

2026 Budget

Executive Budget

Committee of the Whole
September 30, 2025



Agenda



1. Budget overview
2. Budget highlights
3. Upcoming meetings

2026 EXECUTIVE BUDGET | Budget Highlights

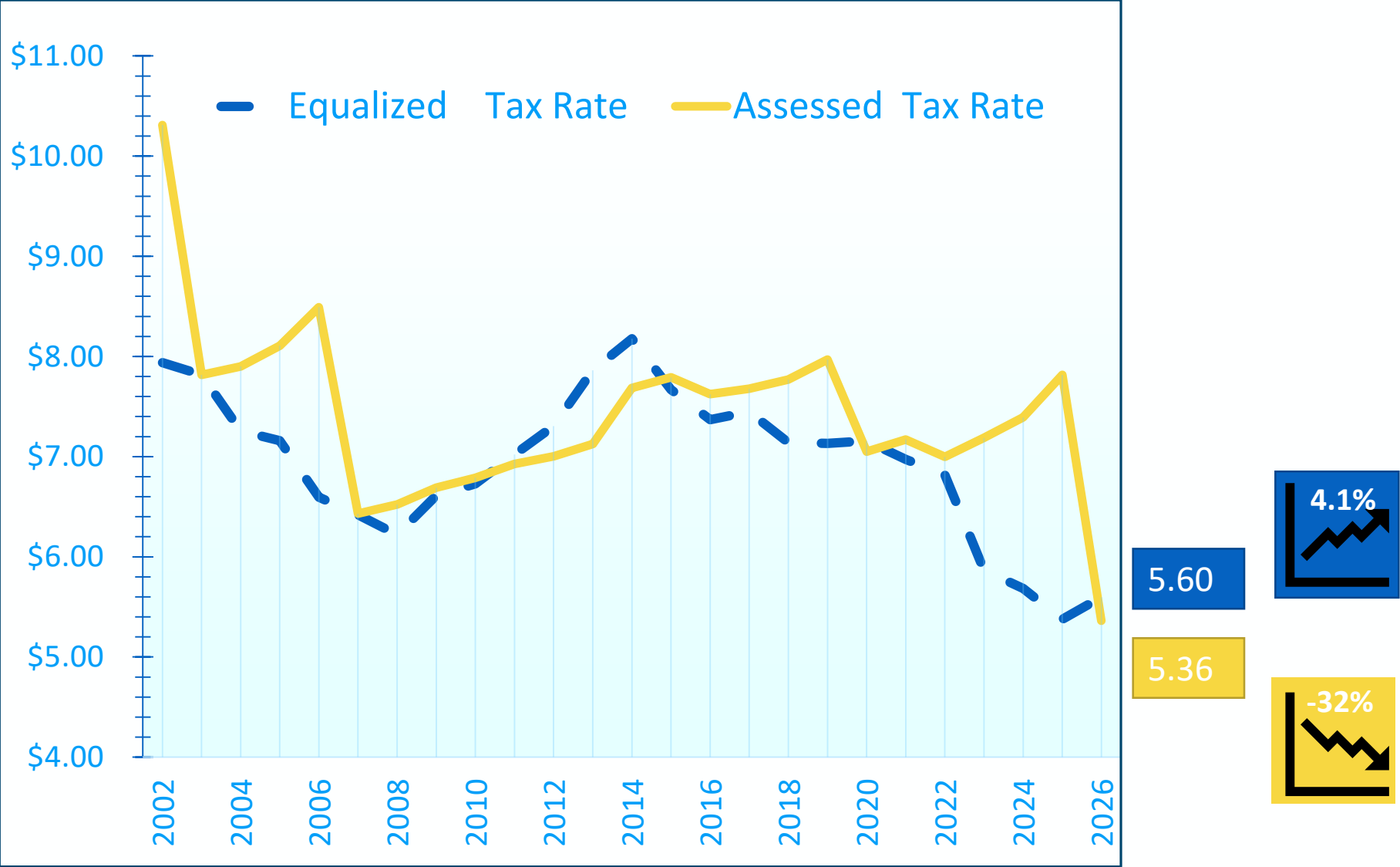


The Budget’s Impacts on Tax Bills

