

SHELDON WASSERMAN

3RD DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

FALL 2025



SHELDON A. WASSERMAN

Milwaukee County Board
3rd District Supervisor

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COMMITTEES

Parks and Culture, Chair
Personnel



Dear Neighbor,

I'm excited to share some of the many positive developments that made 2025 such a memorable year for Milwaukee County. From cultural milestones to major infrastructure investments, there's a lot to celebrate across our community.

The **Mitchell Park Domes** reached an exciting turning point, with a transformational renovation plan now underway. This \$133 million project will restore the iconic Domes, introduce a brand-new Nature Learning Center, and bring enhanced energy efficiency and visitor amenities — all ensuring this historic landmark continues to thrive for future generations.

Over at **Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport**, work began on a new international terminal, setting the stage for Milwaukee to become a stronger global travel destination. The project was kickstarted by an \$8.5 million federal grant and also featured a colorful, local art exhibit in partnership with MIAD that showcased the creativity of our community.

The **Milwaukee County Zoo** is making big changes. The aging small-mammal building will close at year's end as the final phase of Adventure Africa nears completion, with Eastern black rhinos planned to arrive once their habitat is finished.

At **Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS)**, 2025 brought significant challenges. We are very fortunate to have a new CEO at the helm, Steve Fuentes, with a long history of work with Chicago Transit Authority. Right now, MCTS is facing a major budget deficit, and the initial budget picture is extremely challenging.

In a more unexpected story, the saga of Deep Thought a.k.a. S.S. Minnow captured local imagination after the boat became stranded and then rescued in a remarkable operation. The new owner even plans to use the boat's story to benefit charitable causes — a perfect example of transforming a quirky event into something positive.

Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley presented his 2026 Recommended Budget to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, highlighting his focus on continued fiscal responsibility and sustainability. The budget is designed to protect essential services, invest in infrastructure that will serve generations to come, and maintain stability in the face of shifting financial realities.

Budget Overview: A \$46 million deficit shortfall, caused by inflation, rising service costs, and cuts in federal and state funding. I am happy to report, with limited resources, Parks did very well compared to other areas of the budget. The state has been cutting Milwaukee's funding for years. If state aid had kept up with inflation, Milwaukee would have received nearly \$1 billion more. Without restored aid, deep cuts are expected in the next five years.

I encourage you to reach out with any questions, comments, or concerns you may have. Your input is extremely valuable to me and our District. I have included a survey questionnaire that I ask you please consider completing. You can do so by mailing the attached paper version back to my office or by filling it out online following the QR code.

If you're interested in additional district information, I encourage you to sign up for my weekly newsletter. Please join our list at county.milwaukee.gov/Wasserman. It's free!

As always, I remain committed to serving you and advocating for smart, community-driven investments across Milwaukee County. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Sheldon A. Wasserman
Milwaukee County Supervisor, District 3



Supervisor Wasserman addresses his colleagues during a meeting of the Milwaukee County Board.

Mitchell Park Domes



2025 was a milestone year for the Mitchell Park Domes. The summer Kinetic Garden show paired petunias, begonias, and lantanas with kinetic sculptures, drawing visitors from across the region – and the County approved funding to move forward with a major renovation.

The turning point came on July 24, when the County Board approved the \$133 million Domes Renovation Project, backed by \$30 million in County funding and \$103 million in tax credits and private fundraising. The plan includes:

- Restoring the Domes' iconic structures
- Building a privately funded \$27M Nature Learning Center
- Adding a café, gift shop, and children's garden
- Upgrading educational spaces, event venues, and park amenities
- Improving energy efficiency

Operational control will shift to the Milwaukee Domes Alliance, with protections ensuring the County retains ownership if needed. This project safeguards a local treasure while expanding community access to nature, culture, and education.

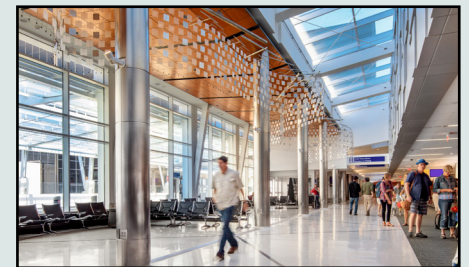
Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport

This year brought major progress and improvements at Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport.

