

FAD Comments

#	Name	Date	Comment	Staff Comment
1	CWC	6/8/17	Test	
2	Gary Groll	6/13/17	<p>Like this web site suggests, this is "Monkey" business. Who projected the construction projects, and their costs? Names please. Who projected the levels of property tax? Names please.</p> <p>We are requesting an independent assessment, by qualified people we choose!</p>	<p>Tim Bray the County Engineer, is responsible for projecting construction needs in the FAD. Jason Rausch, the County Finance Director, is responsible for projecting property tax needs based on the recommendations provided by the County Engineer. The County Board has final authority to approve budgets and the annual construction program.</p>
3	Steven Carfrae	6/13/17	<p>Dear Crow Wing County Commissioners,</p> <p>I most likely will not be at the meeting on June 15, but I do have a question.</p> <p>I read that 65% of property tax dollars go toward bridges and roads. We have owned property on Ojibwa Road since 1988 and I believe that we have not received a fair share of those dollars for that road.</p> <p>Please, get the process restarted for addressing this road that is in terrible shape. I believe the Ojibwa Road properties are above average in valuation versus other parts of the County. I don't believe that we have had a fair shake as far as Ojibwa Road is concerned.</p> <p>Another option, refund part of the taxes we have paid that go toward roads.</p> <p>Thank you</p>	<p>65% of each FAD residents' township level property tax (line 7 of annual tax statement) goes to fund township-level road and bridge needs. These funds are not used to support construction and maintenance of county roads like Ojibwa Road.</p> <p>7% of each FAD residents' county-level property tax (line 6 of annual tax statement) goes to fund county-level road construction and maintenance.</p> <p>On July 11, the County Board authorized moving with the survey work necessary to prepare a preliminary plan for Ojibwa Road (CR115). It is expected that the survey work will occur yet this fall and preliminary plans will be prepared over winter for property owners to review at an Open House in the early summer of 2018.</p>
4	Anonymous	6/14/17	<p>You need to send out a detailed letter with numbers, detailing the cumulative costs each year for snow plowing, mowing and weeding, resurfacing, construction, etc. - not just charts - to every tax payer in Unorganized Territory within the next few weeks. This letter also needs to include what an individual's property taxes would be once all of the increases have been implemented – for example, for a \$100,000.00 dwelling,</p>	<p>It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The Highway Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets the error.</p> <p>Since the original meeting on June 15th, two other meetings have been offered to inform and dialog with FAD residents.</p>

a \$200,000.00 dwelling, etc. If tax payers are going to pay for this, we should know what we are paying for and how much it is going to cost. That is only fair.

Several years ago County Engineer Tim Bray said that Unorganized Territory deserved the same level of service that the rest of the county received for road maintenance and plowing, and in order to provide that, a private contractor was going to be hired. When we read about it at the time we thought, "This can't be good," because it had rising costs written all over it. We wondered why this decision was even made, since we had not been consulted and in fact were very happy with the plowing and maintenance on our dirt and gravel dead-end road. In fact, before the private contractor was hired, we had called the Highway Department a couple of times to compliment them. And yet recently we see that "level of service" seems to be almost a drum-beat in the County Engineering Department. In a November 22, 2016 Dispatch article it says: "Commissioner Paul Koering said he received multiple phone calls from residents upset with plowing efforts during and after Winter Storm Argos. The complaints originated primarily from residents along McKay Road, according to Koering and Franzen. Koering relayed those complaints to County Engineer Tim Bray and Jory Danielson, highway maintenance supervisor." Does our own favorable opinion of the "level of service" we had been receiving not count? Maybe complaints about a snowstorm need to be taken a bit more lightly. We wish that the majority of people who do not complain, especially during a blizzard, are taken into account. Maybe saying things like we are at the mercy of Mother nature with the county system and First Assessment District are a little negative ("We're at the mercy, with the county system and First Assessment (District), of what Mother Nature throws at us," Danielson said"). When did responding to complaints become more popular than remembering the people who are appreciative, self-reliant and patient? When did punishing everyone with outrageously higher taxes become the solution?

A detail of the 2017 FAD maintenance budget have been available in each of the FAD presentations. A summary of typical construction cost have also been presented.

The following is a link to where the most recent presentation can be found.

<http://crowwing.us/1449/First-Assessment-District-Road-and-Bridg>

The presentations also provided information regarding the scope of potential impacts. It is not based on a per \$100,000 value basis. Rather, it is based on the average taxable value of properties in each of 4 primary property classifications.

The contractor is providing a more timely level of snow plowing services and is using more assets to complete the FAD work. For example, the contractor reports to the unorganized area right away in the morning as opposed to the end of the day when the County plow trucks normally completed the work.

This approach should not only increase service for FAD-road residents, it is also an increase in service for County residents. Having a dedicated work force for the FAD allows County personnel to concentrate on the other 60,000 residents of Crow Wing County.

We do value the input of FAD residents regarding how this new approach is working. We have heard both some complaints and some compliments. Ultimately, it will be up to the County Board to decide whether or to what extent this new approach continues and for what duration of time.

It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The Highway Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets the error. At the time of the first meeting, a second meeting of FAD residents was scheduled for those who were unable to make it into the meeting room, A postcard was also subsequently mailed

We first became aware about the proposed tax increases after seeing the June 6, 2017 Dispatch article. There was no mail notification, by the way. We are not the only ones who did not receive any notification – not one person we have spoken to since June 6th had heard about the property tax increases, either. We decided to research this and found the May 17, 2017 Dispatch article online, which again repeated what has apparently been the result of hiring a private contractor. It states in part: “In April, County Administrator Tim Houle said two main factors are contributing to the dwindling fund balance in Unorganized—increased maintenance costs associated with snowplowing township roads and the normal inflation of costs of goods and services the county is purchasing on behalf of the assessment district.” So the chickens have indeed come home to roost. But wait – if the inflation is normal, then why such a drastic increase?

Why the super-inflated level of proposed property tax increases for Unorganized Territory? Inflation has been extremely low during this time period. It seems in part due to this idea of “level of service expectation,” which we personally have not had a problem with and do not believe that most people would have a problem with it, especially if they knew what you think you need to maintain it. No one asked us what level of service we want. The same November 22, 2016 article states: “Jory Danielson, assistant county engineer, told the board costs of the maintenance activities in the bid were favorable, but represented a sizable jump overall. An estimate of the increase was about 20 percent over those in the earlier contract. ‘We attribute that to upkeep and a higher level of service expectation,’ Danielson said. Spreading that across the six-year span the contracts cover, however, means an increase of slightly more than 3 percent each year.” What higher level of service expectation? The people who live on a road or two? Further, the article states: “Another change to the contract converted costs for mowing and sweeping from lump sums to hourly. Danielson said a rough estimate of this impact was a 20 to 30 percent reduction in costs.”

with a more appropriate notice period for the third meeting of FAD residents on July 17.

The County Board remains interested in hearing from FAD residents about their preferred solutions to the issues being raised. The initial proposal of 12%-18% for the first 3-4 years and then 4-5% for the next 6-7 years represents simply a starting point for this important dialog with FAD residents.

Other options exist and will be investigated as this conversation continues.

So we have a slightly more than 3 percent increase each year for six years, which is doable - and a 20-30 percent reduction in mowing and sweeping costs. The proposed property tax increases amount to at the minimum a 78 percent increase over 9 years! Do the math on the higher numbers and it's 173 percent over 11 years. That's insane, especially factoring in the contract increase which only amounts to 19 percent over six years. These suggested increases are way out of line.

Why not go back to the County maintaining the roads internally right now? It would certainly be more cost effective for us personally and evidently for the County, given these proposed increases. Again in the November 2016 article: "Chairman Doug Houge asked Danielson if there was a point when increases in the contract meant it was more cost effective for county employees to resume maintenance internally. 'At some point, it would be,' Danielson said. 'I don't believe we're there yet. There also would be an increase on the county's end, and also at a loss of service that we're providing on our county road system.'" Again we are back to service levels. We are all for keeping roads safe during winter and for keeping them drivable in any season, however you need to go back to the drawing board like the rest of us do when it comes to finances.

A 78 percent increase in taxes over 9 years or 173 percent over 11 years seems way too high for road construction. If this goes through, the property taxes in our rural area would be as high as those in a major metropolitan community. Something is wrong with this picture. Our income has decreased in the last decade or so, with few if any cost-of-living increases. Just about every aspect of our personal budget will be affected for years to come because you have decided for us that we needed a private contractor and a fast-track to road construction.

Why no mailing? Back to the May 15, 2017 article: "Commissioners agreed to allow Bray to proceed with

planning public meetings for Unorganized, and requested a mailing be sent to residents once the meeting schedule was established. Bray is expected to present the meeting schedule at the May 23 county board meeting." Mailing? The "mailing" mentioned in the May article was apparently never sent out since we did not receive a mailing. Neither did the people we spoke to.

