village clerk (160 Mill Street, PO Box 36, Amherst) or sent along by email to [vilamher@wi-net.com](mailto:vilamher@wi-net.com). We look forward to your responses.

**COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE: FOCUS ON THE AMHERST BUSINESS PARK:** UWSP students will be sharing their ideas for the Amherst Business Park at a Community Open House on Tuesday, May 10 from 2:30-4:30 at the Jensen Center. Join them as they present their capstone planning projects. This event is open to the public, so all are invited to take time to stop by to review and discuss these design concepts and ideas for the future development of the Amherst Business Park.



**TRIAL RUN FOR "NO MOW MAY" FOR PRIVATE LAWNS:** In line with the actions of numerous Wisconsin villages and cities, the Village Board recently acted to initiate No Mow May in Amherst. This program seeks to increase pollinator-friendly habitat by encouraging pollinator-friendly lawn care practices through voluntary actions by property owners and residents in their own yards. Starting May 1, this resolution will suspend the enforcement of a portion of Village Ordinance Chapter 24, Section 24.06 D (3) for property owners who decide to voluntarily delay mowing and other lawn care practices for their yards. While pollinator species emerge and early flowering grasses get established, the grassy groundcover may exceed established ordinance height restrictions. Property owners will be required to bring their lawns back into compliance by June 15. Please note that residents and property owners are still expected to mow the public street right-of-way that abuts their private property as per Village Ordinance Chapter 24, Section 24.06.D (3) during this time. As this is a trial run, village residents are asked to provide written comments regarding this program. Your statements can be dropped off in the clerk's office, placed in the village hall drop-box, mailed to the village clerk (160 Mill Street, PO Box 36, Amherst) or sent along by email to [vilamher@wi-net.com](mailto:vilamher@wi-net.com). We look forward to your responses.

**RISING FUEL COSTS TRIGGER FEE INCREASES:** Harter's Fox Valley Disposal handles the collection and disposal of the garbage and recyclables placed in those residential bins we roll out to the curb every week. Recently, the Village of Amherst was notified by Harter's that an additional fuel surcharge would be applied to our monthly invoice as per our contract to cover the increased price of diesel fuel for their trucks. This means that our current monthly garbage and recycling fee will need to increase to \$13.00 per residential unit with this May's utility billing to cover this surcharge. Monthly charges may continue to be modified based upon changes in the price of fuel or changes in the tipping fees charged at the Portage County Waste Transfer Facility.

**WHEN PLANNING THOSE PROJECTS AROUND THE HOUSE:** As this springtime weather encourages us to consider working on all those to-do items around our homes, this is also a good time to send a reminder along that some of these outdoor improvements may need to be reviewed by the village Zoning Administrator. Of course, new structures require an approved zoning permit. But when considering the installation or expansion of other items like fences, garages, garden sheds, patios, decks, permanent swimming pools, porches, signage or solar panels, some determinations may first need to be made by the Zoning Administrator regarding property line setbacks and zoning ordinance requirements. Questions regarding these projects should be directed to Zoning Administrator David Drake. Zoning information and zoning permit forms can be obtained by contacting Village Clerk Jodi Patoka at the Village Hall. The maintenance and improvements of properties within the Village of Amherst continue to reflect the time and efforts of our residents and business owners, and we would ask that you keep the Zoning Administrator in mind in your planning process.

**DNR PFAS WATER SAMPLING PROJECT:** As part of our state's efforts to ensure Wisconsinites have access to safe drinking water, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has launched a new, voluntary program for communities that are interested in learning whether their municipal water supply is impacted by per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The DNR will partner with participating communities like the Village of Amherst to facilitate sampling, communicate results and support follow-up actions if needed. Impacted communities may be able to access resources from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The Amherst village staff conducted the water sampling activities for this program in mid-April, and we await the results from the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene.

**SHARING INFORMATION IMPORTANT TO ALL OF US:** While today there are many platforms for the sharing of information and the exchange of ideas, I have felt that a village newsletter in this traditional pamphlet format to be of value in reaching out to most of our village residents. It is important that you continue to share your thoughts, comments and questions regarding these particular items as well as other issues with the members of our Village Board.