



Town of Florence, Wisconsin

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Did You Know. . . Florence Facts

The Annual Town Meeting (shared 04-16-26)

Did you know that the Town has an Annual Meeting every year? State law requires that an Annual Meeting is held in each Town every year. **Did you know that this is also required by Wisconsin Statutes 60.11?** In most cases the Annual Meeting must be held on the 3rd Tuesday in April, so for 2026 the Annual Meeting will be on Tuesday, April 21, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. If the meeting is held on this date, no public notice is required, but the Town of Florence still posts a notice for the meeting, and the notice for the annual meeting is posted on the Town website for the next year following the annual meeting for the current year.

Did you know that there are circumstances where the date can be changed to a different date? The change in date should be set at the Annual Meeting prior to the date change. For example, the Annual Meeting for 2027 should be on Tuesday, April 20, 2027, but Wi Statute allows it to be changed to a date within 10 days after that date if it is set at this year's annual meeting.

Did you know that the annual meeting must be held in the same location as last year's annual meeting? The Town Board has the ability to change the location unless the board takes formal action to change the location of the meeting. If formal action is taken, the Town must publish a notice stating the location of the meeting, not more than 20 nor less than 15 days before the meeting.

Did you know that the only required order of business for the annual meeting is for the board to present "a statement of the financial condition of the town" under WI Statute 60.41? This financial statement is prepared by the Town's auditor. It includes the previous year's revenues and expenditures and the current indebtedness of the Town.

Did you know that the Annual Meeting is unique to Towns? The electors have an opportunity to exercise their unique powers. The annual meeting is one of the last forms of direct democracy left in the country where locals can actually vote on things directly and not through elected representatives. This does not happen at the city level or the village level, so this does make towns unique.

At the beginning of the meeting the Town Chair will announce the business to be transacted at the meeting (the agenda). **Did you know that the chair then asks if anyone has additional items they would like to have added?** There are items that electors have direct powers that they can take action on and there are items that electors can vote on that would be considered "advisory" only.

Did you know that to vote at the Annual Meeting you have to be a qualified elector of the Town? This means that you are eligible to be a voter in the Town, but you don't necessarily need to be a registered voter. You simply need to meet all of the qualifications to be a voter:

- You are a citizen of the United States
- You are at least 18 years of age
- You have resided at the address you are claiming to live at for at least 28 consecutive days prior to the meeting
- You are not currently serving a sentence including incarceration, parole, probation or extended supervision for a felony conviction
- You are otherwise eligible to vote

Did you know that the electors have a list of Direct Powers at the Town meeting?

This list is given under WI Statute 60.10(1). It includes: raise money including levying taxes, to pay for expenses of the town, unless the authority has been delegated to the town board; town offices and officers; fix the compensation of elective town offices; provide for the appointment by the Town Board of the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer; cemeteries to authorize the acquisition and conveyance of cemeteries; hourly wage of certain employees to establish the hourly wage to be paid to a town employee who is also an elected town officer unless the authority has been given to the Town Board.

Did you know that the electors have an additional list of Directives or Grants of Authority at the Town meeting? This list is given under WI Statute 60.10(2). It includes: Purchase of Land to authorize the Town Board to purchase any land within the Town for present or anticipated Town purposes; Town buildings to authorize the Town Board to purchase, lease or construct buildings for the use of the town; Disposal of property to authorize the Town Board to dispose of Town real property, other than property donated and required to be held by the Town for a specific purpose. "Directives" are a requirement for the Town Board to act.

Did you know that the electors can authorize the Town Board to appropriate money?

This authorization and list of items can be found in WI Statute 60.10(3). The Town meeting may authorize the town board to appropriate money in the next annual budget for: conservation of natural resources, civic functions, insects, weeds and animal diseases, rural numbering systems, cemetery improvements. "Authorizations" are necessary for the board to act, but not a mandate to act or move forward with the authorized matter.

Did you know that the three types of items the electors can vote on each have a different impact to the Town Board? Items under (1) are binding. Items under (2) are mostly grants of authority that the board would need to take various actions such as purchasing land or building a building. The electors can vote to authorize the Town Board to take certain actions, such as purchasing land, but the Town Board will ultimately decide whether to move forward with the project. Finally, items under (3) are grants of authority to appropriate money for certain limited purposes. Grants of authority provide permission to act, but do not place binding mandates on the board. If the statutes do not give the electors any power to act on a particular item, any resulting vote on that issue would be purely advisory to the Town Board and not binding. This does not mean that other items should not be brought up at annual meeting, but rather that other items voted on are advisory in nature.

Did you know that you can find Annual Meeting information on the Town of Florence website? This information includes the date, time and location of the next regularly scheduled Annual Meeting, minutes from the last couple annual meetings and the audited financial report. A tentative agenda can also be found, but it is tentative in nature only. As mentioned above the agenda may change if an elector requests something be added at the beginning of the meeting.

The Town of Florence is proud to have open, transparent government. It means that people can clearly see what the Town is doing, why it is doing it, and how decisions are made. Open and transparent means that information is not hidden, decisions are made at meetings open to the public, and questions and answers can be shared from the Board with the community. The ultimate goal is that people can see and understand the decisions that are made, how to ask questions, and share information

One way the Town of Florence is looking to accomplish this is by sharing informational facts about the Town and the Town's government. Through sharing facts, the Town is looking to help increase awareness and understanding of local Government.