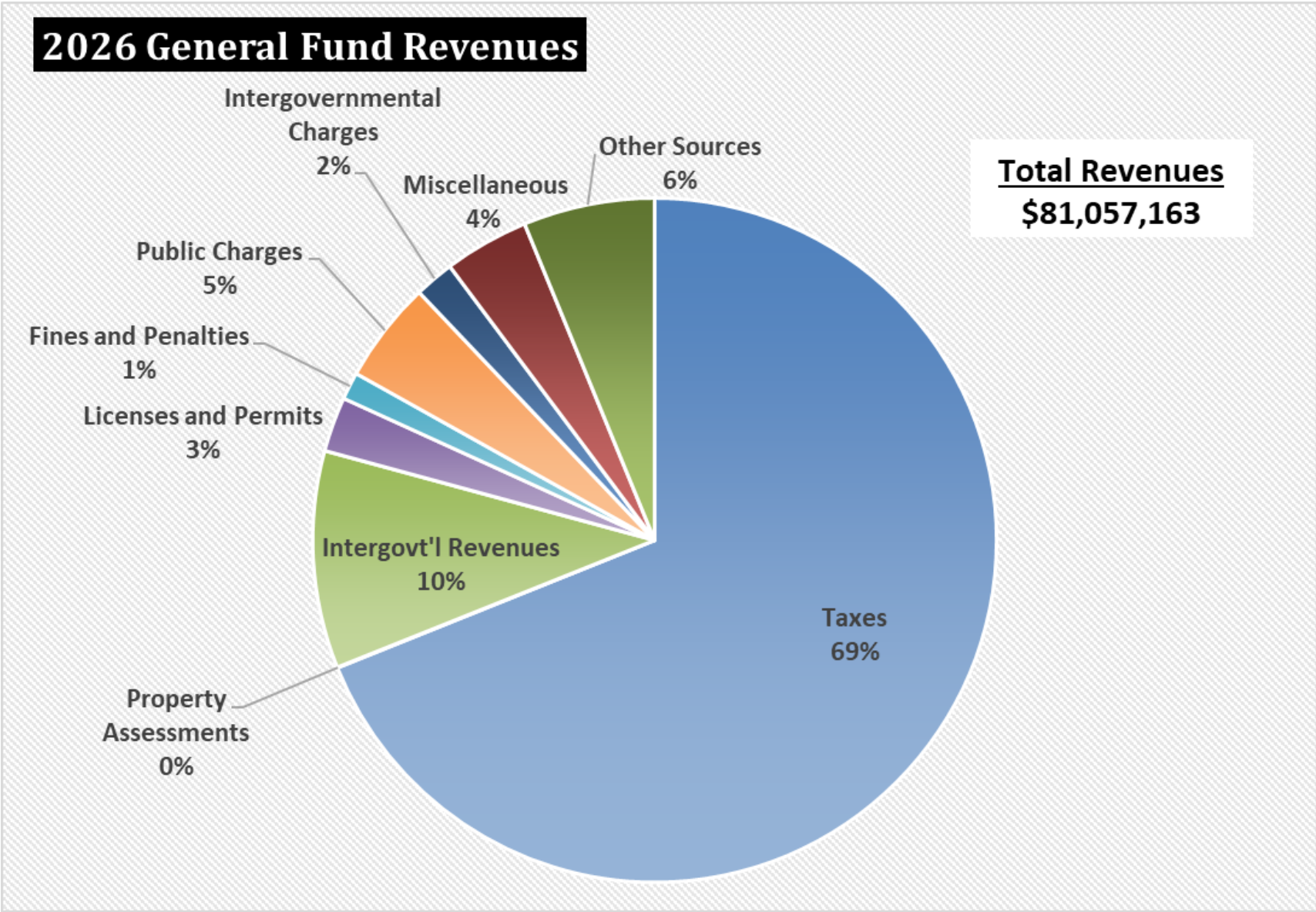
- We expect that the city tax bill for the average Wauwatosa home will increase by 8.21% in 2026.
- This represents a \$176 increase (from \$2,142 to \$2,318) based on the average assessed value of \$420,000.