Another concern we have is a slightly odd attitude - again from the May 15, 2017 article: "If nobody shows up (for meetings), that's the way it works," Koering said. "That's why people elected us to make a decision. ... We have to make tough decisions." If this remark was captured accurately, a reply would be that perhaps nobody "shows up for meetings" because they don't know about them. It's not on everyone's radar to check the County website or to learn how to navigate it to find relevant news, and why should it be? Or maybe people just can't attend because they have busy lives. And maybe you don't receive comments or feedback because you don't send out mailings letting your constituents know about these matters. By the way, the only way we were able to comment was because we had to look this comment form up on the county website, which again most people don't actually do. No mailings were received. Why?

In this matter you seem to have no actual, overall accountability like the rest of us do in our own private sector jobs, and you jump to the highest levels of services and increases instead of seeking out the most conservative methods like most people. Something is wrong.

5	Anonymous	6/15/17	<p>I live on a zero maintenance road. The County will not do any work on that road, even tree trimming the right of way because of it being a 'named' private road. I understand taxes need to go up. What makes me pucker is how much and how fast. Who allowed this shortfall to happen? As wide as the map states, my Merrifield side sees less traffic than the 371 side. Are we picking up the slack for the 371 side? The return on investment has me losing money on this deal. Do some work on my road, I would feel better. I averaged math for 4 years at 15% and 6 years at 4%, my taxes are going to go up 221% over the next decade. I'll be paying OVER \$4000 just to live on my property. I already qualify for energy assistance, free school meals for my kids and MA for my family. AND I get a property tax refund every year. I just can't swing the numbers you guys are wanting. We make less than the median income as averaged in the county</p>	<p>The proposed increases to FAD property tax only applies to the township-level portion of your overall tax bill. This is line 7 on the annual tax statement. Many have mistaken that the proposed percentages will be applied to the total annual tax amount contained on line 14.</p> <p>Although the proposed percentages are significant, only applying them to line 7 produces much different results than if applied to the total annual tax bill found on line 14.</p> <p>Private roads are not maintained with public funds collected from an annual property tax levy. All owners pay property taxes regardless if they live on or utilize publically funded roadways or not.</p> <p>The projected shortfall in 2021 is due to increased cost of maintenance associated with a higher level of maintenance and reconstruction. It is also due to costs of routine maintenance on FAD roads being completely covered by FAD taxes, which, unfortunately, has not historically been the case.</p>
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6	Anonymous	6/15/17	<p>Generate more funding so that this is not depleted. The roads are vital to our community and basic maintenance is not a solid plan going forward (past 2020). I fully support paying additional tax dollars (if necessary) to remain responsible in the obligation to residents, to keep high quality roads in our community.</p> <p>According to the flyer, it appears that the existing Road & Bridge Levy is disproportionate to the population and should be adjusted to maintain adequate support of our infrastructure. It is irresponsible to spend all of the existing funds with no plan for how to address future needs.</p>	<p>The current proposal is to generate the funds necessary to adequately address the deteriorated condition of the FAD road system. It also intended to generate the appropriate amount needed to maintain and protect those roadway investments funded by taxpayer dollars.</p>
7	Anonymous	6/15/17	<p>It is sad I just received this in the mail this afternoon 3 hours before the meeting. I am unable to be there to vocalize my disagreement with this.</p> <p>My road Lisa Lane is dirt and rarely gets leveled, and the neighbors plow the road as we often wait 3 days for a plow to come after it snows.</p> <p>Woida road past Inglewood hasn't been tarred since 1978 and has traffic from Mills test drives has made it unacceptable to drive on.</p> <p>The ditch gets mowed once in the fall only.</p> <p>I vote a big no, as our taxes aren't being used for our benefit now.</p>	<p>It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The Highway Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets the error.</p> <p>Since the original meeting on June 15th, two other meetings have been offered to inform and dialog with FAD residents.</p> <p>The funding generated by the tax increase proposal will help Woida Road, and others, to be funded prior to extreme deterioration.</p>
8	Jayme Klecker	6/15/17	<p>1. Received flyer on same day as hearing. At best this is short-sighted by the Board to send the letter on such a late date. At worst, it seems like an effort by the Board to deter attendance at the meeting. Either way, it is hard to believe that this short notice is valid for a public hearing.</p> <p>2. There are several ways to pay for improvements in lieu of across the board property tax. Surely the board has the ability to assign improvement costs to those</p>	<p>It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The Highway Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets the error.</p> <p>This was no more than an oversight and in no way was intended to deter public participation in this important issue. Since the original meeting on June 15th, two other meetings have been offered to inform and dialog with FAD residents.</p>

directly benefiting from them through special assessments.

3. If you want to stop growth in the FAD your plan appears sound. An 18% tax increase compounded for five straight years would more than double current property tax, plus any additional increases from the County and the School district. I'd like to know how closely the Board has looked at affordability of these proposed increases, especially for the number of fixed income residents in the FAD.

4. There is no mention of alternative funding mechanisms, such as bonds, loans, grants, etc. Alternative financing could well offset many of these future costs if properly employed.

5. Because of the FADs proximity to Brainerd/Baxter, the FAD has a higher population density than other Crow Wing County townships. Therefore, the per capita and per household levy information is skewed to look like our levy burden is light. However, the more telling statistic is the levy per mile, ranking 8th over all, and over double of the average. This tells me that instead of these onerous proposed tax increases, the County should do a better job of managing its budget.

Please carefully consider these points before taking any actions. I truly believe better solutions can be found.

Thank you

The use of special assessments to generate funds for needed roadway improvements may be an alternative for the County Board to consider. The financial projections contained in the mailer and presentations do not take into account the use of special property assessments.

Currently, an across the board township-level property tax increase is the only long term alternative that has been considered. Ultimately, the County Board will make the determination as to the appropriate mix of funding sources.

The County has pursued and received grants to complete improvements to the FAD road network. Inglewood Drive and Dellwood Drive were reconstructed in 2015 and 2016 respectively. These projects were completed with state bonding funds exceeding \$600,000.

Both per capita and per mile figures are relevant to this discussion. Along with the higher population density comes increased traffic demand and an associated demand for services such as more frequent snow plowing and summer maintenance activities. This translates to higher levels of services and more expenses compared to less populated townships.

9	Marc Carley	6/15/17	<p>The information flyer arrived in my mailbox on 6/15 and was opened after work, leaving less than an hour to review the material and get to the meeting. Unacceptable. This should have been in the mail early last week. Receiving this notice at such a late date leaves the impression that you are not really interested in feedback from taxpayers</p> <p>Can you explain why the total levy per mile in FAD is so much higher than the average? It seems that paying that much per mile is a large part of the shortfall. If these costs were better controlled there would not be a need to potentially raise property taxes by as much as 18%. I understand that FAD is at the low end of spectrum in total levy per household which has been a nice feature of living in unorganized territory. This will cease to be the case should property taxes increase at the proposed rates. If you want to address this problem find out why FAD tax payers are paying more than twice the average per mile. I am also a bit disappointed to learn of this issue in light of the noticeable reduction in the quality of snow removal over the past few years. I recall seeing county trucks out on Thanksgiving day trying to clean up after the contracted service failed to do what they are paid to do. This may explain some of the added expense per mile in FAD. Marc Carley</p>	<p>It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The Highway Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets the error.</p> <p>This was no more than an oversight and in no way was intended to deter public participation in this important issue. Since the original meeting on June 15th, two other meetings have been offered to inform and dialog with FAD residents.</p> <p>There appears to have been three typographic errors contained on the mailer. The correct figures are highlighted in green below.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1199 602 1885 805"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Total Levy Per Capita (\$)</th> <th>Total Levy Per Household (\$)</th> <th>Total Levy Per Mile (\$)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>FAD Rank/30</td> <td>29th</td> <td>29th</td> <td>8th</td> </tr> <tr> <td>First Assessment District (FAD)</td> <td>\$138</td> <td>\$358</td> <td>\$13,205</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average of All Townships</td> <td>\$367</td> <td>\$825</td> <td>\$10,059</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Although the correct figure for the all township average has increased in the Total Levy Per Mile category, the FAD figure remains 24% higher. This is in-part due to the annual fire contract expense. This contract is higher than other townships due to the higher population, structure value and exposure rates to fire emergencies. The FAD is also paying higher administration costs than most townships. This is due in-part to paying a share of full time county-level professionals in the areas of administration, engineering and financial services.</p>	Category	Total Levy Per Capita (\$)	Total Levy Per Household (\$)	Total Levy Per Mile (\$)	FAD Rank/30	29th	29th	8th	First Assessment District (FAD)	\$138	\$358	\$13,205	Average of All Townships	\$367	\$825	\$10,059
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10	Anonymous	6/15/17	I received flyer after work at 7:00 pm on day of meeting. Please give more advanced notice.	<p>It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The Highway Engineer is responsible and deeply regrets the error.</p>																

