



Joe Sanfelippo



Milwaukee County Supervisor - 17th District

October 2011



**MILWAUKEE COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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COMMITTEE

ASSIGNMENTS:

Personnel, Chair
Intergovernmental
Relations
Parks, Energy,
and Environment

Dear Friends and Constituents,

Wow, what a way to start October! The Brewers won the first two games of the playoffs against Arizona, the Packers are 4-0 after just pounding the Denver Broncos, and the Badgers cleaned the Nebraska Cornhuskers clock in their Big 10 opener. For Wisconsin sports fans, you can't ask for a better weekend.

For the County Board, October is the beginning of budget season. Throughout the entire month, the Board's Finance and Audit Committee will hold meetings to review the 2012 budget that has been proposed by the County Executive. The meetings are open to the public and provide a good opportunity for anyone who is interested to come and listen. You can also take part by voicing your concerns and opinions as the public is welcome to speak at any one of the meetings.

Later this month, I will hold three neighborhood town hall style meetings to explain the proposed budget and to inform residents of other important issues facing the county. I encourage all of you to attend one of these meetings to help me represent you properly. A list of dates, times and locations can be found later in this newsletter.

If you are unable to attend one of my district meetings, you will have an opportunity to express your views and opinions to the entire Board when we hold the annual Public Budget Hearing on October 31. And, as always, please feel free to contact my office I am happy to respond to any issues you may raise. This is your money we are spending and your input into the process is vital.

Enjoy the beautiful fall weather that October is sure to bring. I hope you and your family have a safe and spooky Halloween.



2012 Proposed Budget

On September 29th, County Executive Abele presented his [first budget](#). I was pleased to see that he continued the previous Executive's practice of presenting a budget with no property tax levy increase. Property taxes in Milwaukee County are already too high, and the challenges from the prolonged economic recession are hitting everyone hard.

While I have not yet finished reading every detail, there are a few areas of concern that already stand out in the proposal.

County Executive Abele has proposed cutting \$14 million from the Sheriff's Department budget. He justified this cut by claiming that crime is going down in the county. I do not agree. Earlier this spring, the Sheriff and his staff were instrumental in keeping a large and rowdy crowd under control at the lake front. Without the expertise and professionalism extended by the Sheriff's Department, this scene could have easily turned into a riot.

On the Fourth of July, a "flash mob" looted a business and assaulted several individuals who were trying to enjoy one of the many Independence Day celebrations around the county. And who can forget the violence that occurred in and around State Fair last August when innocent people were beaten up by out of control mobs.

One of the primary responsibilities of government is to protect the welfare of the public. Sheriff Clarke has done an admirable job running an effective and efficient department. He has maintained law

and order while keeping within budget, something many of his predecessors failed to do. I believe that gutting \$14 million from the Sheriff's budget will have a negative impact on the department's ability to continue to provide the safety and security that our residents deserve. The last thing we want to do is have families feel unsafe at one of our many great county parks.

The County Executive has also eliminated \$3 million for the county Emergency Medical Services. Our EMS program is recognized as one of the best in the nation and is a perfect example of the kind of collaboration County Executive Abele campaigned on promoting. Without this funding, Paramedic services could be cut back or eliminated in many communities, putting people's lives in jeopardy.

The County Executive claims that he needed to cut the EMS funding so that he could increase spending on community-based mental health services. There is no doubt that we need to improve mental health care in the county, and moving to a community based model is best. However, we currently spend more than \$180 million annually on mental health and I find it hard to believe that we could not find \$3 million worth of efficiencies in that department without cutting the EMS funding.

Last year, The Human Services Research Institute (HSRI), a nationally recognized nonprofit agency, released a study that said Milwaukee County's problems in providing mental health care are not caused by lack of funds. Rather, the problem is we are not spending our money wisely. Unfortunately,

County Executive Abele has chosen to maintain the status quo by spending even more money on our troubled mental healthcare division at the expense of the EMS program. This is not good for taxpayers. Even more importantly, it is not good for our patients.



County Board Refuses Reform

My fall newsletter that was mailed out last year included a survey. One of the questions asked your opinion on the need for County Board reform and contained several options that could be taken. Respondents to the survey overwhelmingly recommended that the board be downsized. The second highest option receiving votes was to change the Supervisor position to a part-time job.

As you know from my previous newsletters, during the redistricting process the Board rejected my proposal for serious downsizing and chose a controversial plan that eliminated just one seat. As a result, I introduced a resolution that would have transformed the Board by cutting the pay and benefits of Supervisors to make the position part-time. My resolution also called for committee meetings and County Board meetings to be held in the evening, making it easier for the public to get more involved in county government.

At our September 29th Board meeting, my resolution was soundly rejected by a vote of 4-15.

Over the past two decades, County government has been reorganizing and downsizing. The County workforce has

shrunk by 43%, and many of the programs and services that the County Board is charged with overseeing have been reduced, eliminated or outsourced. Throughout this process, the Board has sought sacrifices from taxpayers in the form of property tax levy increases and sacrifices from County employees in the form of pay freezes, increased workloads and furlough days. Yet, the Board has exempted itself from virtually all reforms.

One of the problems complicating this issue is that there is no clear job description or a list of job responsibilities for a County Board Supervisor. Without this direction, board members are free to set their own rules and determine on their own what is and is not part of their job. Imagine if, at your place of employment, people were hired but never told what they had to do to earn their pay. There would be utter chaos with people coming and going as they pleased and doing whatever they wanted. Nothing would get done.

It is clear, not only from the response to my survey, but also from the many messages of support I received for my resolution from people all over the county, that the time has come for the Board to reform. Since the opportunity for reform through the redistricting process is lost for another decade, the only option left is to change to a part-time Board. I will continue my efforts to achieve that goal by working to develop a job description for County Board Supervisors that defines exactly what the responsibilities of the office should entail.



Milwaukee County Budget Process

The County Board's Finance and Audit Committee will review all aspects of the 2012 Recommended Budget through public meetings in Room 203-R of the Milwaukee County Courthouse. Amendments will be considered at these meetings, which continue throughout October and early November.

The County Board's annual Public Hearing on the County Executive's 2012 Recommended Budget is scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday, October 31 at the Washington Park Senior Center, 4420 W. Vliet Street in Milwaukee.

The County Board of Supervisors will adopt an amended version of the 2012 County Budget on Monday, November 7 at 8:30 a.m. in Room 200 of the Milwaukee County Courthouse.

Possible vetoes from the County Executive will be considered on Wednesday, November 16 at 1:30 p.m. in Room 200 of the Milwaukee County Courthouse. A two-thirds vote (13 members) is required to override any veto.

Reminder Reminder!

District 17 Town Hall Meetings

Make your voice heard!

City of Greenfield

Tuesday, October 18, 2011
Greenfield Public Library
Front Conference Room
5310 W. Layton Ave.

Village of Greendale

Wednesday, October 19, 2011
6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m.
Greendale Safety Center
Courtroom
5911 W. Grange Ave.

City of West Allis

Thursday, October 20, 2011
6:30p.m. - 8:00p.m.
West Allis Public Library
Constitution Room
7421 W. National Ave.

Follow the Finance & Audit Budget Hearing Schedule [Here](#)

Meetings start Monday, October 10, 2011
and run through Thursday, October 27, 2011

County Board Public Hearing on County Executive's 2012 Recommended Budget

Monday, October 31, 2011
at 7:00 p.m.

Washington Park Senior Center

4420 W. Vliet St.

(Includes amendments by the
Finance & Audit Committee)