



"In the Spirit of Town Government"

Town of Buchanan
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Re: Stormwater Equivalent Runoff Unit (ERU)

In 2018 the Garners Creek Stormwater Utility disbanded, which was comprised of the Town of Buchanan, Village of Combined Locks and the Village of Harrison, with each community creating its own Stormwater Utility. The Buchanan Stormwater Utility is in charge of managing the Town's stormwater system for both water quantity (flood control) and quality (pollutants), which is required in part by its DNR MS4 Permit. At that time, Buchanan decided to charge an Equivalent Runoff Unit (ERU) fee in order to operate the Utility but only to properties generally west of STH 55; both Combined Locks and Harrison also charge a fee, but to all properties in their communities. Additional information about the Utility can be found on the Town's website at <https://www.townofbuchanan.org/town-services/drainage-stormwater-management>.

In the fall of 2023, during the budget process and spring of 2024, information was presented to the Utility regarding who is and isn't paying into the Stormwater Utility but no further discussion or action was taken. The data was provided from a study Cedar Corporation (Town engineer) performed in 2019 when this was first discussed as well as additional mapping/evaluation in 2023. In April 2025, discussion was initiated again regarding this topic of who should be paying into the Utility with discussions held in May, June and July. Public meeting agendas, minutes, documents and video recordings can be found at <https://www.townofbuchanan.org/your-government/agendas-minutes>. While this detailed information is available online, below is a summary of the benefits property owners receive and reasons why the Utility is considering charging more properties.

The Utility oversees and manages, through the ERU fee, the storm sewer system, stormwater management ponds controlled by the Town, culverts, ditches, erosion control, street sweeping, and the yard waste transfer station. While not all properties have all the same stormwater devices, all properties benefit from the services provided through the Utility. In addition, the Streambank Erosion Control Program, which is funded through the Utility, was recently expanded to the entire Town, so all properties that abut a stream with erosion issues are eligible for the program.

Town staff, paid through the Utility, also respond to property owner concerns regarding drainage and erosion control. As the Town is very flat and has poor drainage, there are many concerns that staff take time to speak to and meet with property owners and perform research on their properties to assist with these issues.

Finally, when the Garners Creek Stormwater Utility disbanded, Buchanan, Combined Locks, Harrison, in addition to the Village of Kimberly, entered into an intergovernmental agreement which all four communities agreed to share in the cost of stormwater related infrastructure in order

to meet DNR MS4 permit requirements at a cost share of 25% each. Buchanan is required to help pay for projects outside of its municipal boundary with total project costs ranging from \$400,000 to \$875,000 within the Garners Creek Sub-Watershed 2023 TMDL Plan of Action Report based on the Garners Creek Stormwater Management Plan (generally west of STH 55). Additionally, the Utility developed a Stormwater Management Plan for the Fox River, Kankapot Creek and Plum Creek Sub-Watersheds which requires stormwater management improvements (generally east of STH 55).

Operation costs only continue to increase each year and with the larger capital project costs also required to meet permitting requirements, additional funding is necessary over time to meet these needs. Therefore, the following was proposed by the Utility at its July 15, 2025 meeting for consideration:

1. Increase the ERU from \$120 to \$150 per year for the entire Town.
2. Residential properties added to the ERU charge (east of STH 55) would be charged 50% of the ERU or \$75.
3. Non-residential properties added to the ERU charge (east of STH 55) would be charged 25% of the ERU which is based on total impervious surface calculation. This would increase over time but would allow property owners to implement on site stormwater facilities in order to apply for credits to the ERU.
4. Evaluates and update the ERU Credit Policy to incorporate residential subdivisions as well as consider water quality in addition to water quantity credits.

The Stormwater Utility continues to discuss this concept of expanding the ERU fee to additional properties. Property owners are welcome to attend the meetings or watch online to learn more about it and provide feedback regarding the proposed changes.

If the Utility decides to make changes and add properties east of STH 55, it will engage with its engineer to perform a final analysis of what properties would be included and what each would pay.

If you have questions please feel free to contact Michael J. D. Brown, Administrator, at michaelb@townofbuchanan.wi.gov or 920-734-8599.