

Board stays silent on state budget

Written by Mark Jaeger

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Trustees decline offer to take public stand on collective bargaining

Even though the quintessential topic of the day is how Gov. Scott Walker's budget repair bill will affect local taxpayers, the Saukville Village Board opted Tuesday to stay out of the debate.

Village President Barb Dickmann broached the topic during the Finance Committee meeting, saying the League of Wisconsin Municipalities and the Wisconsin Education Association Council invited the board to comment on the state budget.

The League's offer was open-ended, saying it would post the village's position on the question on its Web site.

Dickmann is president of the League, but did not push trustees to take a stand on Walker's spending plan.

The state teachers' union invitation for feedback was more deliberate, asking the board to endorse a model resolution calling for the retention of local control over collective bargaining.

"We are a community of Democrats, Republicans and a little in between. I don't know what anyone's position is on this," Dickmann told trustees.

"I think I would be remiss if I didn't bring these options to your attention. We could take a stand, or we could just throw this material in the garbage."

Board members were reluctant to charge into the budget fray, at least as a collective body.

"I think it would be better if we all did it individually," Trustee Jen Schoenfeldt said. "When we act as a board, we are speaking for 4,000-plus people."

Her colleagues agreed there was no need for the board to take a position on the state budget.

Village Administrator Dawn Wagner said the final resolution of the state budget and how collective bargaining is redefined will become a local concern.

"There will be things we need to update once the dust settles on this. We will be impacted," Wagner said.

Even though Walker's bill does not affect police officers in the village's largest union, the municipality does have 11 employees represented by collective bargaining units. Their contracts run through 2012.