11	Thomas Kasmirski	6/15/17	<p>1st I just received the meeting notice on June 15th after the meeting had already begun. Secondly, I would like the chance to have this discussion with other property owners and your board with a little more notice, I'm sure this meeting didn't just come up. This is no way to treat tax paying citizens, and further more I would like to see the books on how the past monies have been used.</p>	<p>It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The Highway Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets the error.</p> <p>This was no more than an oversight and in no way was intended to deter public participation in this important issue. Since the original meeting on June 15th, two other meetings have been offered to inform and dialog with FAD residents.</p>
12	Anonymous	6/15/17	<p>I didn't receive the flyer until Thursday, June 15 when I arrived home after work. As a result, I missed the meeting. These flyers need to be sent out earlier.</p>	<p>It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The Highway Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets the error.</p>
13	Anonymous	6/15/17	<p>We are barely within the township border and live on County Rd 127, not a township road. We travel to our property from out of state, and bring additional revenue to the area.</p> <p>A significant increase that is being proposed would cause us to sell our property.</p>	<p>Thank you for choosing this area to live/visit.</p> <p>The proposed increases to FAD property tax only applies to the township-level portion of your overall tax bill. This is line 7 on the annual tax statement. Many have mistaken that the proposed percentages will be applied to the total annual tax amount contained on line 14.</p> <p>Although the proposed percentages are significant, only applying them to line 7 produces much different results than if applied to the total annual tax bill found on line 14.</p> <p>We sincerely hope you stay.</p>
14	Anonymous	6/16/17	<p>The tax increases are quite aggressive and that seems unfair, the stated levy per mile is high also, we had a large cash balance and now that is nearly gone, were we mismanaged.</p>	<p>The proposed tax increase percentages shared so far are based on a set of initial assumptions. Crow Wing County is seeking input on these assumptions and other factors in order to better understand what options may exist to address this financial challenge.</p> <p>The FAD finances were never misappropriated. All the funds remain in place for use to construct and maintain the system. The cash balance was purposely depleted as it was too high and was spent on reconstruction work on FAD roads. The FAD road system is aging and will need additional road reconstruction done, which current fund</p>

				balances can only sustain through 2020. That is the issue that is causing this conversation. We want FAD residents engaged in helping to determine the best possible solution with you and for you.																
15	Brian McShane	6/16/17	I do not think that I should pay more in taxes when the only road I use to get to my cabin is a state highway. I would gladly pay if someone was going to maintain white gables road and white gables trail, we have to pay a private party for road maintenance now. I just about pay less taxes for a house in Albertville that I can live in all year.	<p>All owners pay property taxes regardless if they live on or utilize FAD roadways or not. Presently 65% of this tax revenue is used to construct and maintain the FAD's road and bridge system.</p> <p>Your tax rate in Crow Wing County is likely a seasonal resident tax rate, which is not as favorable a tax rate as homestead residential, the rate you likely enjoy in Albertville. The class rates for various types of property are determined by the State of Minnesota and administered by Crow Wing County.</p>																
16	Anonymous	6/16/17	<p>The information was poorly explained in the flyer and you were ill prepared for the meeting turn out. You should have expected a larger turn out because taxes are always a concern. The flyer you that was mailed has different information on than the comparison colorful sheet that was handed out at the meeting. Average for all townships on the handout was \$10,059 and the mailer had \$5,926 for the Total Levy per mile. The two columns prior to that also vary.</p> <p>The classification of Drahos Road needs to be changed. The lake side of the road belongs to the DNR and the east side is held by the developer but has not been on the real estate market for over three years. The road is used as a dumping ground, a place to party and deal drug. It is a waste of money for all taxpayers to maintain that road.</p>	<p>It is true the selected venue for the first meeting June 15th was inadequate. Future meetings regarding this issue will be held at a Crow Wing County facility in Brainerd that can better accommodate varying size groups. We apologize that the first site was inadequate. We were trying to choose a site within the FAD boundaries and, as it turned out, it was inadequate. Again, we apologize.</p> <p>There appears to have been three typographic errors contained on the mailer. The correct figures are highlighted in green below.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Total Levy Per Capita (\$)</th> <th>Total Levy Per Household (\$)</th> <th>Total Levy Per Mile (\$)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>FAD Rank/30</td> <td>29th</td> <td>29th</td> <td>8th</td> </tr> <tr> <td>First Assessment District (FAD)</td> <td>\$138</td> <td>\$358</td> <td>\$13,205</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average of All Townships</td> <td>\$367</td> <td>\$825</td> <td>\$10,059</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Drahos road is still considered a FAD public road. Until this changes the County has the responsibility to maintain it as it does other township-level roads in the FAD regardless of the ownership status of any parcels adjacent to the road.</p>	Category	Total Levy Per Capita (\$)	Total Levy Per Household (\$)	Total Levy Per Mile (\$)	FAD Rank/30	29th	29th	8th	First Assessment District (FAD)	\$138	\$358	\$13,205	Average of All Townships	\$367	\$825	\$10,059
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17	Anonymous	6/16/17	<p>I received the flyer 2 days before the June 15th, 2017 meeting. This was very short notice and bad planning on the County's part. Secondly, we on Welton Road, have banded together to pay for our own road, how is this fair to us in paying for improvements and repair to roads not being used by us? Thirdly, I think further clarification was needed on what part of our property tax would go up by your proposed tax increase. Many people, if not all I have talked to thought that the total tax bill they pay could possibly go up the 12-18% which would be a huge increase. I believe you should have more clearly stated that the portion of the total tax bill possibly being raised by the 12-18% is the City or Town part on the property tax statement we recieved. A lot of confusion and stress for all involved could have been elevated, had someone more closely proof read the newspaper articles that you sent out, and the flyer mailed out, and clarified what part of the property tax statement you were talking about. Very poor communication!</p>	<p>It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The Highway Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets the error.</p> <p>This was no more than an oversight and in no way was intended to deter public participation in this important issue. Since the original meeting on June 15th, two other meetings have been offered to inform and dialog with FAD residents.</p> <p>All owners pay property taxes regardless if they live on or utilize FAD roadways or not. This is also true for city residents regardless of whether they travel all or any of the city streets. Whether right or wrong, our system of property taxation does generalize many expenses beyond the degree to which we use or do not use a particular public asset. That is already true for you today though we understand that the existing proposal would exacerbate that situation. Presently 65% of the FAD's tax revenue is used to construct and maintain the FAD's road and bridge system</p> <p>Revenue from township-level property taxes is also utilized to fund Welton Road maintenance activities such as gravel maintenance and snow plowing. Property tax revenue will continue to fund these activities now that it is paved.</p> <p>Currently there is no proposal to change the current policy of requiring assessments for residents desiring to upgrade a FAD road from gravel to bituminous pavement.</p> <p>It is agreed the mailer and other pre-meeting information should have more clearly explained the proposed increases would only apply to the township-level portion of the property tax. The County Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets not being clear about this important piece of information.</p>
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18	Anonymous	6/16/17	<p>I received the information flyer on the day of the meeting. This was very poor in the communication of the information. The information is fine but to receive the information the day of the meeting almost looks like they didn't want people to give input in person. I am sure that is not the case, but very poor planning.</p> <p>I think there needs to be an increase in funding to keep the road up. I just wonder why it took so long, so now the increases are very high for the next couple of years. That is not good planning.</p>	<p>It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The Highway Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets the error.</p> <p>This was no more than an oversight and in no way was intended to deter public participation in this important issue. Since the original meeting on June 15th, two other meetings have been offered to inform and dialog with FAD residents.</p> <p>The rate of increase is based on a number of assumptions, all of which can be adjusted to slow down the rate of increase. This process is precisely about conveying resident's preferences to County Board members who are, ultimately, charged with making the final decisions.</p>
19	Anonymous	6/16/17	<p>I want to know why, with a meeting as important as this was, I was not notified until I received your letter in the mail 2 HOURS prior to the meeting start time????? I do not believe it could not have been mailed a few DAYS prior to the meeting date. This is totally unacceptable.</p>	<p>You are correct, this was unacceptable. The invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The County Engineer accepts full responsibility and deeply regrets the error. That is why we have scheduled two subsequent meetings in order to ensure that residents get a fair opportunity to be heard. In fact, a postcard mailer was sent to every FAD resident with ample notice for the third meeting on July 17. Nonetheless, you remain correct that the notice for the first meeting was unacceptable.</p>
20	Anonymous	6/16/17	<p>I don't really have a comment on the shortfall, but am VERY disappointed that I received the notice the day of the meeting. One would think you could have gotten the notice out more timely. There is no indication when they were sent, but I picked up my Thursday mail about 8 pm, which was too late. Either you were remiss in sending these so we'd receive on time (was that by design?) or the mail service stinks. Next time spend a little more time thinking it through!!!!</p>	<p>It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The County Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets the error.</p> <p>This was no more than an oversight and in no way was intended to deter public participation in this important issue. Since the original meeting on June 15th, two other meetings have been offered to inform and dialog with FAD residents.</p>

