



Welcome to Local Government

An Onboarding Guide for
Newly Elected Officials

Immediate Next Steps for Your First Week



1. Complete Your HR Paperwork
(Getting you officially set up in our systems)



2. Review Board and Committee Assignments
(Understanding your specific areas of focus)



3. Get to Know Your Support Resources
(You don't have to know everything on day one)

Your Dedicated Support Network

Municipal Clerk & Municipality Staff

The primary guide for meeting procedures, local records, and day-to-day governance navigation.



**You
(The Elected
Official)**

League of Wisconsin Municipalities

Premier resource for networking, municipal education, and legislative advocacy.









UW-Madison Extension Local Government Education

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Your source for ongoing training and deep-dive educational workshops.

Understanding Your Jurisdiction's Unique Power

Cities & Villages	Towns & Counties
 <p>Authority: Broad "Home Rule" (power to govern locally without state interference).</p>	 <p>Authority: Limited to specific statutory provisions.</p>
 <p>Services: Full spectrum of urban services (police, fire, water, sewer, libraries).</p>	 <p>Services: Limited or regional services; typically do not provide full urban infrastructure.</p>
 <p>Growth: Broad authority to annex territory and create Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) districts.</p>	 <p>Growth: Very limited TIF authority; lack power to unilaterally approve subdivisions outside borders.</p>

The Shape of Local Government

The Voters

The ultimate source of authority who delegate power through elections.

The Board/Council & Mayor/CEO

You represent the voters. Your role is to set policy, pass budgets, and dictate the vision.

Department Heads & Staff

The subject matter experts who execute the vision and manage daily operations.

Collaborating with Your Municipal Staff



- **The Board** manages Policy (the 'What' and 'Why').
- **The Staff** manages Operations (the 'How' and 'When').



Rely on your **Subject Matter Experts**. You are not expected to be an engineer, an accountant, or a police chief. Lean on the department heads who manage these vital services 24/7.



Where Decisions Happen: The Open Meeting

Wisconsin Open Meetings Law dictates that all governance, deliberation, and policy-making must happen in the public eye. Transparency is our mandate.

Navigating Robert's Rules of Order



The Specific Role of the Chair

Sets the Agenda.

Organizes the flow of the meeting.



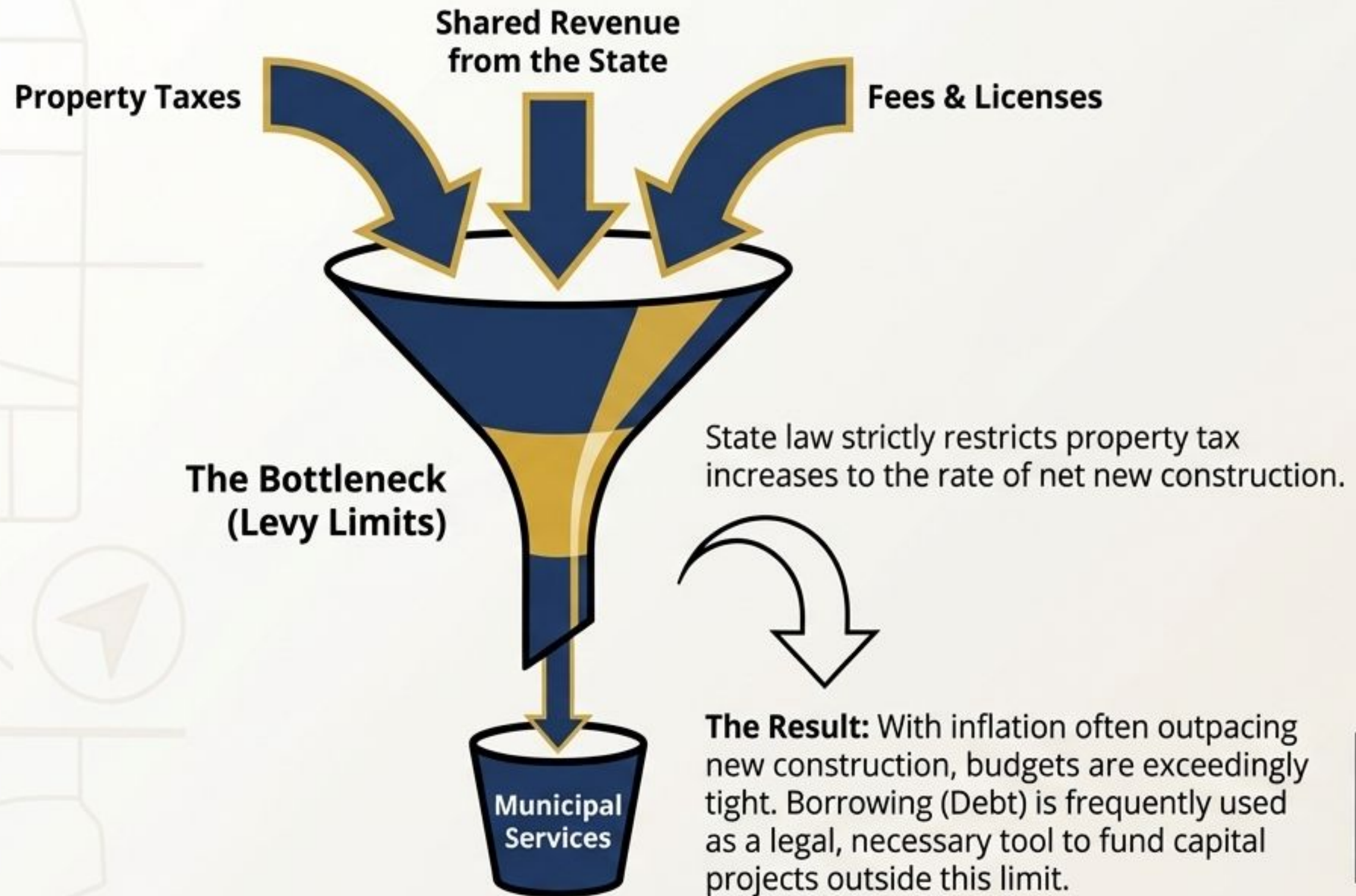
Maintains Order.

