

Date: October 13, 2023

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Sequanna Taylor, Chairwoman, Committee on Intergovernmental Relations

From: Fred Ludwig, Government Affairs Liaison, County Board of Supervisors

Subject: American Family Field Update

I am providing this brief update as it relates to recent state legislative deliberations surrounding American Family Field.

Overview

As noted in a prior report to Intergovernmental Relations on September 20 and in an additional email update to County Board members on September 30, majority party legislators introduced a roughly \$700 million package to fund maintenance at American Family Field ballpark in order to ensure the Brewers' lease at the field extends through at least 2050.

This package was formally introduced as 2023 Assembly Bills [438](#) and [439](#) on September 28 and referred to the Assembly [Committee on State Affairs](#). Upon their introduction, Milwaukee County [registered](#) with comments and documentation directly from [File No. 23-559](#), approved by the County Board on 5/25/23 and signed by the County Executive on 6/21/23, and explicitly states that the County is "opposed to using tax levy dollars to help fund long-term renovations at American Family Field as more urgent, higher funding priorities exist but support legislation to keep the Brewers in Milwaukee without property tax levy support."

Ahead of the October 5 public [hearing](#) at State Fair Park on the bills, Supervisors were provided with template language with direct reference to adopted county policy that they could utilize for committee testimony.

Recent Updates

Following the October 5 public hearing, the Assembly Committee on State Affairs scheduled an Executive [Session](#) on October 12 for a vote on this legislation. An [amendment](#) was offered by the bills' author that included significant changes to the legislation, and initial details were outlined to Supervisors in October 11 correspondence from the County Executive's office.

The amendment was adopted unanimously by the committee, and the bill as amended passed 13-1, with one member of the minority party voting no.

Next Steps

The State Assembly will likely be voting on AB 438 and AB 439 this coming Tuesday, October 17. However, the State Senate has yet to publicly state a timeline for its consideration of this or any modified legislation for its chamber.

Date: October 26, 2023

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Sequanna Taylor, Chairwoman, Committee on Intergovernmental Relations
Steve Taylor, Vice-Chairman, Committee on Intergovernmental Relations

From: Fred Ludwig, Government Affairs Liaison, County Board of Supervisors

Subject: American Family Field Update

I am providing this update as it relates to recent state legislative deliberations surrounding American Family Field.

Overview

As noted in prior reports to Intergovernmental Relations on September 20 and October 14, and in an additional email update to County Board members on September 30, majority party legislators introduced a roughly \$700 million package to fund maintenance at American Family Field ballpark in order to ensure the Brewers' lease at the field extends through at least 2050.

This package was formally introduced as 2023 Assembly Bills [438](#) and [439](#) on September 28 and referred to the Assembly [Committee on State Affairs](#). Upon their introduction, Milwaukee County [registered](#) with comments and documentation directly from [File No. 23-559](#), approved by the County Board on 5/25/23 and signed by the County Executive on 6/21/23, and explicitly states that the County is "opposed to using tax levy dollars to help fund long-term renovations at American Family Field as more urgent, higher funding priorities exist but support legislation to keep the Brewers in Milwaukee without property tax levy support."

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Following the October 5 public hearing, the Assembly Committee on State Affairs scheduled an Executive [Session](#) on October 12 for a vote on this legislation. An [amendment](#) was offered by the bills' author that included significant changes to the legislation, and initial details were outlined to Supervisors in October 11 correspondence from the County Executive's office.

Main changes as they impact Milwaukee County include:

- Reducing of Milwaukee County's annual contribution from \$5 million to \$2.5 million.
- Enabling the County's ERS pension costs to be removed from the property tax levy, potentially saving county residents up to \$144 million in property taxes over 27 years by adding ERS as an eligible expenditure
- Reducing DOR's administrative fee from 1.75% to .75%, allowing the County to retain an additional \$78 million via local option sales tax revenue

The amendment was adopted unanimously by the committee, and the bill as amended passed 13-1, with one member of the minority party voting no.

Recent Updates

Upon Assembly committee passage, Governor Tony Evers, Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson, and Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley all came out in favor of the amended legislation. It should be noted that the policy adopted in File No. 23-559 continues to be the official stance held by the County in the absence of additional direction provided by Committee on Intergovernmental Relations or the Board since the introduction of state legislation.

The plan, as amended, was approved by a [69-27](#) vote in the Assembly on October 17. Sixteen members of the majority party and 11 members of the minority party voted in opposition to the legislation. The linked Assembly roll call vote above shows ten members representing Milwaukee County voted in favor, while eight voted in opposition and one not voting. Four members of the majority voted in favor with two voting in opposition, and six members of the minority party voted in favor with six members also voting in opposition.