21	Anonymous	6/16/17	<p>I think the 18% compounded amount is a little extreme. I would go with a 10% increase. Also I do not see anything on the website about the next Wednesday meeting at courthouse or was it cancelled? Maybe put it in paper again or broadcast on radio?</p>	<p>The initial proposal of 12%-18% for the first 3-4 years and then 4-5% for the next several years does represent a significant increase. Many other options do exist including a flat increase spread out over a longer time period.</p> <p>Notices for the second and third meeting were advertised in the Brainerd Dispatch. A postcard notice of the third meeting was mailed to all FAD residents with a more appropriate lead time.</p>
22	Anonymous	6/16/17	<p>We live on Cove Pointe Road, a private road that we pay to maintain and plow. We should not have to pay extra for other roads.</p>	<p>All owners pay property taxes regardless if they live on or utilize FAD roadways or not. Presently 65% of this tax revenue is used to construct and maintain the FAD's road and bridge system</p>
23	Anonymous	6/16/17	<p>Contrary to Paul Koerings feelings we did not feel that last nights meeting was hostile. Obviously something needs to be done so monies will be in place for road repairs, construction, etc. We are ok with your plan.</p> <p>Concerning your first question we only received survey day of meeting.</p> <p>A question: please comment on whether the contracted snow plowing is all being done by one provider or are there multiples?</p> <p>PS the word "comment" is spelled incorrectly below!??</p>	<p>It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The County Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets the error.</p> <p>This was no more than an oversight and in no way was intended to deter public participation in this important issue. Since the original meeting on June 15th, two other meetings have been offered to inform and dialog with FAD residents.</p>
24	Anonymous	6/16/17	<p>This whole issue is due to inefficiencies and poor job performance of public employees. Accounting errors are what we pay supervisors and directors and county officials for to oversee such things and prevent them from happening. Now we are being asked to trust the same governing body to fix the problem they caused in the first place? You want to fix the problem? Whomever made the mistakes or whatever department failed to do their job needs to be replaced and whoever has oversight on such practices should be relieved of their duties immediately. Obviously we don't need to pay the oversight payroll for this as it's why we're in this cluster now. Sure, it's only \$20 a year more, not a big</p>	<p>It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The County Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets the error.</p> <p>This was no more than an oversight and in no way was intended to deter public participation in this important issue. Since the original meeting on June 15th, two other meetings have been offered to inform and dialog with FAD residents.</p> <p>Your property taxes are a combination of what all of your local taxing jurisdictions have done, e.g. the County the</p>

			<p>deal to most, but when is it ever enough with this darn county? When I bought my house in 2000, my property taxes were \$751, now they are almost \$1,600. WHY have they doubled in 15 years?? Rest assured, I don't care what side of the aisle my commissioner is on, I am voting anybody but that person the next election.</p> <p>Mr. Bray... don't blame your complete screw up of the timing of the notification on being a perfectionist. If you were a perfectionist, you would have had a process in place to get these notifications out sooner. If I operated my job like that I would be fired. You knew you needed to send these out awhile ago, just get it done, no excuses. You plain and simple screwed up and should have been more prepared and executed your duties more efficiently. Yet another waste of our tax dollars on someone that can't populate a simple postcard style notification to their residents with all the resources available to them. You should be ashamed you are collecting a pay check from this past month or more.</p> <p>Regards.</p>	<p>township (FAD), the school district, and any special taxing districts. The county's tax levy in 2008, the year most members of the current County Board were elected, was \$34.2 million. In 2017, it was \$34.4 million, a difference of only \$200,000 over a 9-year period. This represents a .6% total increase and a yearly annual rate of increase of .07%. The County Board has demonstrated remarkable fiscal constraint. In fact, the County's levy has actually been reduced each year since 2011—seven consecutive years of levy reduction—something that has never been done in MN history. It is hard to plausibly argue that they have not been sensitive to tax rate increases at the county level.</p> <p>The FAD rate of tax increase has averaged 5.17% per year. Rising costs have been primarily a reflection of rising fire protection costs, but have also reflected rising road and bridge expenses as well. As such, your FAD taxes have not quite doubled in the last 17 years.</p> <p>Given the rate of increase in the county and the FAD, we can only surmise that you may wish to check with other taxing jurisdictions regarding rates of increase greater than the above to support a doubling of your taxes in 17 years.</p>
25	Tam Paulson	6/17/17	<p>FAD residents need to decide what we can reduce/stop using in our annual budget, i.e. Dust control, mowing (Shady Lane, Shady Lane Circle, Woodlawn...we all do our own mowing yet somebody contracted came around last week for basically doing nothing), snow plowing (contractors were "plowing" 1/2 to less than 1 inch of snow at times).</p> <p>I look forward to the 6/21/17 meeting and more ideas on solving this issue.</p> <p>Thank you,</p>	<p>The current FAD road maintenance contract requires each roadside be mowed twice per year. Some areas require less attention than others. The contract unit pricing for mowing is by the hour. Roadsides requiring less mowing activity will incur less cost than other areas.</p> <p>It is true snow plows can be dispatched for events involving small amounts of accumulation. Many times this is in response to resident reports of icy conditions and a corresponding request for services. When those calls are received, the contractor is contacted and directed to plow or sand the roadway.</p> <p>To ensure delivery of a level of service comparable to the County and nearby municipalities, snow plows are dispatched in the FAD for every event the County plows sent out.</p>

				<p>Getting broad agreement on the right amount or type of services to provide is very difficult, at best, as each citizen tends to want something different. It is, ultimately, up to the County Board, listening intently to the wishes of every citizen, to make the final determination of that right mix for any given area and situation. They welcome your input on what you believe it to be and ask for your patience and understanding as they try to mix your opinion with others' in coming to their final decision.</p>
26	Anonymous	6/17/17	<p>There is no statement on expenditures, making it difficult to understand how there is a projected funding shortfall. In addition, the county's mechanisms and philosophy on winter road maintenance have been severely inadequate over at least the past 8 years. The County engineer's statement that snow plow drivers are given great personal discretion on when or if to plow has not served county residents, especially those who must commute to jobs within the county well. The recent storms which left large chunks of ice on the roads last winter could have been entirely avoided, if the county had been proactive and started plowing when the first of the wet snow fell.</p> <p>Next, the budget comparison produces a lot of non-relevant data attempting to demonstrate or justify the commissioners' plans to raise taxes, despite Rosemary Fransen's campaign rhetoric. Examining the comparison statement on the mailing, I see a number of comparisons which appear to lack relevance. For example, road and bridge levy per capita, per household, and total levy per capita and per household do not appear to have relevance to this discussion.</p>	<p>A summary of annual maintenance expenditures is contained in each of the meeting presentations. The most recent can be viewed at this link.</p> <p>http://crowwing.us/1449/First-Assessment-District-Road-and-Bridg</p> <p>The balance of the road and bridge expenditures are engineering and roadway construction costs.</p> <p>County snow plow drivers and the contractors are not given broad discretion when plowing. The timing of dispatching snow plows is a centralized decision made by the County Engineer and the Maintenance Supervisor. Plow operator discretion is required to appropriately react to changing roadway and weather conditions.</p> <p>The proposed increases to FAD property taxes only applies to the township-level portion of your overall tax bill. This is line 7 on the annual tax statement. Many have mistaken that the proposed percentages will be applied to the County portion contained on line 6 or the total annual tax amount contained on line 14.</p>

Total population and miles of roads do have relevance. Passenger vehicle traffic is a factor in road cost maintenance and is at least partially paid for with fuel taxes. Large equipment/truck traffic does much more harm to roads and therefore create more maintenance demands.

Examining those portions of the comparison, we find: Total LEVY PER MILE is more than double that of the other townships. Why does the county think it needs DOUBLE per mile to maintain county roads compared to the average of all township?

Road and Bridge Levy per mile is \$8,609 v. \$5,926 which is 45% HIGHER than the average of townships. Why is this inadequate? Remember its is a per mile comparison.

Noticeably absent from this brochure is any comparison of present and historical expenditures per mile or per bridge comparison over time, changes in road construction, and pavement characteristics which might increase the need.

In short, the County has stated it wants (and probably will) to increase taxes, because they say they need it without detailing a cost justification and a detailed plan on how this money will be used.

I agree that the County has done a dismal job of winter road maintenance, far worse than the surrounding states of Wisconsin, North and South Dakota and Michigan. Little has changed in the past decade in this regard. The county must be asked why it cannot plow roads to meet the needs of the residents rather than the whims of its snow plow drivers. The commissioners must be held to account for how they plan to spend this money, in detail. They must not be allowed to say, we need more money and we're going to take it without a detailed plan, a budget and a justification for the "long list of FAD roadways in need of major repair," and how much those repairs will cost on a per mile basis and

Although the proposed percentages are significant, only applying them to line 7 produces much different results than if applied to the total annual tax bill found on line 14.

Both per capita and per mile figures are relevant to this discussion. Along with the higher population density comes increased traffic demand, associated asset deterioration, and an associated demand for services such as more frequent snow plowing and summer maintenance activities. This translates to higher levels of services and more expenses compared to less populated townships.