	2026	Amount Changed	Percent Changed
Property Tax Levy	\$53,127,153	\$1,045,526	⬆️ 2.01%
Assessed Value	\$9,908,048,300	\$3,244,030,312	⬆️ 48.7%
Tax rate (est)	\$5.36	\$(2.45)	⬆️ 31.4%

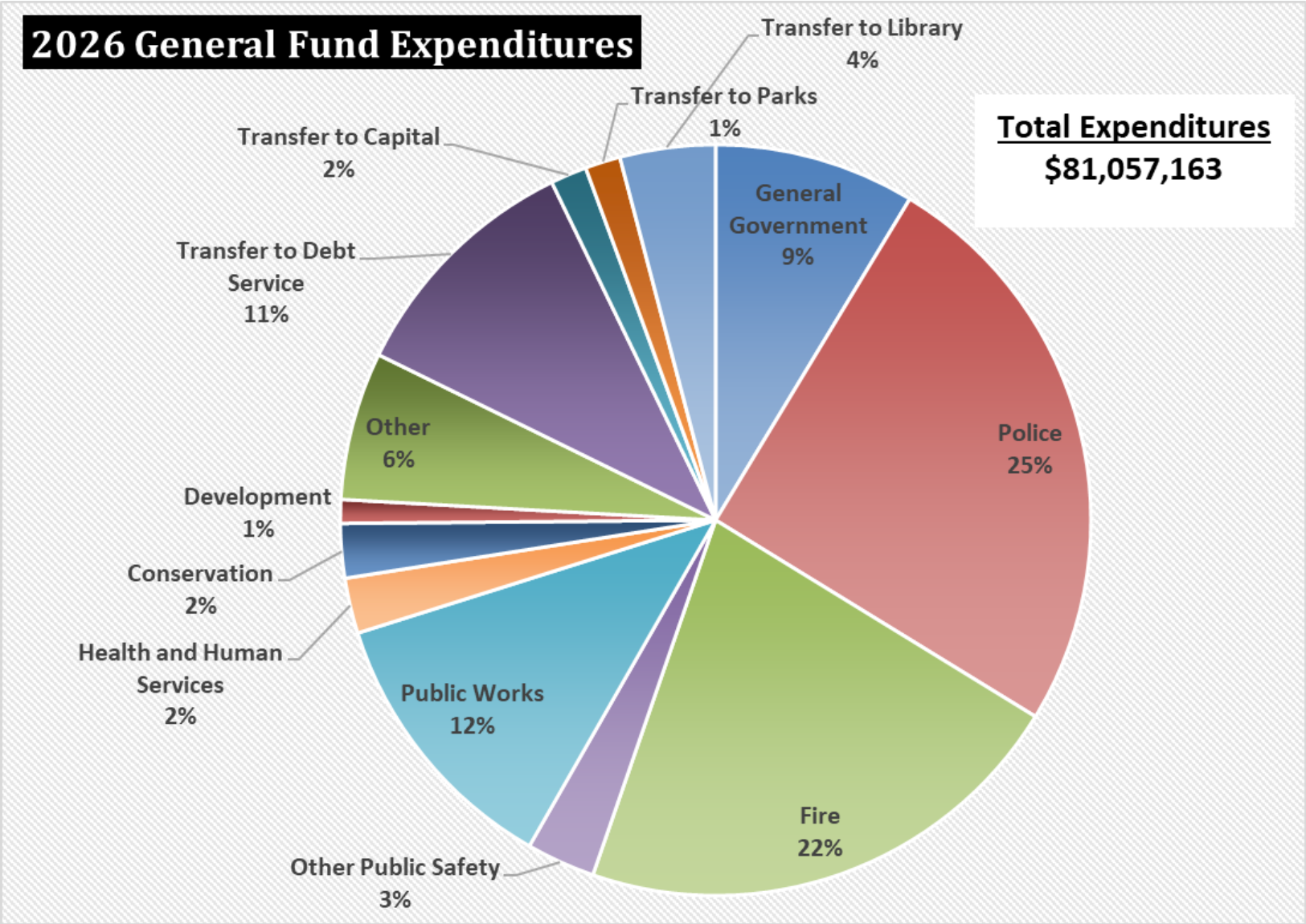
2026 EXECUTIVE BUDGET | Property Tax Rate Over Time



2026 EXECUTIVE BUDGET| Expenditures and Revenues



2026 EXECUTIVE BUDGET | Expenditures and Revenues



2026 EXECUTIVE BUDGET | Budget Highlights

The 2026 Budget **does not** reflect any budget considerations from the potential fire merger, flooding, or the Library/City Hall renovation project.

