

**MILWAUKEE COUNTY BOARD**  
**INTEROFFICE MEMO**

**TO:** Fellow County Board Supervisors  
**FROM:** Deanna Alexander, 18<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor  
**DATE:** Tuesday, February 5, 2013  
**SUBJECT:** Resolution under Suspension of the Rules

Dear Colleagues,

I have today submitted a resolution to the Chairwoman with a request that she add it to the agenda for our next board meeting, for potential consideration under Suspension of the Rules. I write to you today in an earnest attempt to explain why I am requesting suspension, to answer common questions, and to offer you as much opportunity for discussion as possible prior to the meeting.

**WHAT IS THE RESOLUTION?**

Adoption of the resolution would result in the County Board requesting that the State of Wisconsin's Legislative Audit Bureau conduct a performance audit of both the County Executive's Department and the County Board's Department. In the event that the Bureau was unable to perform the audit, our own internal audit department would be authorized to create an RFP to identify an external auditor. Corporate Counsel has reviewed and approved the resolution and its fiscal note for cohesiveness in content, purpose, and legality.

**WHAT WILL THE AUDIT TELL US?**

A performance audit is not the same thing as a financial audit. This audit would essentially tell us what staff functions the County Executive and the County Board have available to them, if the work of the staff is being performed in an efficient and effective manner, if there are any concerns about our practices in training and succession planning, how the salaries in our departments (including our own) compare to similar positions in the private sector, and whether or not there are any gaps where either department actually needs more staff or investment, amongst other important metrics.

**WHY ARE YOU ASKING FOR A STATE AUDIT?**

We received reports from our own audit department in 2002, 2004, and 2007 providing information about legislative and executive compensation, staffing, and departmental expenses. In those reports, our own auditor (Jerry Heer) recommended that we utilize a more thorough audit, performed by an external auditor if we had further questions and wanted more details. We have never followed up on that recommendation, despite the fact that these departments are currently under an enormous public microscope. Further, as cited in the "WHEREAS clauses," Government Auditing Standards would require us to avoid conflicts of interest and impairments to independence in such an audit.

The state has just recently announced on January 31<sup>st</sup> that a Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC) (composed of both Senators and Representatives from both the Democratic and Republican parties) is now accepting requests for audits. If we as the County were to make such a

request, and the JLAC were to agree, the Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) would then be assigned the task of performing the audit.

**WHY DIDN'T YOU SUBMIT THIS REQUEST THROUGH COMMITTEE?**

As I mentioned above, I have just become aware of the January 31<sup>st</sup> opening for audit requests, thus I had no knowledge of this potential action at the time the Chairwoman was accepting items for committee referral. Corporate Counsel has confirmed that the timeliness of today's submission to the Chairwoman is in compliance with public meetings laws, County Ordinances, and the rules of this body.

**WHY DON'T YOU JUST WAIT UNTIL NEXT CYCLE?**

The fact that the JLAC put out a notice for audit requests, and only meets on certain days throughout the legislative cycle tells us that its agenda could fill up quickly. It is in our best interest to have this performance audit completed sooner rather than later. Not only will the information we receive from it help us to become more efficient and do more with the human and financial resources we have, but it will be an excellent tool in navigating the surely continuing public debate of the size and status of our department. It will also help put focus on the County Executive's department, so that ours is not the only department properly scrutinized.

If we were to wait until next cycle to take up this resolution, I fear that we will miss an opportunity to demonstrate to the public and the media that we are serious about self-examination, but also want to ensure that what we review is true and reliable information.

**TELL ME MORE ABOUT SUSPENSION OF THE RULES**

At the end of our board meeting, the County Clerk will announce an opportunity to discuss any items to be presented under suspension of the rules. At that time, we will be able to vote on whether or not we will suspend the rules in order to take up any items that are added to the agenda under that section (presumably, the resolution discussed in this memo). If at least 2/3 of the board votes affirmatively (saying "aye") then the rules will be suspended and we will be allowed to make motions on and have debate on the resolution. If less than 2/3 of the board votes in the negative, the rules will not be suspended and we will not take up the item.

**WHY SHOULD I SUPPORT SUSPENSION AND POTENTIALLY, THIS RESOLUTION?**

I am respectfully asking for your support because it was not possible for this item to be presented sooner, and it would defeat the purpose of the resolution to delay it. We need to ask the JLAC for this right now—time is of the essence! I mean no harm by offering it to you under suspension, only expedience in allowing us the opportunity to move forward with what I hope you will find to be a good idea. Further, I am sure that with as much information as the public is receiving about the County Board and the County Executive these days, the public would be supportive of us submitting ourselves to an external audit. What better way to say that we are honest, well-intentioned, and transparent? *Please vote to suspend the rules to allow this discussion.*

I will make myself available to meet with Supervisors to answer any questions or concerns. You may also call or text me on my cell phone at 414/939-9339 to arrange a time to talk if we do not see each other in the courthouse between now and the Board meeting.

Thank you,

