

## Don Merkes

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**From:** ofbreaker@aol.com  
**Sent:** Monday, November 14, 2011 9:30 AM  
**To:** Don Merkes  
**Cc:** Brian Tungate  
**Subject:** Reduced Pool Hours

Good Morning

I would ask that you reconsider the projected reduction in pool hours as part of your new budget. My concern is a possible loss of revenue as a result of such action. In today's economy families may have budgeted a fixed amount for family entertainment choices. As they review their options I'm thinking they will try to choose an option that has the 'best bang for their buck'..an option that has broad hours of use that fits in to their schedule. Your proposal to limit pool hours may actually reduce pool revenue as families opt not to use the facility, but instead find another recreational option that has more hours of operation. Budgeting at any level,wether its's a city or a family, is what it is....making choices. I would ask that you keep the pool hours of operation at the same level as in 2011 so the pool continues to be a choice destination for families.

Thanks for your continued support of our Menasha Grade School All-City Track And Field Wellness Day. The 2012 event is scheduled for Wednesday, May 16th, 2012(rain date is May 18th) starting @ 9AM at Calder Stadium..consider this an official invitation to attend and help us with event.

## Don Merkes

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**From:** bill\_54952@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 13, 2011 1:31 PM  
**To:** Don Merkes  
**Subject:** Question, Comment, or Request from Website Visitor

Name: Bill and Julie Neubert

Company:

Phone:

EmailConfirm: [bill\\_54952@yahoo.com](mailto:bill_54952@yahoo.com)

Method: Email

Comments: Hello Mayor Merkes, I am contacting you regarding the city pool. Please vote to keep the pool open and the hours the same. We built a house about 4 years ago in Menasha and love living here. Part of the reason we picked Menasha was the pool. We have a 6 and a 5 year old and they love going to the pool in the summer. I understand that the pool does not make money but something should be said for the quality of life that it helps produce in Menasha. Please vote to keep the pool open and the hours unchanged. Thank you Bill Neubert 1031 Brighton Dr.

Could you please forward this to all the Alderpersons, Thank You

## Don Merkes

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**From:** bbmoozer@aol.com  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 12, 2011 8:10 AM  
**To:** Don Merkes  
**Subject:** Feedback from Web Site: Comment

Selected Subject: Comment

Name: SARAH PATERSON

Phone: 9207200465

Fax:

EmailConfirm: [bbmoozer@aol.com](mailto:bbmoozer@aol.com)

Contact Method: Email

Message: Hi Mr. Mayor-

Just want to voice my support of the Menasha City Pool as Dr. Michael Gitter suggested in his letter to the Post Crescent. Please keep the community involved and engaged in any discussions! We can NOT close it!!!! Just look at Oshkosh's new pool - it's a money making machine (or so it seems). I realize that it (Oshkosh's) is funded in part by private donations and perhaps Menasha's is too (but I don't know). In any event, I'd love to see our pool thrive and want to be a part of keeping it ALIVE for our community.

Sarah Paterson

204 Elm

Please add me to your personal mailing list: Yes

## Don Merkes

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**From:** Don Merkes  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 12, 2011 9:39 PM  
**To:** Jess Thiel  
**Cc:** Kevin Benner  
**Subject:** RE: Menasha Pool hours

Jessica,

I feel obligated to respond to Steve's doom and gloom message below. It is true that we are burdened by two very bad decisions made by our former mayor and aldermen; Lake Park Villas and the Steam Utility have left us in a place that all of would rather not be. Changes in state shared revenues, highway aids, and recycling grants haven't helped matters any further. However, we are here and we must move forward to make Menasha a good place to live. Contrary to Steve who hasn't proposed any solutions, I have worked with staff to create solutions and begin the recovery of our community.

Yes we did propose to reduce the hours at the pool in the evenings as the best solution to reduce costs in a time period that isn't heavily used. We did also look to duplicate our very successful partnership with the YMCA and Senior Center at the pool, however found out that we currently run the pool for less costs than the YMCA could. This is something that we want to continue to explore in the future. We did initiate a marketing partnership with the YMCA which allows YMCA members to receive resident rates on season passes in exchange for the YMCA marketing our pool to its members as an outdoor alternative for the summer months. We also initiated the friends of the pool group to look at the future of the pool both physically and financially.

We have entered into a development agreement with two builders to begin construction in the long dormant city owned Lake Park Villas area. Currently the city pays in excess of \$650,000 annually through our taxes to pay for debt incurred when the city developed the first phase of the residential area. The agreements entered into will enable 140 new homes to be built in the area over the next five years with investment for the roads and other infrastructure paid by the developer, and an incentive paid to the developer only if he lives up to his agreement. Steve continues to lay land minds in an attempt to squash one of the agreements and put us at risk of a lawsuit by the developer which could cost us millions as a city. These agreements will reduce the debt paid by the city taxpayer substantially each year and free that money up for other services and capital projects.