There appears to have been three typographic errors contained on the mailer. The correct figures are highlighted in green below.

Category	Total Levy Per Capita (\$)	Total Levy Per Household (\$)	Total Levy Per Mile (\$)
FAD Rank/30	29th	29th	8th
First Assessment District (FAD)	\$138	\$358	\$13,205
Average of All Townships	\$367	\$825	\$10,059

Although the correct figure for the all township average has increased in the Total Levy Per Mile category, the FAD figure remains 24% higher. This is in-part due the annual fire contract expense. This contract is higher than many other townships due to the population, structure value and exposure rates to fire emergencies. The FAD is also paying higher administration costs than most townships. This is due in-part to paying a share of full time county-level professionals in the areas of administration, engineering and financial services.

			overall, and how they will benefit the county and its residents.	
27	Anonymous	6/17/17	<p>How does this plan affect property on non-maintained dirt or class 5 roads that may be called private roads. The road I am on is not maintained, repaired or plowed. So what would I be paying for?</p> <p>The tax increase should not be the same as for a county or city paved road. In fact, I already pay for private plowing and grading.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>	<p>All owners pay property taxes regardless if they live on or utilize FAD roadways or not. Presently 65% of this tax revenue is used to construct and maintain the FAD's road and bridge system.</p> <p>There are options to consider that would spread the cost more heavily on residents who live on FAD-maintained roads, such as special assessments. Ultimately, the County Board will make the final determination regarding the appropriate mix of funding sources to deal with this issue. They welcome your input, which is the sole purpose of this series of meetings.</p>
28	Anonymous	6/17/17	<p>First off, why hasn't a township (probably 2) been established for this "large" area. I feel like you are punishing the citizens in these areas and how can we afford a doubling of our taxes when you know Brainerd school district is also going to be asking citizens for more taxes. I can see a partial increase in our property taxes but not double. I am not in favor. Maybe savings can be made elsewhere (other departments). Many companies are getting smarter with online capabilities thus able to reduce staff.</p>	<p>The area that makes up the FAD has never been organized into a township. Over the years, there have been discussions about organization, including a failed referendum to do so in the late 1980s.</p> <p>The county is willing to assist with process questions regarding organization of the FAD, however it will not advocate for or against officially initiating such a process and has not expressed any opinion either in favor of or opposed to the FAD organizing into a township. That is a decision for the residents of the FAD. Should the FAD continue to stay unorganized, Crow Wing County can and will continue to serve the needs of the FAD to the best of our ability with all of the other demands on the county's staff and resources.</p> <p>The FAD has no dedicated staff to reduce. Unlike other townships, the FAD has the entire County Highway Department (and now a contractor) at its disposal to meet</p>

				<p>customer service demands. Essentially having this full-time staff standing by, can incur costs at much higher rates than other townships. Other portions of the annual budget go to fire protection (which is contracted for from the City of Brainerd) and admin costs. The cost of fire protection is directly related to population and total value of structures in the coverage area.</p>
29	Anonymous	6/18/17	<p>We did not receive any info to attend the meeting. This shows very poor communication; unfortunately such incompetence taints the projections.</p> <p>There are two issues that must be addressed now:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The county-wide sales tax increase 3-4 years ago was sold to voters for infrastructure development and maintenance. How much, and where is that new funding being spent in FAD? 2. This area is now a hub for growth and development. Why not levy a new construction impact fee to sunset in 5 years? Roads clearly are impacted by such development. 	<p>It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The County Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets the error.</p> <p>This was no more than an oversight and in no way was intended to deter public participation in this important issue. Since the original meeting on June 15th, two other meetings have been offered to inform and dialog with FAD residents.</p> <p>The county-wide sales tax was adopted by the County Board in December 2015. First collections began in April 2016. This revenue source can be utilized on the county roads (Such as CR 115 or State Aid Highway 77) within the FAD. These funds are not authorized for use on the township-level roads such as Cinosam Rd or McKay Rd. Similarly, they are not authorized for use on roads under the jurisdiction of other cities or organized townships.</p> <p>Thank you for your suggestion to levy a new construction impact fee. There are a variety of potential funding sources and, ultimately, it will be up to the County Board to determine the appropriate mix. They welcome your continued input.</p>

30	Anonymous	6/18/17	<p>I would like to see the increases start earlier than 4 years from now to reduce the annual % needed. I would also like to know if the errant accounting mentioned was corrected by the county fund being reimbursed, resulting in a heavy hit to the reserve for FAD. Have all accounting functions been looked at for other accounting errors?</p>	<p>Starting this strategy earlier would reduce the annual percentages needed to generate the needed funds on 2021.</p> <p>The accounting practices and technology used to manage the FAD finances have changed. The likelihood of large swings in the amount of available road and bridge funds has been greatly reduced.</p> <p>With the new technology and financial practices in place, the likelihood of an inadvertent FAD subsidy from the County has been eliminated.</p>
31	Anonymous	6/18/17	<p>We purpose a MIDDLE ground. 15% for 4 years then 4% for 7 years. However, re-address the issue in 5 to 6 years and see if we need to do more or less of a percentage in the tax. We feel we will have to fix the roads one way or another and we rather have a tax increase than be assessed.</p> <p>We live on a dirt road Cadwell Avenue off of St. Columbo Road. We feel that the road does NOT need to be graded as much in the summer as it has been. We do not get much traffic on this road because the roads only go in this 12 bock square neighborhood, no through traffic. Now the county seems to be spraying our roads for dust control and we have found that we really do not need our road graded after one application of spray for the rest of the summer! Four of us neighbors have been paying to have our block of the road sprayed for the past several years because we were told by the CWC Hwy dept that they did not have the chemicals or the equipment to spray our roads. We have been paying for it ourselves. What we found in spraying the road on Cadwell is that it seems to turn the road very hard and we don't get near the pot holes or washboard we would get before the spray. Every year we would call the county to tell them we had sprayed and to NOT grade the road.</p> <p>So my point is, that after our road was sprayed this year, 2017, by the county, we do not need it graded for</p>	<p>The initial proposal of 12%-18% for the first 3-4 years and then 4-5% for the next 6-7 years represents a starting point for this important dialog with FAD residents.</p> <p>Other options exist and will be considered as this decision-making process continues.</p> <p>We will work hard to improve communication with you about the timing of our maintenance activities.</p> <p>The area that makes up the FAD has never been organized. Over the years there have been discussions about organization, however nothing significant enough to gain sufficient traction</p> <p>The county is willing to assist with process questions regarding organization of the FAD, however it will not advocate for or against officially initiating such a process.</p>

			<p>the rest of the summer. However, after it was sprayed around the beginning of June, it was graded a week later!!! This is just wasting the spray.</p> <p>And just for the record, since it was brought up in the meeting, we do NOT want to become a Township! We chose to move to our home because it WAS unorganized territory. Thank you very much for your work and for your time!</p>	
32	Anonymous	6/19/17	<p>Please consider that instead of playing with the 'levy' and 12-18% percentage increases on it, can we consider a 'special assessment' similar to the solid waste fee that is currently \$15 ??</p> <p>What would the numbers look like if all taxable parcels with any buildings on them were 'assessed' a flat \$40 per year and parcels with no buildings (vacant land) 'assessed' a flat \$20 per year? Take those numbers out over 10 years and see if this might be more palatable to citizens. You could also use other numbers like \$25 and \$50 just to see if enough funds are generated this way. Commercial and business parcels could have slightly higher numbers too, such as \$75 or \$100 or more per year, for example since they generate more traffic on the roads.</p> <p>By using the 'levy' and then 'percentage' increase, that opens the door for even more tax dollars as the levy is based on property values and those values are rising lately. Values also could fall which would then require increasing the percentage again, that's not going to be popular with taxpayers.</p> <p>By using the 'assessment' method, those dollars are fixed for the most part, similar to the \$15 solid waste fee.</p> <p>If necessary future county commissioners could adjust that 'assessment' as needed. This gets away from 'percentages' which are much more scary to tax payers once they see how it all works.</p>	<p>The initial proposal of 12%-18% for the first 3-4 years and then 4-5% for the next 6-7 years represents a starting point for this important dialog with FAD residents.</p> <p>Special assessments are a funding source alternative to some of the assumptions originally put forward during the public meeting presentations. Although property assessments were not included in the initial proposed solution, as this dialog continues, it may receive additional consideration by the County Board.</p>