The legislation is now being considered before the State Senate, as the Senate Committee on Government Operations held a [public hearing](#) on Assembly Bills [438](#) and [439](#) and companion bills SB [482](#) and SB [483](#) on October 25.

Further changes to the legislation are likely in the State Senate, including the addition of a ticket surcharge for concerts and other non-Brewers events to help raise money for the stadium's improvements, and an audit of the Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball District.

Date: November 29, 2023

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Sequanna Taylor, Chairwoman, Committee on Intergovernmental Relations

From: Fred Ludwig, Government Affairs Liaison, County Board of Supervisors

Subject: File No. 23-10 Report

Pursuant to File No. 23-10, this report is submitted as an informational report regarding legislative updates. The purpose of this report is to provide an update related to local, state, and federal policy developments, as well as an overview on the current state legislative session

American Family Field

As noted in the previous October 26 report, 2023 Assembly Bills [438](#) and [439](#) were approved by a [69-27](#) vote in the Assembly on October 17, and companion bills SB [482](#) and SB [483](#) received a public hearing in the Senate Committee on Government Operations on October 25.

On Tuesday, November 7, State Senator Dan Feyen (R – Fond du Lac) – the lead Senate author of this legislation – offered an [amendment](#) that would make the below changes to the proposals.

- Reducing the state contribution from \$411.5 million to \$382.4 million
- Increasing Brewers' rent payments by \$10 million for a total of \$60 million beyond their scheduled payment
- Adding a \$2 ticket surcharge on non-baseball events, which increase up to \$8 for boxes/suites, which is projected to generate \$14.1 million for stadium improvements over the next 27 years
- Requiring a biennial review of the Southeast Wisconsin Professional Baseball District Board conducted by the non-partisan Legislative Audit Bureau
- Reducing the cap on a short-term loan the state could make to the district board from \$50 million to \$35 million
- Specifying the Governor must select the Brewers' representative on the district board from a list of at least three individuals submitted by the team
- Requiring the redevelopment report required under the bill include a recommendation on a payment in lieu of property taxes for any development on the grounds over than the stadium

On Wednesday, November 8, the Senate Committee on Government Operations and the Joint Finance Committee both held executive sessions on these proposals with the amendment outlined above. The Senate Committee on Government Operations passed the bills on a 3-2 vote, and the Joint Committee on Finance passed the bills on a 15-1 vote.

On Tuesday, November 14, the State Senate convened and passed the legislation on a bipartisan [19-14 vote](#), with 11 members of the majority party and 8 members of the minority party voting in favor and 14 members of the majority party and 3 members of the minority party voting against.

Ahead of the vote, notable changes in an [amendment](#) by the bills' author – in addition to the changes noted above – include:

- Reducing the state contribution from \$411.1 million to \$375.5 million
- Increasing the Brewers' contribution by an additional \$10 million to \$150.7 million
- Adding four new members to the stadium district board, two of whom would be selected by the governor from lists provided by the City of Milwaukee (Mayor) and Milwaukee County (Executive)

The amended legislation was then sent back to the State Assembly for concurrence that afternoon, where it passed on a [72-26 vote](#).

Once a bill has been presented by the respective body of the Wisconsin State Legislature, the governor has six days, excluding Sundays, to take action on a bill. When presented with the legislation, Governor Evers has [indicated](#) he will sign them into law.

Transgender Sports and Gender-Affirming Surgery Bans

On Thursday, October 12, the State Assembly passed legislation limiting transgender youth participation on sports teams and outlawing gender-affirming surgery for minors. One would limit high school athletes to playing on teams that match the gender they were assigned at birth. The second would apply the same restriction to college athletes. The third would bar doctors from performing gender-affirming surgery on minors.

The legislation has been sent to the state Senate, which has been referred to committee at this point. If the legislation were to pass through committee and the whole state Senate, it would then come before Governor Evers, who has [indicated](#) he would veto the legislation once presented.

Redistricting

On November 21, the Wisconsin Supreme Court Justices began to hear oral arguments on a lawsuit that could overturn the legislative maps drawn by majority party lawmakers in 2012.

The two main arguments in the case focus on 1) whether or not the current maps are constitutional based on noncontiguous territory and 2) whether or not the Supreme Court violated separation of powers by inserting the Court into an April 2022 decision to reject maps drawn by Governor Evers.

Legislative Calendar

On November 16, the state Legislature adjourned for the remainder of the calendar year, although legislative committees will continue to convene. The first scheduled floor period for 2024 begins on January 16.