The article regarding snow removal in the paper wasn't as clear as it could have been. We have one retirement in the department of public works that will not be filled next year which will require us to prioritize. The priorities will remain roads, then sidewalks, then removal from terraces. There will be no changes in removal from the roads as that is a priority, where there may be changes is to snow removal on sidewalks at parks and city buildings, and removal of snow from terraces downtown and narrow streets. Last year's snow removal was effected mainly by the time that the snow fell. We had an unusual number of overnight & morning snowfalls which lead to us having to wait longer to start plowing operations. Normally we would start at midnight or as soon as the snow was substantially finished falling and be finished by the time people wake up or go to work, this year we had to start later overnight or sometimes as late as 7AM which lead to bad driving conditions, hopefully the snowfalls will return to a more normal time schedule this year. Another note of interest, our Public Works Team has worked with management to allow their hours to be shifted from the regular 7-3 to other hours during snow season to help control costs when the hours are shifted there is no overtime or call in time saving all of us significant money,

The majority of our debt is as a result of the Steam Utility, while we do have \$1.5million in annual payments for the foreseeable future it could have been much worse. Through an agreement with our wholesale electric power supplier we were able to execute a sale leaseback agreement which provided funds to settle a bondholder lawsuit and maintain our electric utility. Without this agreement that I was able help initiate we would have lost our electric utility which would have increased everyones electric bill on average of \$15 monthly and eliminated an over \$500,000 annual payment from the electric utility to the city which we are using to pay steam utility debt down. We should have final court approval of the settlement agreement by the end of this year.

Our staff has also worked tirelessly to secure grants to complete capitol projects, increase energy efficiency, and provide amenities. We have received millions in grants over the past four years which have fully funded a new fire station on Manitowoc Rd, rebuilt Manitowoc Road, rebuilt Tayco St, installed energy efficient streetlights on the island and downtown, provided for urban forestry emerald ash borer planning, installed lighting on the Friendship Trail behind the department of public works near Melissa St, replaced heating equipment at the police station, and rebuild the Brighton Drive bridge in the future. These grants have saved Menasha taxpayers tremendous costs and allowed us to complete important projects that otherwise wouldn't have been able to be accomplished.

We recently received another grant to complete a trail segment from Provence Terrace (near the new fire station) to the corner of Plank Road and Oneida St where the Friendship Trail ends. Steve and three other aldermen voted to reject the \$300,000 returning it to the state because it had a required 20% match from the city(to be mainly city staff time). Luckily the public spoke very loudly and clearly that this was not in the city's best interest and all four aldermen changed their vote and the grant was accepted unanimously two weeks later. This trail segment will finally allow safe access from the east side of the community to amenities like the pool and library.

Menasha's equalized value (property values) have actually increased in 2011, this was not the case for Neenah and most other cities in the area (although most towns increased substantially). Steve's doom and gloom is not warranted, and even if values go down that doesn't mean that your tax bill goes up, just the rate changes. Furthermore, we have been working tirelessly to bring new development to Menasha such as new senior housing with the Mission Village development and Dollar General store on Appleton Road. We are positioned to see new development on the former Gilbert Paper site next year as well if aldermen don't stop enhancement of the public waterfront which we are optimistic that will be largely funded through stewardship grants.

We are accomplishing great things even with all of the adversity that we have been faced with. Rolling up the carpet and calling it quits isn't the answer. We need to continue to be solution oriented, spend wisely with a vision for results, and become more efficient. We will recover, we're all in this together and we will all enjoy a bright future together.

Don

Donald Merkes  
Mayor, City of Menasha  
140 Main St  
Menasha WI 54952  
967-3600 office  
727-9381 cell

-----Original Message-----  
From: Steve Krueger

Sent: Sat 11/12/2011 7:42 PM

To: Jess Thiel

Cc: Daniel Zelinski; Jim Englebert; Stan Sevenich; Mark Langdon; Kevin Benner; Michael Taylor.; Chris Klein; Don Merkes; Debbie Galeazzi

Subject: RE: Menasha Pool hours

Hello Jessica,

I felt the need to respond to your Email in order to correct some misconceptions and hopefully provide a little more understanding as to what is taking place.

First of all, the Common Council has not yet proposed any cuts to hours for the library, hours for the pool or cuts to snow removal. These current cuts have been proposed by the Mayor and the respective Departments, not the Common Council.