			<p>Using an 'assessment' method also helps taxpayers understand what those dollars are used for. They know those dollars will be set aside for roads and not lost to 'other' projects.</p> <p>Please run these numbers ahead of the Wednesday meeting if at all possible.</p> <p>Regards,</p>	
33	Anonymous	6/19/17	<p>I would like to see a detailed plan of how and where the tax dollars are to be spent .</p>	<p>A summary of annual maintenance expenditures was contained in each of the meeting presentations. The most recent can be viewed at this link.</p> <p>http://crowwing.us/1449/First-Assessment-District-Road-and-Bridg</p> <p>The balance of the road and bridge expenditures are engineering and roadway construction costs. A listing of planned FAD road construction can be found in the Crow Wing County 2017-2021 Highway improvement Plan. This document can be reviewed at the following link.</p> <p>http://crowwing.us/DocumentCenter/View/9253</p>
34	Anonymous	6/21/17	<p>Though I am very disappointed in the county's poor fiscal planning and accounting practices, it seems only fair that we in the unorganized territory should pay our fair share of costs.</p> <p>It does seem to me however that residents on paved roads should pay more than residents on gravel roads when it comes to sharing road rebuilding and maintenance costs.</p>	<p>The accounting practices and technology used to manage the FAD finances have changed. It was during the course of these changes that the County discovered it may have been inadvertently subsidizing the unorganized road system.</p> <p>With the new technology and financial practices in place, the likelihood of an inadvertent FAD subsidy from the County has been eliminated.</p> <p>All owners pay property taxes regardless if they live on a paved FAD road or not. Presently 65% of this tax revenue is used to construct and maintain the FAD's road and bridge system. There are funding alternatives, such as special assessments that may be considered as an alternative</p>

				<p>funding strategy either in whole or in part by the County Board in making the final decision.</p>												
35	Anonymous	6/21/17	<p>Will the county board be reducing the 13% of the budget that they currently receive for attending meetings? If not they will essentially be giving themselves a 12-18% raise for the next 3-4 years followed by an additional 4-5% the next 6-7 years. This is well above the inflation rate. The first year alone would be approximately \$23,000 pay increase for the board. This will increase exponentially.</p>	<p>The 13% admin budget is utilized to fund services such as governance by the County Board, accounting and audit services and County Administrator involvement in matters concerning the FAD. It also encompasses an animal control contract with Hart. The proposed property tax increases are intended to fund projected shortfalls in the Road & Bridge fund.</p> <div data-bbox="1228 657 1711 950" data-label="Figure"> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> <th>Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Road & Bridge</td> <td>65%</td> <td>\$493K</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fire Contract</td> <td>22%</td> <td>\$166K</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Admin</td> <td>13%</td> <td>\$98K</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <p>There are very few meetings, in fact only one within recorded memory, where the meetings for FAD issues are held at a time that is not also dealing with County issues. This series of meetings would be the notable exception to that. Even so, County Commissioner per diems are paid for out of county resources. As such, there will be no difference in County Commissioner compensation or chargebacks to the FAD for their compensation as a result of any of the proposed alternatives.</p>	Category	Percentage	Amount	Road & Bridge	65%	\$493K	Fire Contract	22%	\$166K	Admin	13%	\$98K
Category	Percentage	Amount														
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36	Anonymous	6/21/17	<p>We do not believe or trust the figures. There needs to be an outside agency to do the audit on the taxes for this area. We have had our property taxes rising every year since 2012, so there may be others also with the same issues. There has been no improvements of any kind since our purchase of this property and there has been budget cuts of snowplowing of our road. Our property has lost value, so with this information the county needs to have a state or federal agency to step in to clarify the past figures before moving forward with such tax hikes also providing all property owners a detailed description of where the tax dollars are to go that causes this hike.</p>	<p>The FAD's financial documentation is subject to the County's annual audit conducted by the State of Minnesota. Since 2012 over 15 miles of FAD roads have been resurfaced with public funding. An overview of the FAD's finances is presented in the presentations given at each of the three public meetings and can be found at the following link:</p> <p>http://crowwing.us/DocumentCenter/View/13690</p>
37	Anonymous	6/21/17	<p>I do not believe that frontage and dead end roads, which do not have barely any traffic, should be put on a 20 year replacement plan. I would estimate that this project should be less than half of the tax projections that you are currently making to the residents of First Assessment. As an owner of lakeshore property, we currently pay a large sum for taxes, and we do not believe that we should have to continually increase that amount for new roads that are not essential.</p>	<p>It is reasonable and likely that not every FAD roadway will be on a 20 year replacement cycle. In response to feedback received to date, additional tax impact scenarios have been created based on roadway replacement cycles of 25 and 30 years. What these road replacement life cycles represent is an average replacement of 20, 25, or 30 years. Each roadway would be individually reviewed for just such criteria as you point out. Undoubtedly, some can be delayed for up to a 30 year life cycle, but others will need to be done in 10 based on differing traffic volumes. We use the average life cycle numbers in order to do financial projections (and they do a good job of that), but actual reconstructions will be based on the specific circumstances unique to each individual roadway segment. Summaries of these tax impacts can be viewed in the presentation found at this link.</p> <p>http://crowwing.us/DocumentCenter/View/13690</p>

38	Anonymous	6/21/17	<p>We would like to see which portion of the tax statement is being used? An example in the paper would be adequate for us or on the website.</p> <p>I don't live on this particular road but wondered why Skye Road off Gull dam is not paved. The county works hard to maintain it and wondered if more cost effective to pave it in the long run.</p>	<p>The proposed property tax increases are only to be applied to Line 7 of your annual tax statement. There has been a widespread misinterpretation that these increases would be applied to the total annual property tax figure contained on Line 14.</p> <p>Skye Road has not been upgraded from gravel to a paved surface because the residents have not petitioned to assess themselves to do so. Crow Wing County Board policy requires residents adjacent to gravel roads pay for the requested upgrades through assessments. This is in contrast to using public funding to provide for reconstructions or overlays.</p>
39	Anonymous	6/21/17	<p>Our taxes have increased 4X what the original assessment was twenty yrs. ago. We continue to live on a gravel road, that has cost us, as well as our neighbors thousands of dollars in car maintenance i.e. Nails in tires, brakes having to be replaced far sooner than normal, because the original "class 5" was from a demolition site containing metal, glass & bricks. In twenty yrs. we have had new class 5 placed on our road 2X. Last year was the first year in 20 that a large amount was brought in & then over the winter your contractor "Holmvig" plowed most of it into the ditch & onto our lawns. We petitioned the county to pave our road at the encouragement of a county employee, & were subsequently humiliated by the county engineer when we presented our petition to the board. He was unable to respond at that time as to whether it was more cost effective to pave a road or continue to maintain a gravel road. Cass County as well as Baxter has repeatedly stated in writing (Brainerd Daily Dispatch) that it is far more cost effective to maintain a paved road over a gravel & they have been taking steps toward that goal. Yet our county engineer could not even give the board these statistics, but was more interested in humiliating resident property owners who paid far greater property taxes on the road than non-residents who paid less than 1/3 of property taxes, yet the non-residents prevailed. The boards formula for determining what roads should be paved was extremely flawed, inconsistent, & arbitrary. i.e. Welton Road & the road</p>	<p>We are very sorry to hear of your unfortunate accident and we're sorry to hear of your disappointment. It is unclear which road you are referring to and so it is difficult to accurately respond, but we would very much like to discuss this further with you. Please feel free to contact the Crow Wing County Highway Department or County Administration with questions regarding your specific situation.</p>

		<p>that the county engineer lives on. In 20 yrs. services have not improved & in fact there were several years that residents had to pay for oil to keep the dust down, in addition to paying increased property taxes. Commissioner Theide stated several months ago that he thought they must be doing a good job for unorganized because they weren't hearing from any constituents. I suggest he not be so quick to pat himself on the back. After being humiliated when our neighbors came before the board after spending many hours garnering names for our petition, particularly in locating non- residents, of which some lived out of state, we felt it was an effort in futility. As an aside to decisions made by the board, it needs to be noted how far reaching their decisions affect residents. Because the road was not paved nor, prior to August 17, 2015, had not been graded for 2 months, I experienced a life altering bicycle accident, which I continue to rehabilitate from. The cost of paving the road, which would have been paid for by the property owners, was less costly than the medical expenses & life altering result of my accident, which at this point exceeds \$150,000, not to mention my inability to be as active as I was prior to the accident. I am unable to travel distances, visiting my son in Ca., go for morning walks with my husband (3 miles almost daily) ride bike with my husband other than short distances (I averaged 2,000-3,000 miles per yr.)interact with my grandchildren. I've suffered memory loss from my concussion, and physically have balance, light sensitivity issues & dizziness problems, headaches from any stress, unable to walk distances because of my shattered hip along with hundreds of hours spent rehabilitating. We live on a very limited retirement income & yet because those in county administrative positions i.e. county engineer, are not fiscally informed to make cost effective decisions, now want to increase our taxes. This is beyond our comprehension.</p>	
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40	Anonymous	6/22/17	<p>COUNTY'S CAN NOT CONTINUE TO INCREASE PROPERTY TAXES MORE THAN AVERAGE WAGE INCREASES, I DON'T KNOW WHERE THIS MONEY IS SUPPOSED TO COME FROM AND HAS TO BE TAKEN FROM ALREADY THIN BUDGETS. THIS TYPE OF ACTIVITY FORCES PEOPLE TO MOVE AND DRIVES BEHAVIORS THAT ARE NOT FAVORABLE FOR THE COUNTY. 2-4% INCREASES ANNUALLY AS WAGES OFTEN ARE IN THAT VARIANCE ARE ACCEPTABLE.</p>	<p>The Crow Wing County Board has certified a flat or negative county property tax levy for 7 years in a row. The FAD property tax levy has experienced increases averaging 5.17 % per year during this same period. The proposed FAD property tax increases are only to be applied to Line 7 of your annual tax statement.</p>
41	Anonymous	6/23/17	<p>An average annual tax increase of \$20 is acceptable, it is also worth looking at a portion of roadway repairs be paid for by assessments. Not to the extent of Brainerd and Baxter full property assessments on road work, but partial mixed with current tax tables.</p>	<p>The initial proposal of 12%-18% for the first 3-4 years and then 4-5% for the next 6-7 years represents a starting point for this important dialog with FAD residents.</p> <p>Although property assessments were not included in the initial range of alternatives, as this dialog continues it may receive consideration by the County Board.</p>
42	Anonymous	6/23/17	<p>My question is that let's say I bought a car and made payments on it. After it is paid off I don't owe anything. So if after the 10 year tax rate increase is over will my taxes go back to what it started out before the increase or will I continue to continue paying what it ended up to be ?</p>	<p>It seems unlikely that after the proposed 10 year cycle, property taxes will return to 2017 levels. To borrow your analogy to this situation, at one time, these roads were the equivalent of a new car when they were first paved. During its life cycle, however, there is depreciation and routine maintenance that is necessary. And, after ten years, the car may be worn out and it is time to reinvest in a new car. Like with a new car, buying it once does not mean you have relieved yourself of the expense for the long term. Once we paved these roads, we began a life cycle for them that is now expiring and it is time to bring them back to like-new condition in a methodical and planful approach. This also does not take into account normal inflation of labor and road construction materials.</p>