The biggest focus has been on fixing the outdated international terminal which is estimated to cost around \$95 million. Right now, the terminal can't handle departing flights, isn't connected to the main terminal, and exposes travelers to harsh weather. It also makes connecting to other flights difficult.

A brand-new international terminal will be built on Concourse E. The updated space will include two modern gates, meet today's safety and security standards, and allow for future growth. Construction began this summer. The project will be paid for by a mix of passenger fees, airline contributions, and federal grants. The goal is to attract more international passengers, especially those who currently fly through Chicago's O'Hare Airport.

In addition to terminal upgrades, MKE continued its partnership with the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design (MIAD). A new art display, MKE Prints, was installed in Concourse D, near Delta and Spirit gates. The exhibit highlights Milwaukee's landmarks and local stories, bringing art and culture to the airport experience.



Milwaukee County Zoo

The year 2025 brought exciting updates, big plans, and adorable new arrivals to the Milwaukee County Zoo.

A Vision for the Future Unveiled

In April, the Zoo revealed a preview of its new strategic plan, developed in partnership with the Zoological Society of Milwaukee. This plan outlined three major exhibit upgrades aimed at enhancing visitor experience and advancing conservation education:

- Latin American Tropics, planned to feature jaguars, monkeys, and an aquarium modeled after the Great Mayan Reef
- Primates of the World, proposed to include expanded outdoor habitats and a modern indoor space showcasing primates from around the globe
- The Wild North, designed to highlight northern wildlife such as bears, wolves, and moose in naturalistic environments

New Arrivals Welcomed

The Zoo celebrated several new animal births in 2025, including Baatar the Bactrian camel calf, Japanese macaques Chihiro and Kinji, bonobo baby Remi, and Roo the Humboldt penguin chick, whose name was chosen by public vote.



A La Carte at the Zoo

One of Milwaukee's favorite summer traditions took place as the Zoo came alive with music, food, and fun. Popular local restaurants were stationed throughout the park, offering delicious fare, while top national and local performers entertained guests on six stages. The animals were part of the celebration as well, making it an unforgettable blend of wildlife and entertainment.

Overall, 2025 was a year full of growth, excitement, and new beginnings at the Milwaukee County Zoo.

Milwaukee County 3rd District Survey - Your Opinion Matters!

This survey is also available online at: www.tinyurl.com/2025District3Survey or through the QR code to the right. All responses must be completed and returned by January 15, 2026.



SCAN HERE TO TAKE SURVEY ONLINE

Please rank Milwaukee County spending based on your priorities. (1=highest, 5=lowest)

- ___ A. Milwaukee County Parks
- ___ B. Milwaukee County Zoo
- ___ C. Milwaukee County Senior Centers
- ___ D. Reconstruction of the Milwaukee County Safety Building
- ___ E. Sheriff's Department

Additional Comments/Concerns: _____

For e-updates, please provide your email: _____

Full Name: _____ Address: _____

To submit by mail, please send to:
Supervisor Sheldon Wasserman Milwaukee County Courthouse, 901 N. 9th St., Rm 201, Milwaukee, WI 53233



The Journey of Deep Thought a.k.a the S.S. Minnow

What started as a stormy night on Lake Michigan turned into nearly a year-long saga for a 33-foot Chris Craft Roamer – better known to Milwaukee locals as the S.S. Minnow or Deep Thought. On October 12, 2024, while attempting to anchor and ride out a storm, the boat ran out of gas and ultimately ran aground between Bradford Beach and McKinley Marina. Stuck in the sand, the once-proud vessel transformed into a local curiosity. Covered in graffiti and photographed by countless beachgoers, the Minnow became an unexpected piece of lakeside lore – a blend of urban art installation and nautical cautionary tale. After sitting stranded for over four months, Milwaukee County partnered with All City Towing to remove the boat – a complex operation requiring cranes, coordination, and community support.

Finally, the Minnow was pulled from its resting place, but its journey was far from over. In late July, the County listed the boat for online auction in hopes of recouping costs of the boat removal. The auction concluded on August 5, and in a poetic twist, the winning bidder was none other than Jeff Piller, the owner of All City Towing, the very company that rescued the boat. But Jeff isn't holding onto the Minnow for nostalgia. He's planning to auction off pieces of the boat, with proceeds going to charity, turning a story of misadventure into one of giving back. From shipwreck to street art, from salvage to philanthropy, the S.S. Minnow's voyage has been anything but ordinary.





