



Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

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UNIFIED COUNTY BOARD APPROVES 2013 BUDGET ON 13-5 VOTE

Two-thirds back plan to improve public safety, lessen impact on taxpayers

Milwaukee – The Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors is proud to announce that it has adopted, on a 13-5 vote, a 2013 Milwaukee County budget that improves public safety, moves toward greater intergovernmental cooperation and strikes a more balanced approach to fiscal choices.

Additionally, the Board's action means the average homeowner in the city of Milwaukee, where nearly two-thirds of the County's residents live, will see a decrease of approximately \$19 in the County portion of their tax bill.

"I'm thrilled to point out that this budget has passed on a two-thirds vote and comes from the work of Supervisors who represent diverse geographic areas and divergent political views," said Chairwoman Marina Dimitrijevic.

In further display of collaboration, the product from the Board maintains at least 95 percent of the budget introduced by the County Executive.

"We have respected the framework introduced by the County Executive and made changes as the Legislative body does in any budget process," noted Chairwoman Dimitrijevic. "Both branches are exercising the checks and balances that the public elects us to do."

The Board prioritized investment in public safety, including moving ahead on 911 response transferring to the Milwaukee Police Department; strengthening support for Emergency Medical Services (EMS); and creating two new investigator positions in the Office of the District Attorney.

After careful evaluation and deliberation, the Board favored the Sheriff's plan and promise to commit to proactive patrols in County Parks.

In a significant move, the Board acted in response to testimony from Chief Judge Jeffrey Kremers and others to transfer control of the County Correctional Facility South from the Sheriff to an appointee of the County Executive.

The Board also increased funding by nearly \$400,000 to keep the Behavioral Health Division's Community Support Program with Milwaukee County and not outsourced.

Additionally, in keeping with a recommendation from the non-partisan, impartial Public Policy Forum, the Board has increased the unallocated contingency fund by \$1 million, which is a conservative measure setting aside additional funds that can only be released by a two-thirds vote of the Board should unanticipated emergencies arise.

In a creative nod to sparking local job growth, the Board unanimously approved a Small Business Opportunity Initiative that includes a \$100,000 loan fund for small businesses; the training of small business at the Milwaukee County Research Park; a micro-loan program of loans ranging between \$1,000 and \$5,000; and other business-building components.

The Board prioritized Milwaukee County Parks with a vote of 17-1 to create a Parks Amenities Matching Fund that will pay for outstanding deferred maintenance without a burden on the tax levy.

The Fund stands to raise approximately \$800,000 for County Parks, based on revenue projections of two, new beer gardens, anticipated Milwaukee County land sales estimates and leveraged donations.

The tax levy accompanying the Board's budget is 1.43 percent, which is below the rate of inflation.

Under the adopted budget, Milwaukee County employees, who already pay about 25 percent of their health care costs, will pay even more in 2013.

"I look forward to a spirit of collaboration with County Executive Abele as we advance this budget that reflects the hard-work, fairness, creativity and overall integrity of the Board," said Chairwoman Dimitrijevic.

The Milwaukee County Executive may now issue vetoes on budget line items until November 14, 2012. The Board is set to reconvene to consider any vetoes on November 14.

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