Tax rates and property values are estimates as Board of Review has not yet concluded



2026 EXECUTIVE BUDGET | Budget Highlights



Yard Waste Shifting From Biweekly to Monthly

- Collection will remain from April to October
- During collection, residents can:
 - Drop yard waste at the Drop Off Center for free (previously an \$5 fee)
 - Purchase a yard waste cart to store waste until the next collection (\$85 per cart)

2026 EXECUTIVE BUDGET | Budget Highlights

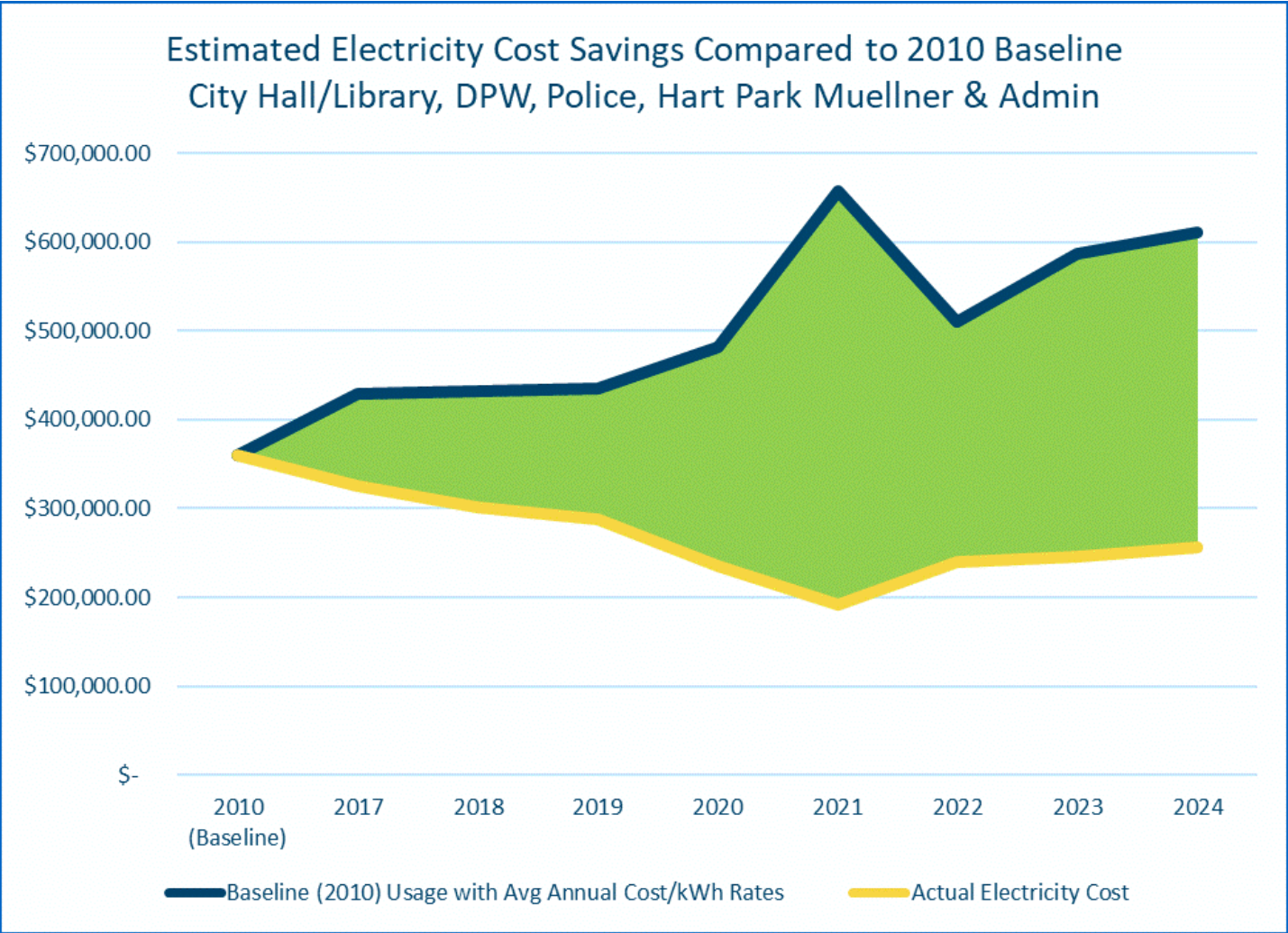


Fire Department Leaves a Position Unfilled

- Saves \$110,000
- Does not require a layoff
- This decision will contribute to more “brownouts”– times when an engine is unavailable because there are not enough firefighters to staff it

**Service will be covered by neighboring engines and mutual aid agreements, ensuring emergency response coverage is maintained.*

2026 EXECUTIVE BUDGET | Budget Highlights



Savings Through Energy Efficiency

- Investments in energy efficiency and solar saved over \$2 million since 2017.
- We continue our strategy to make smart purchases and incremental investments that drive long-term energy savings.

