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WEST BRANCH TIMES

Established in 1875 • West Branch is the birthplace of President Herbert Hoover, the Great Humanitarian & Home of the Bears

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Property taxes may drop 3.5% with city levy

Levy hearing set for April 6; total valuation up \$13.5M

By Gregory R. Norfleet
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The City of West Branch's proposed property tax levy shows tax rates decreasing, and the collective amount paid by landowners will dip about 3.5 percent.

Also, the city estimates that actual property taxes paid on a residential home will decrease from \$608 per \$100,000 in taxable value to \$570.

A home with a taxable value of \$250,000 would pay about \$1,425 to the city. About one-third of a West Branch landowner's property tax payment goes toward city taxes.

The value of private property increased due to new growth, but "there will be no net increase in total property taxes for existing individual properties this year," according to city information.

The West Branch City Council will host a public hearing 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 6, at City Offices should anyone wish to comment on the levy figures.

Some of the highlights put forth in the public hearing notice:

- The city plans to collect \$2.51 million in property taxes in fiscal year 2026-2027, down from \$2.6 million in the current budget year which ends on June 30. That amounts to a \$90,800 decrease, about 3.5 percent less.
- The taxable value of properties inside the city limits comes to about \$213.6 million, up from \$200.1 million. That extra \$13.5 million reflects a 6.75-percent increase.
- The property tax rate will decrease from \$12.82 per \$1,000 of taxable value to about \$11.63, a drop of about \$1.19, or a 9.28-percent drop.
- For agricultural property, the city's tax rate will remain unchanged at about \$3.00 per \$1,000 of taxable value.
- However, the state rollback for ag land decreased from 73.86 percent to

59.44 percent, according to Finance Director Heidi Van Auken. That means the taxable value, in dollars, will decrease from about \$535,000 to \$486,000.

- With the rollback, the city expects ag property tax revenue to decrease from \$1,608 this year to \$1,460 next year.

- The city's Consolidated General Fund, which brought in just under \$1.61 million this year, should bring in about \$1.66 million in the coming year, an increase of about \$58,000.

- The city expects to spend another \$20,300 on insurance, increasing from \$118,900 this year to \$139,200 next year.

- The cost of employee income taxes and retirement savings should decrease, according to the levy. Between Federal Insurance Contributions Act (Social Security and Medicare taxes) and the Iowa Public Employees' Retirement System payments, the city expects the total paid to drop from \$211,800 to \$188,900.

- The biggest decrease in the property tax levy comes from "other" employee benefits. The city does not plan to levy anything for that line item in the coming year, cutting nearly \$189,000 from the levy.

- To pay off debts, the city expects to need about \$30,000 more than the \$327,200 it needed this year, bumping up that figure to \$357,300 for next year.

The city council is working on its 2026-27 budget now. According to a Feb. 9 draft report, the city plans to resurface West Main Street, hire its first full-time fire chief, and make improvements to its parks.

City Administrator Adam Kofoed assumes 2.9-percent inflation for the coming year.

He estimates spending 41 percent of the property tax revenues on public safety (police and fire), 27 percent on culture and

Taxes

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Trying to cover \$450K gap, school gets some pushback

District proposal would increase tax rate from \$15 to \$15.50

By Gregory R. Norfleet
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Instead of cutting staff or programs to reduce spending, West Branch school leaders seek to raise property tax levies by more than 3 percent to make up for an expected \$451,000 budget

shortfall in the coming year. At a March 25 public hearing on the proposed \$771 million property tax levy, Superintendent Marty Jimmerson said he would prefer not to raise taxes, but felt the school district could not afford to make cuts. A few public comments,

including from one school board member, pushed back on the proposal.

