



MILWAUKEE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Supervisor Ryan Clancy - District 4

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Supervisors Clancy, Martinez Decry Passage of Budget Which Fails to Adequately Invest in Human Needs

Supervisors underline harm-reduction measures

MILWAUKEE – Today the Board of Supervisors adopted [15-3] the 2023 Milwaukee County Budget. Supervisors Ryan Clancy and Juan Miguel Martinez made the following statements.

“Residents have been clear about their budget priorities,” said Supervisor Clancy. “As they have in all prior years, and even faced with a multi-million-dollar deficit, residents again said via the Balancing Act website and in many other formats that they wanted to see more dollars go into parks, housing, mental health, and aging services. They also want fewer dollars spent on prisons, jails, and county administration. A staggering 89% wanted the Sheriff’s office budget not to increase as it does every year, with 54% of those folks wanting to see the Sheriff’s budget cut. In public comments last week, as people spoke to the need for vital investment like transit and paratransit, every person who spoke to the Sheriff’s budget wanted to see it cut. This year, as we do every year, we’ve done just the opposite. The ‘public safety’ budget will give staggering increases to every category that residents want to see cut while not even providing enough to the most valued departments to keep up with inflation and their increasing needs.”

“As a County Supervisor, it is my duty to be the voice in county government for the people I represent. We have heard time and time again that residents prioritize services such as transportation and parks over policing and jails,” said Supervisor Martinez. “This budget does not reflect those priorities and increases funding to an unaccountable Sheriff’s Office while cutting transit routes and youth services. I will continue to advocate for budgets that reflect the will of the people for as long as I am on this County Board.”

Supervisors Clancy and Martinez offered a package of 30 amendments which sought to restore Sheriff’s Office funding to where the public has asked it to be. The amendments provided funding for free transit, the opening of pools and park bathrooms, elimination of library fines, and basic needs for adults and children in the Jail, House of Correction and Vel Phillips Center. Most amendments did not have the support needed from the rest of the County Board to pass. The County Board did adopt an amendment diverting \$1.9 million from the Sheriff’s Office Training Academy Park Lot replacement project to fund various capital projects throughout Milwaukee County.

Supervisors Clancy and Martinez authored language to create a paratransit stakeholder task force, to create a transit safety task force, to create a taskforce for incarcerated youth, and to fund a study to resume visitation at the jail, which banned and monetized visitation two decades ago. "We are appreciative, though, of our colleagues support of some measures likely to bring us increased public engagement and future progress," added Supervisor Clancy.

"Our failure as a Board to adequately invest in our community and employees may well have additional consequences," said Supervisor Clancy. "The rejection of an amendment which would have provided MCTS funds for increases in employee salaries makes an open-ended transit strike more likely in the future."

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