2026 EXECUTIVE BUDGET | Budget Highlights

Technology Investments in Public Safety

- The proposed additional \$170,000 in the 2026 budget is part of a 10-year contract with Axon, one of the few providers of body-worn camera systems – critical tools in transparent policing.
- A second drone would support our law enforcement through extended operations, large events, and other critical needs.



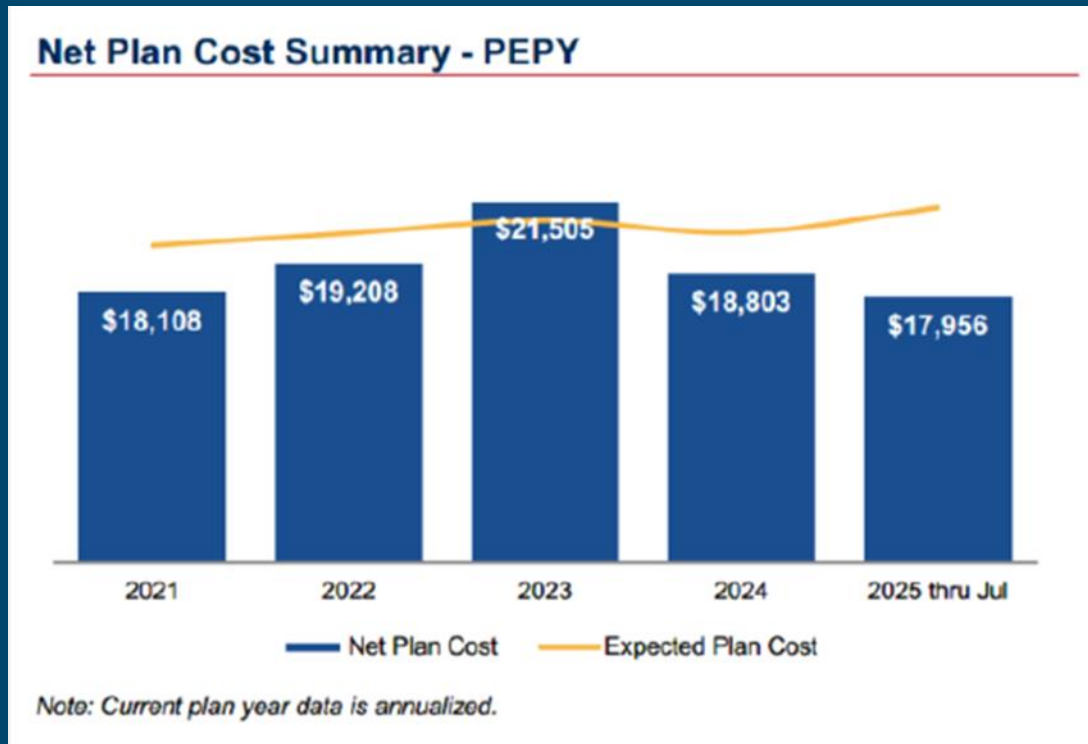
2026 EXECUTIVE BUDGET | Budget Highlights



Adding Library Service

- We check out more items per FTE staff than all but three libraries in Wisconsin. In 2024, **871,541 items** were checked out, nearly a record for our library.
- We have expanded circulation desk staff hours to meet ongoing customer demand.
- The Library requested two additional Librarians to enhance service and meet customer demand, but we were unable to fund these positions.

