

Town of Grant et al. vs. Portage County
Case No. 15-CV-176

In July 2015, the Town of Grant and three resident co-plaintiffs sued Portage County over an errant levy for ambulance services; so called *County-wide Emergency Medical Services (EMS)*. As of this writing, a portion of every Town of Grant property owners' county taxes goes to support the City of Stevens Point Fire Department and the Village of Amherst Fire Department for ambulance services. No county taxes, from any municipality in Portage County, goes to support our ambulance provider United Emergency Medical Response (UEMR). As such, Town of Grant taxpayers pay about \$35,000 per year to the county for ambulance services we do not use, and also pay UEMR approximately the same amount from our town taxes for the ambulance services we do use. **No other municipality in Portage County is double-taxed in this way.**

State Statute 60.565 requires that Towns, not counties, contract for ambulance service. We are the only municipality in Portage County that has a contract on file with a provider; as the law requires. Portage County has assumed the responsibility for ambulance services without either verbal or written consent from us, and taxes us annually for it. And although we all pay for other services provided by the county that we may not use commonly or at all, it is relevant that ambulance (and fire protection) services are a responsibility of the Town, not the county. We contend that Portage County has no authority, under current state law, to levy us for ambulance service.

To exaggerate this issue, beginning in 2008, Portage County exceeded the State of Wisconsin levy limits caps under the auspices of *County-wide EMS* to accrue enough funds for the aforementioned fire departments to support ambulance services. Since that time the Town of Grant has actively protested the county's actions through meeting attendances, county board appearances, written memos and letters, preliminary legal action and ultimately, formal legal action. .

On October 23, 2015 an initial hearing was held in a Portage County courtroom with Judge Bernard Bult of Marquette County presiding. Judge Bult did not grant the Town of Grant the temporary injunction it was seeking to prevent Portage County from taxing us in 2016 for *County-wide EMS* from the 2015 fiscal year. However, the judge also did not grant Portage County a dismissal of this case; rather he said the case would continue in the court system. **The hearing for this case will be Friday, September 23, 2016 beginning at 2:00 pm at the Portage County Courthouse** (County Board Room). Please consider attending this important hearing to show your support for the Town of Grant.

Respectfully,

Sharon Schwab, Chair
Town of Grant Board of Supervisors