



Milwaukee County

Board of Supervisors

February 1, 2007

For Immediate Release

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COUNTY BOARD STRATEGY LEADS TO SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME WITH AFSCME UNION

Agreement will fully fund positions in 2007

Milwaukee, WI – More than 100 workers in Milwaukee County can now thank the County Board for saving their jobs. On a unanimous 19-0 vote, the Milwaukee County Board voted to approve a contract agreement with AFSCME District Council 48.

Personnel Committee Chairman Jim “Luigi” Schmitt said, “This deal gives taxpayers and employees some stability through the end of 2008. Although I wish we could have reached this point sooner, we’re pleased about the cooperation we’ve received from both sides.”

The County Board’s amended budget led to this successful outcome. While the County Executive wanted to abolish a large number of positions in the 2007 County Budget and contract out for services, the County Board stepped in, crafting a Budget Amendment that temporarily restored many of the positions with limited funding. The Board later overrode the County Executive’s veto of the entire 2007 budget. The County Board’s strategic move gave the union an incentive to come back to the bargaining table.

Now that union leaders have agreed to the health plan already approved for all other unions and now non-union employees, a long-term solution is in place. The new health care structure means these union employees will pay more for their health insurance co-pays and premiums in the more costly health plan, but they’ll keep their jobs, rather than losing them to outsourcing.

“We have embraced these employees and ultimately saved their jobs,” said Board Chairman Lee Holloway. “I’m glad the union had the courage to take this necessary next step to protect their future here.” The agreement frees up money that will provide full funding for their positions for all of 2007.

County Supervisor Ryan McCue said it’s a good deal for taxpayers. “This contract eliminates the backdrop pension benefit for all new hires and steers employees toward lower-cost health care plans,” McCue said.

“The Board’s Personnel Committee clearly took a leadership role throughout this process, making it possible for the union to return to negotiations,” Supervisor Schmitt added. “Our top priorities were removing the backdrop benefit and significantly reducing sick leave benefits. We accomplished those objectives and want to continue working with the health care community and all of our employees to seek better health care programs.”