Enforces rules and administers the deliberations of the governing body.

Participation.

Depending on local rules, the Chair may still participate in discussion, make motions, and cast votes.

The Engine of Government: Funding & Levy Limits



Understanding the Financial Ecosystem

General Fund



The main operating "catch-all." Funded mostly by taxes. Pays for daily services like police, administration, and office supplies.

Enterprise Funds



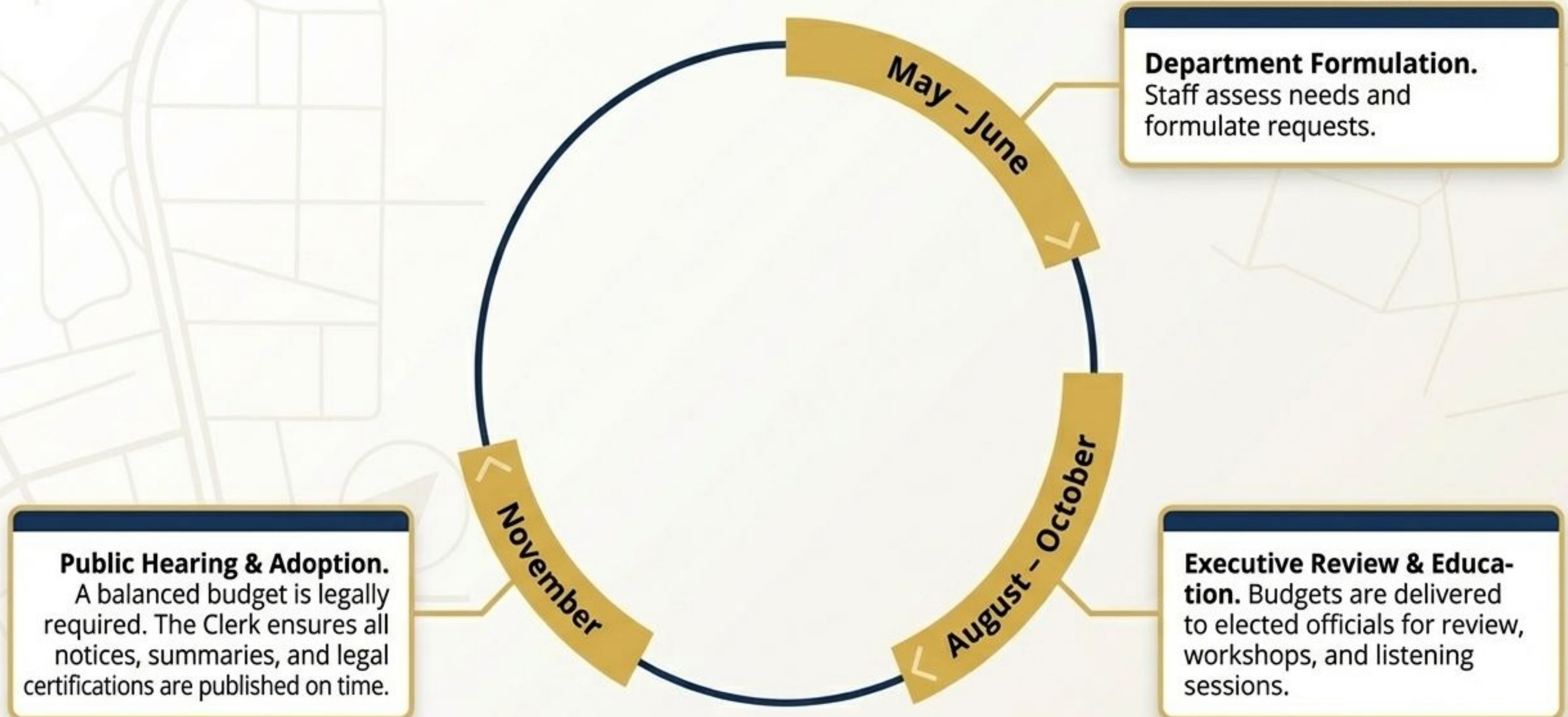
Run like a private business. User fees pay directly for the service provided. Example: The water bill pays exclusively for the water utility.

Capital & Debt Service



Distinct funds used strictly to pay for long-term physical improvements (roads, vehicles) and to accurately pay down municipal borrowing.

The Annual Budget Cycle





Stewardship of Public Assets

Beyond the ordinances and statutes, your fundamental duty is to protect, maintain, and responsibly manage the community's resources for future generations.

The Voice of the Community



Constituent Engagement

Actively listening to the needs, concerns, and aspirations of the people who elected you.



Legislative Action

Using your new understanding of budgets, ordinances, and meeting procedures to translate those community voices into tangible municipal policy.



Your Journey Ahead

The budget is your engine. Open meetings are your steering wheel. The municipal staff are your navigators.

You are now equipped to serve your community. When you encounter uncharted territory, your Municipal Clerk's door is always open to help you find the way. Welcome to local government.