43	Anonymous	6/23/17	<p>I believe as a new property owner on W Tranquility Dr. Off of Executive Acres Rd.that the Unorganized territory should split up into east and west sections due to way more traffic going north on 371. We have no bridges on the east side. We are already paying for our own road maintainence for our road. I understand you have to raise taxes to cover inflation, but maybe you should consider road repairs that absolutely need to be done, not ones that perfectly fine!</p>	<p>The area that makes up the FAD has never been organized and a split to create two manageable portions has not been considered. Over the years there have been discussions about organization, however nothing significant enough to gain real momentum. Given that, it is unlikely to think that it will be divided into any sub-sections as it is sized to be that of a statutory township and there has been no consensus thus far about whether it should be organized let alone split. In the end, of course, that is up to the residents of the FAD, not to county staff or Board.</p> <p>The county is willing to assist with process questions regarding organization of the FAD, however it will not advocate for or against officially initiating such a process.</p> <p>West Tranquility Drive is currently a private road that is not maintained with public funds.</p>
44	Anonymous	6/24/17	<p>I first want to say that I am disappointed that I received the mailing on Thursday June 15, 2017 when I got home from work at 6pm. I had not been out of town and did get my mail every day. I think you should have planned to have this mailed out a month before the actual meeting, I can't imagine anyone receiving the mailing was able to attend, just people that are in your small circle knew about the meeting in time to plan to attend. People need a month or so notice to plan for time off of work, day care, meals, etc. I know I am not the only one that received the flyer too late to attend. I am NOT pleased with the 12-18 % increase in my property taxes, especially since my property has been zoned "non buildable" and seasonal with no allowance for a building, water or sewer. I don't mind paying a little for the road in front of my property, but from my position and the neighbors to my north that are zoned the same....we shouldn't be paying as much as a person that actually has a liveable residence on their property and that would use the road much more. Thanks for listening.</p>	<p>It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The County Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets the error.</p> <p>This was no more than an oversight and in no way was intended to deter public participation in this important issue. Since the original meeting on June 15th, two other meetings have been offered to inform and dialog with FAD residents.</p> <p>The initial proposal of 12%-18% for the first 3-4 years and then 4-5% for the next 6-7 years represents a starting point for this important dialog with FAD residents. A number of other options and scenarios have been offered for consideration.</p> <p>If the final proposal continues to include annual percentage increases, property with less value will contribute a lower dollar amount than those with higher property values.</p>

45	Anonymous	6/28/17	<p>I got this in the mail the day before the meeting. We were out of town! and obviously too late to come to a meeting that is a very important piece of our financial picture, I retired here due to an ongoing disability. I selected my property based on 3 main criteria...obviously price and taxes....and floor plan based on my age and orthopedic issues.</p> <p>I do understand taxes are not stagnant, however, this projected increase is" irresponsible" on the part of our governing commissioners!! With health insurance increases looming overhead, I already pay a huge monthly premium plus high deductible. Now, we are being also subjected to extreme tax increases that in NO WAY parallel my pension and disability payments. How will I make these payments and pay other necessary bills...sell my home? I am outraged.....yes OUTRAGED...this reeks of poor long term planning...</p>	<p>It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The County Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets the error.</p> <p>This was no more than an oversight and in no way was intended to deter public participation in this important issue. Since the original meeting on June 15th, two other meetings have been offered to inform and dialog with FAD residents.</p> <p>The proposed increases to FAD property tax only applies to the township-level portion of your overall tax bill. This is line 7 on the annual tax statement. Many have mistaken that the proposed percentages will be applied to the total annual tax amount contained on line 14.</p> <p>Although the proposed percentages are significant, only applying them to line 7 produces much different results than if applied to the total annual tax bill found on line 14.</p>
46	Anonymous	6/28/17	<p>I'm sure makes me angry the other residents of Crow Wing County have been footing the bill for those in FAD. If this accounting error was never caught by someone, who knows how long this would have gone on! Great work!!!</p>	<p>The accounting practices and technology used to manage the FAD finances have changed. It was during the course of these changes that the County discovered it may have been inadvertently and inappropriately subsidizing the FAD's road system.</p> <p>With the new technology and financial practices in place, the likelihood of an inadvertent FAD subsidy from the County has been eliminated.</p>
47	Mark Sunde	7/1/17	<p>I am disabled, I can not work, I live on disability that is very limited. I can not afford to have my taxes raised. I feel this is ridiculous and you need to find some other way. I think if looked into farther the county can find other ways to cut in other places to help make the difference. I am paying school taxes and never have had any children. I do not think that is fair either. Why should someone that has no children and does not use the schools have to pay school tax. Like I said I am</p>	<p>The proposed increases to FAD property tax only applies to the township-level portion of your overall tax bill. This is line 7 on the annual tax statement. Many have mistaken that the proposed percentages will be applied to the total annual tax amount contained on line 14.</p> <p>Although the proposed percentages are significant, only applying them to line 7 produces much different results than if applied to the total annual tax bill found on line 14.</p>

			<p>disabled and on a very fixed income I can not afford tax hikes. Thank You.</p>	<p>The County and FAD budgets are separate. The ability to make cuts in some other area of the County would not affect the FAD financial situation. Making cuts to another area of the FAD budget may result in increased services, however it may be at the expense of another critical area. Ultimately, your opinion is welcome and will be part of all of the opinions expressed, including those outlined here, that the County Board uses to make the final decision.</p>
48	Phil & Sondra Votruba	7/1/17	<p>- For the meeting on 6/15/17 we received the notice the same day. Had to leave this meeting due to overcrowding. We were not able to attend the meeting on 6/21/17. More advanced notice for these meetings is necessary. - What are semi-public roadways and why are we using public tax dollars for them? - These areas need to become organized Townships. It is hard to believe that an area with a population of these areas is not an organized area. - The tax increases should be adjusted in smaller increments than proposed. Failure to effectively plan out the funding should not result in an emergency on the tax payers. - Keep maintenance down to the essential needs until the funding is stabilized. - More frequent communication is necessary thus pointing to the need for organization.</p>	<p>It is true the invitation to FAD residents was not mailed in a timely manner and many residents did not receive it prior to the meeting. The County Engineer has accepted responsibility and deeply regrets the error.</p> <p>This was no more than an oversight and in no way was intended to deter public participation in this important issue. Since the original meeting on June 15th, two other meetings have been offered to inform and dialog with FAD residents.</p> <p>The term semi-public roadways is intended to describe roads that receive limited public funding to maintain. These roads commonly have a gravel surface do not receive publicly funded snow plowing or other summer maintenance activities. The County does utilize a policy that allows residents adjacent to these roads to request gravel maintenance once per year. If the request is approved, FAD public funds are used to complete this one-time per year activity.</p> <p>The area that makes up the FAD has never been organized and a split to create two manageable portions has not been considered. Over the years there have been discussions about organization, however nothing significant enough to gain real momentum.</p> <p>The county is willing to assist with process questions regarding organization of the FAD, however it will not advocate for or against officially initiating such a process.</p>

