



DATE: July 15th, 2025

TO: Clerks and Chairs of Marathon County Towns

FROM: Shad Harvey, Land Resources Manager & Zoning Administrator

SUBJECT(S):

- 2025 TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE MARATHON COUNTY *GENERAL CODE OF ORDINANCES CHAPTER 15 – Private Sewage Systems*

Marathon County Conservation, Planning & Zoning (CPZ) is preparing to propose updates to *Chapter 15 – Private Sewage Systems* of the Marathon County General Code of Ordinances. These changes, if adopted, will apply to all Towns within Marathon County.

The proposed amendments aim to:

- Improve clarity and organization of the ordinance language.
- Correct outdated or inaccurate code references.
- Establish a special charge to support the State-mandated Septic System Maintenance Program, reducing reliance on the general property tax levy.

A public hearing to review the proposed changes will be held by the Environmental Resources Committee (ERC) at its meeting on **Tuesday, September 2, 2025**.

As part of the ordinance amendment process, CPZ is seeking feedback from Towns on the proposed updates. We invite you to share any comments, suggestions, or questions you may have. Please submit written input by **Friday, August 22, 2025**, either by email to me at shad.harvey@marathoncounty.gov or by mail to 1100 Lake View Drive, Suite 400, Wausau, WI 54403. A full draft of the proposed ordinance amendments is available on the Marathon County website(<https://www.marathoncounty.gov/services/zoning>).

The timeline for considering and adopting the *General Code of Ordinances Chapters 15*, as follows:

July-August: Conduct outreach with Towns on proposed draft;
September: ERC Public Hearing
Adoption by ERC and County Board

Marathon County General Code of Ordinances Chapter 15- Private Sewage System Code:
Generalized List of Amendments (A full draft is located at: <https://www.marathoncounty.gov/services/zoning>)

Amendment Number	Section	Proposed Change	Reason for Change
1	Entire Document	Replace References of Shoreland, Wetland, and Floodplain Code to correct reference.	We recently separated our Shoreland and Floodplain regulations into two distinct chapters—Chapter 22 for Shoreland and Chapter 27 for Floodplain. These edits update references throughout the code to reflect that change and ensure accuracy.
2	15.7	(1) All structures or premises in the County that are permanently or intermittently intended for human habitation or occupancy, and/or which are provided with interior plumbing and are not serviced by a public sewer or a privately owned wastewater treatment facility regulated by the Department of Natural Resources, shall have a system for holding or treatment and dispersal of sewage and wastewater which complies with the provisions of this ordinance.	Clarify the code to ensure that any structure used for living purposes or that contains interior plumbing is required to have a properly permitted septic system or approved non-plumbing sanitary system. This ensures all wastewater is managed safely and in compliance with regulations.
3	15.36	(1) All private sewage systems and non-plumbing systems shall be managed and maintained in accordance with SPS 383, 384 and 391 Wisconsin Administrative Code, and this ordinance. a. As permitted under Wis. Stat 145.20(4), each property owner of a POWTS shall annually be charged a fee per POWTS for the costs associated with operating the Marathon County POWTS Maintenance Program, including the inventory and tracking of pumping and maintenance on each system. The annual fee shall be imposed in an amount listed on the schedule of fees approved by the Environmental Resources Committee and will be included on the property owner's property tax bill as a special charge beginning in the 2025 tax year.	To add a special fee to the POWTS Code to create a dedicated funding source for the State-mandated Septic System Maintenance Program. This approach provides an alternative to using property tax levy funds, ensuring the program is supported without increasing the general tax burden.