Regarding the recent letter in the Post Crescent by Dr. Gitter, the statements incorporated into the text are also inaccurate and a bit presumptuous. The current proposed cut in operation hours came from the Department head and Mayor, not the Common Council. Dr. Gitter did emphasize the benefits a pool CAN have to an individual but does not explain why we have such a high obesity rate within the city despite the pool being open full hours since I was a kid. The obesity rate is not connected in any way to pool operation hours, the concern he should have is with the available items that contribute to the obesity problem being purchased at the concession stand. I have also been told by a vast number of parents and children that they avoid using the Menasha pool due to the element that hangs out there.

Your concerns involving snow removal are extremely valid, however, situations such as our pool running a deficit of over \$140,000 each and every year are contributors to the problem, and it will be worsening over the next couple of years because this budget seems to, in my opinion, be organized to get us through an election year and nothing more. We are not dealing with the known financial destruction that will happen in another year. Let me explain:

The budget our Mayor proposed is raising taxes and cutting services in order to break even for next year. Claiming that we have no more room to adjust department spending in order to give us a little cushion automatically means any and all debt payment increases that will happen must be taken care of through the tax levy. Our debt obligation will increase another \$164,675 in 2013 and another \$200,000 in 2014 meaning the tax payers WILL have to carry the burden of those increases if we are unable to get a grip on reality with this budget. Please keep in mind that our assessed values have not yet dropped, and according to all indications home and property assessed values will almost certainly have to be lowered which would result in an automatic tax increase to make up for the lost revenue. Our comptroller has given me his opinion that the only true method for Menasha to survive what lay ahead is to increase taxes by 8%-10%; the council is trying desperately to avoid that outcome, but if people insist that secondary departments and amenities cannot be adjusted or touched that scenario will have to become a reality.

Each year there are increases in wages along with benefits including health insurance that are forgotten about when considering our future. I will not rely on any possible east side development for the added revenue because there are no tangibles until structures are actually placed on the property, so we MUST deal with the current tangibles. making considerations for the "yet to develop" is exactly why Menasha is in this financial situation.

The Friends of the Menasha Pool have not come forth with any solid plans, which I am aware of, to substantially aid in the massive pool deficit. I had correspondences with one of the organizers one day before the scheduled Park and Recreation budget meeting where I asked if they have ever thought about developing some fundraisers to achieve their goal. That idea was not on their radar at that time; however, they mentioned fundraising the following day which was nice to hear them take my advice. putting a dent into a \$140,000 shortfall will be a monumental task. Equating shorter pool operation hours to a removal of children's social skills and physical fitness is, in my opinion, twisting the realities of the function of a city and the social abilities of children. Our youth do not fall into depravity the remaining 300 days of the year that our pool closed, just as moral and social abilities do not fall to the wayside for the 12 hours each day during the season the pool is taking a rest from the activity. If pool hours are slightly diminished during the season means the end to proper civility as some are making it out to be, we defiantly have a much larger issue on our hands to deal with.

If residents want their taxes to level out and imperative services to climb back to levels that they once were, we need to accustom ourselves to having the secondary amenities properly calibrated in order to meet that goal. There are deeper issues that will be rearing their ugly heads within the next two years and our city is totally ill-equipped to deal with them when they arrive. and they will arrive. I am grateful that concerned citizens have been voicing their opinions and the more information they receive may cast a more vivid light on the issues that every Alderman must consider when placing their stamp of approval upon anything that will ultimately cost Menasha's valued residents more money, especially without exhausting every cost saving measure that can be found.

Thank you for your time.

Ald. Steve Krueger  
5th District Menasha  
NMFR Finance & Personnel Committee  
Vice-Chair Public Works  
Vice-Chair Personnel

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From: Jess Thiel [mailto:jathiel@sbcglobal.net]  
Sent: Sat 11/12/2011 7:30 AM  
To: Chris Klein; Stan Sevenich; Michael Taylor.; Kevin Benner; Mark Langdon; Steve Krueger; Daniel Zelinski; Jim Englebert  
Subject: Menasha Pool hours

Dear Menasha Alderman,

I'm writing to urge you to reconsider reducing the hours at Jefferson Pool. I hope you all will read the excellent letter by Dr. Michael Gitter in today's Post-Crescent. In Menasha, we have some kids who face challenges, economic and otherwise. For many, I believe that the pool is the one safe place they can go to have fun and get physical activity in the summertime. I hope you will take a serious look at the ideas the Friends of the Menasha Pool are putting forth.

As someone who loves the City of Menasha and takes a lot of pride in it, I have to say that these proposed reductions are hard to accept. We pay very high property taxes and yet: our recycling is picked up once a month vs. biweekly in surrounding communities. The council is proposing cutting hours at the library, another valuable resource for our kids and adults. Snow removal will be reduced when, in our neighborhood, for example, it was subpar last year already.

I hope you will consider what I've said, and I thank you for your time.

Jessica Thiel

1995 Dreamfield Lane