3rd District Milwaukee County Supervisor

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Milwaukee County Transit System

2025 was a year of change and challenge for MCTS, from leadership shifts to budget pressures.

In July, Steve Fuentes was appointed as the new President and CEO, aiming to stabilize the system after several transitions. While contract talks with the drivers' union have been resolved, MCTS still faces a \$9.2M budget shortfall. Federal relief funds will cover the gap in 2025, but uncertainty looms beyond 2026.

Looking ahead, MCTS projects roughly a 15% service reduction in 2026 due to rising costs and dwindling aid. To prepare, planners are using ridership data and community feedback to guide equity-centered changes.

Due to the publishing deadline, I am unable to provide the final County Board modifications to the 2026 budget.



MCTS unveiled a new bus wrap in September recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month.

Get up-to-date information on
FREE Milwaukee County Attractions at:
[county.milwaukee.gov/freedays](https://www.county.milwaukee.gov/freedays)

Service Guide for 3rd District Milwaukee County Residents

3rd District Milwaukee County Supervisor

Sheldon A. Wasserman (414) 278-4237

Aging and Disability Resource Center ... (414) 289-6874

Airports

Mitchell International Airport (414) 747-5300

Timmerman Airport (414) 461-3222

Child Support Services (414) 615-2593

Clerk of Circuit Courts (414) 278-5362

Community Reintegration Center (414) 427-4700

County Board of Supervisors (414) 278-4222

County Clerk (414) 278-4067

County Executive (414) 278-4211

County Treasurer (414) 278-4033

Courts

Civil Division (small & large claims) (414) 278-5362

Criminal Division (414) 278-4538

Children's Division (414) 257-7700

District Attorney's Office (414) 278-4646

Election Commission (414) 278-4060

Emergency/Public Safety

Sheriff General Information (414) 278-4766

Sheriff (non-emergency) (414) 278-4788

TDD Emergency (414) 278-5252

Burn Center Hotline (24 hours) (414) 585-1163

Emergency Management (24 hours) (414) 257-4709

Suicide Prevention/Intervention (414) 257-7222

Mental Health Crisis (414) 257-7222

Fraud Hotline (414) 93-FRAUD

Health and Human Services (888) 947-6583

Jury Services

General Information (414) 278-4469

Reserve Juror Message (414) 985-6000

Marcus Performing Arts Center (414) 273-7121

Medical Examiner (414) 223-1200

Milwaukee Art Museum (414) 224-3200

Milwaukee County Historical Society ... (414) 273-8288

Milwaukee County Parks (414) 257-7275

Organized Sports (414) 257-8030

Golf Office (414) 257-8024

Boerner Botanical Gardens (414) 525-5600

Mitchell Park Domes (414) 257-5600

District 3 Parks

Back Bay (414) 962-8809

Bradford Beach (414) 962-8809

Cambridge Woods (414) 962-8809

Gilman Triangle (414) 962-8809

Juneau (414) 277-0851

Lake Park (414) 962-8809

McKinley (414) 273-5224

Prospect Triangle (414) 962-8809

Riverside (414) 962-8809

Veterans (414) 962-8809

War Memorial & Art Center Grounds (414) 273-5533

Milwaukee County Sports Complex (414) 281-2694

Milwaukee County Zoo (414) 771-3040

Milwaukee Public Museum (414) 278-2728

Municipality

Milwaukee City Hall/Common Council (414) 286-2221

Milwaukee Night Number (414) 286-CITY (2489)

Office of Persons with Disabilities (414) 278-3932

Register in Probate (414) 278-4444

Register of Deeds (414) 278-4021

Rent Assistance (414) 278-4894

Senior Centers

Clinton & Bernice Rose Senior Center (414) 263-2255

Kelly Senior Center (414) 481-9611

McGovern Park Senior Center (414) 527-0990

Washington Park Senior Center (414) 933-2332

Wilson Park Senior Center (414) 282-5566

Serving Older Adults (414) 933-2332

Transit System - www.ridemcts.com

Bus Routes/Schedules/Fares (414) 344-6711

Customer Comments (414) 937-3218

Transit Plus (414) 343-1700

UW-Extension (414) 615-0550

Veterans Services (414) 266-1234

Victim/Witness Service (414) 278-4667