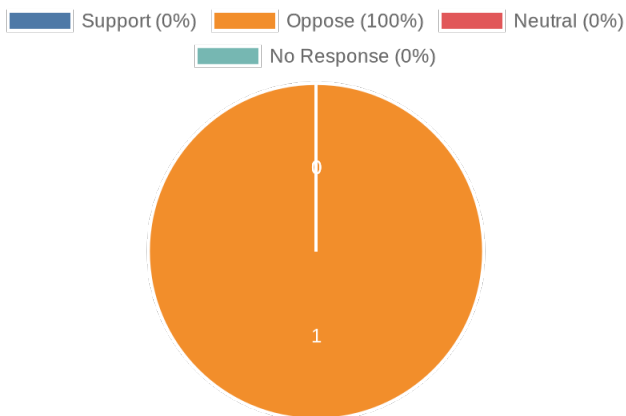


Overall Sentiment



Andrew Meindl

Location:

Submitted At: 6:19am 09-22-25

I urge the Council to oppose this new round of borrowing.

The staff report recommends issuing over \$26.6 million in new debt to fund the 2025–2029 Capital Improvement Plan. While the numbers may appear manageable on paper, each issuance compounds long-term obligations at a time when Wauwatosa residents are already stretched by rising property taxes, reassessment impacts, and looming rate hikes in sanitary, storm, and water utilities.

The City notes that sanitary and storm coverage ratios can support this issuance, but this assumes future rate increases of 3% for sanitary and 5% for storm in 2026, with additional adjustments in later years. Water rates are also expected to rise as the utility's return falls below PSC thresholds, necessitating another conventional rate increase by 2027. These are hidden costs to residents, layered on top of property tax pressures.

The argument that “we remain below our debt capacity” misses the point: debt service as a share of the operating budget will grow, limiting flexibility to respond to emergencies, unfunded liabilities, or economic downturns. With \$147 million in outstanding general obligation debt after this issuance, we risk normalizing unsustainable borrowing as business-as-usual.

Residents deserve a pause and a serious prioritization process before adding another \$26.6 million in obligations. Council should reject this issuance and require a transparent reassessment of which projects are essential, which can be deferred, and how costs will truly affect taxpayers and ratepayers over the next decade.