

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

APPROVAL OF MOVING GARBAGE COLLECTION FEE FROM TAX LEVY TO MONTHLY FEE

BACKGROUND:

The Common Council has been aware of the financial difficulties facing the City for over two years now.

At their May 12th, 2026, Common Council meeting, the Hartford Council approved a list of cuts in expenses and increases to revenues to offset some of the budget shortfalls. On that list was the moving of garbage collection from tax levy to monthly fee.

After reviewing all costs associated with garbage collection services, it was calculated that the initial monthly fee would be \$10.66 per household for this service on a monthly utility bill.

If approved, residents would be notified of this change to their monthly utility bill in November with the first bill with the charge not coming out until January 2027.

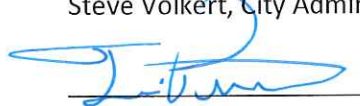
ECONOMIC IMPACT:

The city would be removing \$667,742 off the tax roll and distributing this same amount on monthly bills.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The Staff recommends the Council approve the transfer of garbage collection services fees from the tax levy to a monthly utility billing.

REVIEWED BY:  DATE: 9-17-26
Steve Volkert, City Administrator

 DATE: 9-20/26
Tim Puestow, City Public Works Director

Committee Routing: Finance and Personnel
City Council

October 13th, 2026
October 27th, 2026

Resolution Creating and Setting Monthly Fees for Residential Garbage Collection Services

Whereas the City of Hartford provides collection services for garbage and recycling to residential properties in the City; and

Whereas the City of Hartford had previously transferred the recycling fee from the property tax levy to a monthly fee on residential utility bills; and

Whereas the cost of providing garbage collection services is presently paid out of the City's property tax levy; and

Whereas Wisconsin's Levy Limit Law places a strict limit on the amount that the City's tax levy can increase each year; and

Whereas the cost of providing garbage collection services through a private contracted company has increased at a percentage rate above the city's ability to tax for it, leading to unsustainable funding for such services; and

Whereas the City desires to continue providing garbage collection services for the benefit of the health, safety, and welfare of the City's residents; and

Whereas garbage collection services may be funded by a fee charged to residents instead of being funded by the tax levy; and

Whereas because garbage collection is a "covered service" under the Levy Limit Law, if the funding for that service is switched from the tax levy to a fee then the City's tax levy must be reduced by an amount attributable to fees collected for garbage collection services, subject to certain limits; and

Whereas garbage collection services can only be sustained for the City's citizens if revenues for those services can be increased at a rate greater than the Levy Limit Law would otherwise allow; and

Whereas funding garbage collection by a fee rather than through the tax levy is the most responsible way to ensure that vital garbage collection services continue to be provided by the city;

Now therefore, the Common Council of the City of Hartford does resolve as follows:

- 1.** Garbage collection and disposal services provided by the City of Hartford shall be funded by the imposition and collection of a monthly fee, rather than by the property tax levy.
- 2.** The fee shall be charged to the owner of the property as shown in the City's tax records.
- 3.** The fee shall be set annually by the Common Council by resolution, which shall also specify payment terms for each year. A public notice shall be published annually stating the fee amount and payment terms. The notice shall be posted in three public places and published as a Class 1 notice in the Washington County Daily News or successor official newspaper, no later than 21 days before the date the first monthly fee is due. Any fee payments that are not made by the due date shall automatically be added to the property tax bill as a special charge pursuant to Wis. Stat. §66.0627(2).
- 4.** The fee shall not be payable in installments.

5. The initial fee shall be \$10.66 per month and shall be charged per each City-issued garbage cart
6. The initial fee due date shall be the same date as the rest of that months utility bill.

Passed and adopted the 13th day of October, 2026.

Dennis J Regan, Mayor

Shanna Kreilkamp, City Clerk