				The initial proposal of 12%-18% for the first 3-4 years and then 4-5% for the next 6-7 years represents a starting point for this important dialog with FAD residents.
49	Emily Gutenkauf	7/1/17	I don't think there is enough information provided in this survey for a person to be able to comment on. I'm only assuming that you are considering raising our taxes? You don't tell us what services are normally provided for the FAD besides, " basic summer maintenance activities and winter snow plowing." How much of a deficit are we talking about? I'm guessing you will have more information available at the meeting, but that doesn't help us if we are unable to attend. It would be nice if an informational paper or an internet link was made available that would give us more information on this issue. I can't really comment much about the issue itself without more information.	<p>A summary of annual maintenance expenditures was contained in each of the meeting presentations. The most recent can be viewed at this link.</p> <p>http://crowwing.us/1449/First-Assessment-District-Road-and-Bridg</p> <p>The balance of the road and bridge expenditures are engineering and roadway construction costs. A listing of planned FAD road construction can be found in the Crow Wing County 2017-2021 Highway improvement Plan. This document can be reviewed at the following link.</p> <p>http://crowwing.us/DocumentCenter/View/9253</p> <p>Every FAD resident should have received an invitation to the 3rd meeting held on July 17, 2017. I hope you were able to attend in order to get your questions answered.</p>
50	Gary Thompson	7/2/17	If you are trying to obfuscate what is going on, congratulations. Prescription bifocals aided by a magnifying glass wasn't much help. Sending out information printed in micrographics, aggravated by all caps makes it very difficult to read. Have your PR people take a basic course in copywriting.	We are sorry the correspondence you received did not meet your expectations.

51	Andrew Kuecher	7/10/17	<p>I would like the following to be known as public comment/opinion: 1. Based upon the proposed tax levy increase in relation to the current tax levy I pay for my property located in the FAD, your proposal would increase my overall taxes by \$1,163 per year. This is without any additional increases from future voter levies and/or any potential property appreciation. Both of which would further increase the tax burden. 2. Myself and my customers use literally a 12' wide by 12' long strip of Soder Rd. The other 160' of road is comprised of private roads and parking lots that are privately maintained. If the proposal were to pass, I ask you to consider prorating the levy according to the total feet of road frontage per property. This is used in other cities and townships within the county versus the proposed flat overall percentage increase across the board. 3. The proposal states that without this levy, the FAD would only be able to provide basic summer and winter maintenance. I am in favor of and support this option above all others. Thank you for your consideration, Andrew Kuecher</p>	<p>The proposed increases to FAD property tax only applies to the township-level portion of your overall tax bill. This is line 7 on the annual tax statement. Many have mistaken that the proposed percentages will be applied to the total annual tax amount contained on line 14. As such, we are confused that this proposal could possibly increase your taxes by \$1,163 per year. Please contact Crow Wing County Administration to track down the most accurate figures for your specific parcel.</p> <p>Although the proposed percentages are significant, only applying them to line 7 produces much different results than if applied to the total annual tax bill found on line 14.</p> <p>If used as a viable option, property assessments may be able to be prorated based on various factors. General property tax is not typically prorated. All owners pay based on their valuation regardless if they live on a FAD road or not. Presently 65% of this tax revenue is used to construct and maintain the FAD's road and bridge system.</p> <p>Generating only the revenue needed to complete basic maintenance activities, would perpetuate the deteriorated condition of the FAD roadway network. This would result in a steadily decaying public infrastructure.</p>
52	Kenneth Svee	7/17/17	<p>I understand the tax increase is to upgrade Ojibwa Rd /Nashway Dr. Co Rd 115. No repair or rebuild should be done unless it includes the proper drainage and storm sewer plan. The road should be a minimum of 16 foot lanes or a minimum of a total width of 32 feet. Sight distance should be improved; if a pedestrian lane is to be constructed that is ok but no bike lane necessary.</p>	<p>The proposed tax increase for the FAD is not a result of or in any way connected to the CR 115 project. The projected shortfall is in the fund necessary to construct and maintain township-level roadways such as Dove Lane or Cinosam Road. The funding for county-level roadways, such as CR 115, comes from county-level property taxes and other sources.</p> <p>Regarding CR115, however, on July 11, the County Board did authorize moving forward with the survey work necessary to prepare a preliminary design that can be reviewed with property owners within the affected project area. We expect that survey work to be completed yet this fall and the preliminary design to be prepared over the</p>

				winter for review with property owners early next summer after the snowbirds return.
53	Donald Privitt	7/17/17	Do not ask me to compensate for the commission's budgeting shortsightedness. In recent years, how many tax breaks have been given to businesses that are tantamount to economic blight? And now the commission expects me to open my wallet to fund those decisions? UNACCEPTABLE. Any of you who vote to approve this measure, can count on a vote against you, regardless of party lines, in any and *every* upcoming election that I'm a part of, from me and anybody who will listen to me. Do not approve this measure.	Thank you for your opinion. Of course, doing nothing is always an option. Ultimately, the County Board will make the final decision on the most appropriate course of action. Regarding "tax breaks," we are unaware of any County Board decisions to provide property tax breaks to business in the FAD or any other area of Crow Wing County.
54	Belinda Krohmer	7/17/17	I don't feel we have sufficient information on why this shortfall is coming. The presentation is pretty opaque. These are significant hikes to a population who are not typically flush with extra cash. Have any alternative plans been floated? There must be a way to fund these projects with less steep immediate increases on property owners here now.	On July 17, another meeting was held to gather input from FAD residents about this important topic. Throughout each of the three sessions a number of ideas surfaced about how to lessen the percentage increase in the first 3-4 years. There are a number of ways this can be accomplished. Among them is doing less construction in the FAD and allowing an average of a 25-30 life cycle for FAD pavements. Some preliminary figures associated with this option have been developed and can be found in the presentation at the link below. http://crowwing.us/DocumentCenter/View/13690
55	Joe Mucha	7/18/17	The meeting was very helpful and informative. My conclusion is that a tax increase is needed to meet the needs of FAD and the residents of FAD need to pay their own way. I would opt for a more gradual increase over time, perhaps the 12% level versus the 18% level, but sustain this over a longer period of time until the financial objectives are met. FAD should pay its own way and it was obvious that in the past the County subsidized the area,...but the past is the past !!! I feel the Commissioners are being objective in addressing two key areas; 1) providing good roads and services to the FAD and 2) trying to transition the FAD residents to pay for the services they get from the County. I believe that the Commissioners are doing a great job and commend you for taking on these tough issues.	Thank you for your comments regarding your preferred alternative. County Board members will be presented options to try to achieve just such an objective.

56	Tom Holbrook	7/18/17	<p>I have lived on County Road 115 for over 27 years. In that time there has been no maintenance other than crack sealing and pothole filling. It is inconceivable that the anticipated tax shortfall wasn't seen much sooner. I am not convinced our county officials are spending enough time managing unorganized territory tax revenues and expenditures. Obviously if this had been done the shortfall could've been picked up many years ago. It is time to get our road fixed! No more studies, not another five years. There has been enough studies and surveys it's time for someone to put their "big boy pants on " and make the decision. I also believe as a resident of organized territory that a petition for an audit of unorganized territories income and expenditures should be authorized by the county. If not a number of residents are aware through the Minnesota state auditors office of the petition process. Please understand there is no accusations or innuendos here. It is just time for an audit. Residents do not have confidence in our county leaders at this point. "When the foxes are telling the chickens who have been laying eggs for years and years that they need to lay more eggs because they have not been doing their job". It's time for someone other than the foxes to count the eggs and help make a decision for both the residents and the county on how to move forward. Thanks the courtesy of a reply from the county official would be much appreciated. I am voicing this opinion on behalf of a number of neighbors and residents who are expressing concern. Thank you Tom Holbrook. PS. Unfortunately I was unable to attend last nights' meeting along with other neighbors due to the severe storm and power loss.</p>	<p>There is no shortfall of revenue until 2021. The County is trying to be planful in raising this issue now 4 years before a shortfall would occur. Four years ago is when the County began dedicating more of the FADs resources to reconstructing and crack-sealing FAD roads. The County does have a published 5-year plan for roads for the FAD, which can be found in the presentation at the public meeting here:</p> <p>http://crowwing.us/DocumentCenter/View/13690</p> <p>In addition, the County is preparing plans for FAD roads that go beyond the 5-year time horizon but, since they are not finalized or approved by the County Board, they are not yet published.</p> <p>The fact is that many paved FAD roads are simply nearing the end of their life cycle and the current levy is insufficient to pay for their reconstruction beyond 2021. Every proposal, other than a do-nothing alternative, is considering a ramped trajectory for the levy to get to where it needs to be to support road reconstruction over a multi-year timeframe. Changing the underlying assumptions in the financial model can and will change the rate of increase in that trajectory. The County Board can and is soliciting feedback from residents on balancing the perceived need for reconstruction versus the obvious pain of any tax increase. That is what this entire process is about.</p> <p>Regarding an independent auditor, the MN State Auditor, a neutral third party and an independently elected state-wide officer's office, already audits the County every year and that audit includes audits of the FAD's finances.</p>
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