2026 EXECUTIVE BUDGET | Compensation & Benefits



- 3% COLA for non-represented employees
- WRS Rate from 6.95% to 7.2%
- No plan design changes to healthcare
- We anticipate a 4% increase to healthcare premiums

2026 EXECUTIVE BUDGET | Timeline

October 7, 2025: Financial Affairs Committee

Departmental review of the budget

October 14, 2025: Financial Affairs Committee

Departmental review of the budget (continued)

October 21, 2025: Financial Affairs Committee

Amendments and potential adoption of the operating budget

October 28, 2025: Committee of the Whole

Overview of the capital budget and a public hearing for the operating budget

November 4, 2025: Financial Affairs Committee

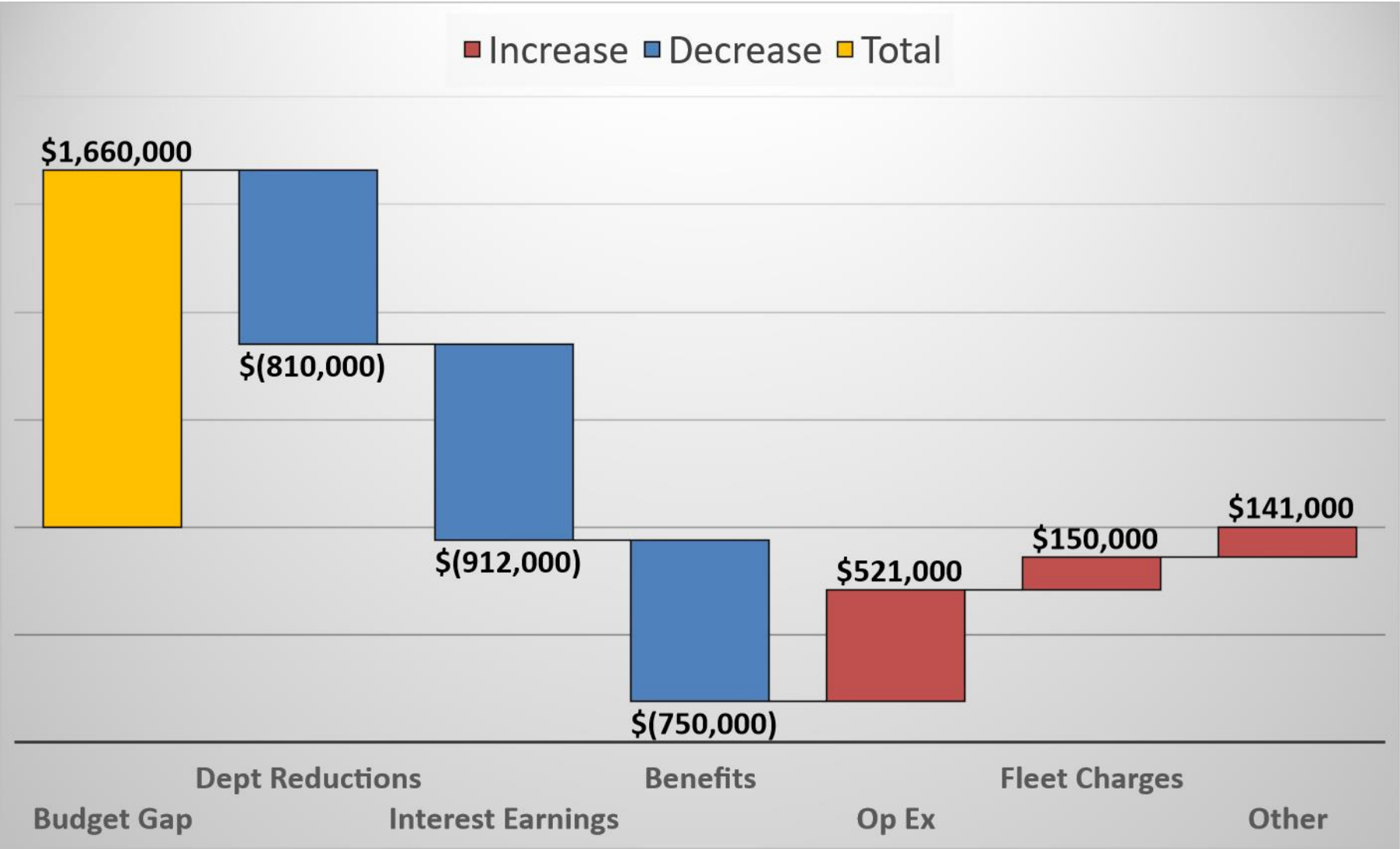
Amendments of the capital budget

November 18, 2025: Common Council

Potential budget adoption



2026 EXECUTIVE BUDGET | Budget Gap Map



Questions?