

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wisconsin State Statute 59.694 sets forth minimum requirements regarding the size of Board of Adjustments and residency requirement for its membership.

Wis. Stat. 59.694(2)(a) states that in counties with a population of less than 500,000, the board of adjustment shall consist of not more than 5 members as determined by resolution of the county board. Stat. 59.694(2)(c) goes on to state that the members of the board of adjustment, including alternate members, shall all reside within the county and outside of the limits of incorporated cities and villages; provided, however, that no 2 members shall reside in the same town.

The Kenosha County Board of Adjustments historically has consisted of five members. Since 2014 we have been unable to fill all five seats.

Prior to 2009 there were seven unincorporated townships within Kenosha County.

In 2009 Bristol Township incorporated a portion of their township to village status and shortly thereafter annexed the remaining township lands into the village. These two actions eliminated the entirety of Bristol Township, thus eliminating one township from the potential personnel pool.

In 2015 the Town of Somers incorporated a portion of their township to village status and shortly thereafter annexed the majority of the remaining township lands into the village, leaving only a small area to remain in the township. These actions forced the Board's Chairperson into retirement.

In 2017 the Town of Salem and the Village of Silver Lake merged into village status. This action eliminated the entirety of Salem Township, forcing another Board member into retirement.

As is currently stands, there are five unincorporated townships within Kenosha County. One of which, the Town of Somers, is substantially small in terms of area/population and will cease to exist in 2035 when the City of Kenosha/Town of Somers Cooperative Plan expires. This is also the one township not represented on The Board of Adjustments.

With a reduced number of unincorporated townships from which to fill seats, compounded by the fact that without full Board, there are no alternates to make use of in the event of an absence, reducing the Board of Adjustments from 5 members and 2 alternates to 3 members and 2 alternates is a change that makes sense given the math of our political geography.

Adoption of this text amendment will allow the Kenosha County Board of Adjustments to conduct business with a full Board membership, make use of alternates in the event of absences and reduce the chances that a meeting which is only held once a month would need to be cancelled due to failure to reach a quorum.