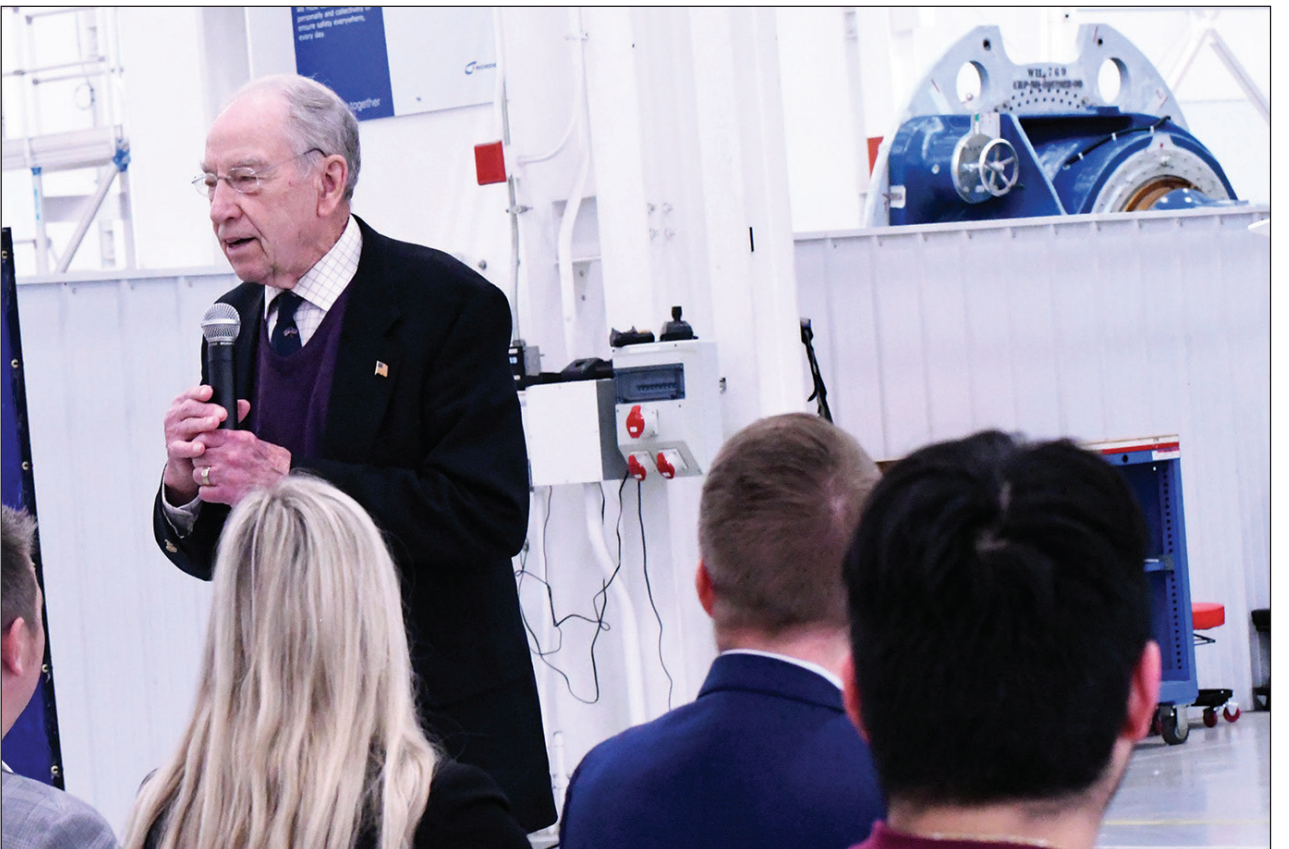
The Board of Education will likely vote on the tax levy at its 5:30 p.m. April 13 meeting.

The school district proposes raising the levy from \$15 per \$1,000 of taxable

valuation to \$15.50, an increase of 3.33 percent.

For residential property with an assessed value of \$100,000 to \$110,000, homeowners would see their taxes increase by \$48 per year, or 6.75 percent.

Pushback [Page 7](#)



US Sen. Charles "Chuck" Grassley speaks Monday afternoon to Nordex North America employees on a variety of subjects, from tariffs on wind industry parts to reopening the government. [Gregory R. Norfleet/West Branch Times](#)

Grassley dismisses 'No Kings' accusation against president

However, Grassley agrees with SCOTUS ruling against tariffs

By Gregory R. Norfleet
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Yes, U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley agrees with the Supreme Court ruling against President Trump's tariffs related to the wind industry.

No, the Republican does not agree that such actions — or any actions Trump has taken up to this point — suggest the president is trying to act like a king.

The senator visited West Branch on Monday, two days after 82nd Indivisible hosted a local "No Kings" rally that drew about 80 people to downtown.

He said those who know history and the Constitution understand Trump could not succeed in becoming a king even if he wanted to do so.

"Not if you know what King George III did to the colonists. He deprived them of all their rights that, if they were in London, (they would have) had. People resented that," the senator said. "That's why we had the Revolution. The Constitution was written to protect those constitutional rights. So the answer is, no, there's no way any president of this country could be king."

Grassley noted that,

before the Constitution was written, George Washington turned down an offer to become king.

"He didn't take it and he limited his term to two terms, and now the Constitution says that a president can't serve more than two terms," he said. "So there's no way any American can ever again be a king, including Trump."

After a tour of the Nordex North America wind turbine assembly plant, he took questions from the staff and management.

One questioner said Trump's tariffs "are really

hammering our industry" and the Supreme Court ruled "they were illegal tariffs."

He was referring to *Learning Resources Inc. vs Trump*, where the president invoked the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act, which raised costs on certain imports, like wind turbine parts.

The Supreme Court determined by a 6-3 vote that no qualifying emergency existed to authorize those powers.

Trump then turned to Section 122 of the Trade

King [Page 2](#)

Senator impressed by Nordex growth

COO thanked senator for 'longstanding support' of wind industry

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After reopening and installing bigger cranes for its larger wind turbine models, Nordex North America impressed U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley,

who toured the facility on Monday.

Chief Operations Officer John McComas Rodriguez led a short tour of the plant, telling Grassley that since reopening less than a year ago, the assembly plant can

now produce up to 400 units per year.

Officials said that the West Branch location is the largest Nordex facility in the world, and its three new cranes — two inside and one outside — include one that can lift 190 tons,

making it one of the largest cranes in the area.

"When they tell me they can do 200 to 400 of these big turbines a year, they're no small operation," the senator said.

Grassley last toured the facility about 15 years ago,

before Nordex purchased Acciona.

"I was glad to come back and see how these components have grown in size to such a great extent," Grassley said. "It's incomprehensible to me how you can even lift these up on those towers, but, obvi-

Nordex [Page 8](#)

