

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: 5/6/2025

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Amos Morris, Executive Zoo Director *Amos D Morris, Jr.*

Subject: From the Executive Zoo Director requesting approval to create 1.0 FTE Mechanical Maintenance Grounds Worker and abolish 1.0 FTE Zoo Facilities Grounds Worker

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

The Executive Zoo Director is requesting to abolish one position of Zoo Facilities Grounds Worker and create one position of Mechanical Maintenance Grounds Worker to provide additional mechanical support and operational quality and quantity for the Zoo Grounds section of the Facilities Division, which is a seven-day-a-week operation that heavily uses small engine and mechanical equipment and machinery.

POLICY

Wisconsin State Statutes:	Chapter 59.17
Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	Chapter 17.05 (1)
Specific Adopted Budget:	2025 Budget
Specific Adopted Budget Amendment:	
Specific Adopted Capital Project:	

BACKGROUND

The 2025 Budget includes one Grounds Supervisor position overseeing a seven-day-a-week operation, with the following authorized positions: Five Vehicle Machinery Operators, eight Facilities Grounds Workers, and up to 20 seasonal employees. These positions run and operate approximately \$2.5 million worth of equipment and fleet vehicles, which are used daily, in addition to maintaining the necessary garage space, tools and facilities.

Zoo facilities and grounds support requires staffing 365 days per year, across multiple shifts to maintain operations. This includes a diverse fleet of equipment such as 10 backpack leaf blowers, 10 string trimmers, 10 push mowers, 10 snow blowers, around 10 specific gardening pieces with small engines, various hand tools, up to 50 golf carts, 10 utility vehicles, three aerial boom and one scissors lift, one mini-loader, one mini-skid steer, two riding lawn mowers, one riding snow blower, four pressure washers, and

more, all essential to maintaining the Zoo's 200 acres of grounds.

Creating a new position of Mechanical Maintenance Grounds Worker will support the Grounds Supervisor in managing the day-to-day maintenance and repair of the extensive equipment fleet. This dedicated position will ensure more efficient repairs, allowing equipment to be up and running quickly and increasing its longevity. By addressing small engine and mechanical issues promptly, this role will help minimize downtime and extend the life of critical tools and machinery. It will free up the Grounds Supervisor to focus on broader Zoo needs and more effectively manage staff and operations.

The entire Zoo will benefit from having a dedicated person focused on the repair and maintenance of equipment, ensuring better functionality, increased efficiency, and a smoother overall operation.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Describe how the item aligns to the objectives in the [strategic plan](#):

2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered: Creating the Mechanical Maintenance Grounds Worker position at the Zoo will facilitate better communication and coordination between the Zoo staff and the Department of Transportation's Fleet Management Division. This role will serve as a vital link for sharing critical information, best practices and addressing specific equipment needs or repairs. It will ensure that the Zoo receives timely updates from the Fleet Division on equipment issues, helping the Zoo maintain its extensive fleet in optimal condition.

Additionally, this position will allow the supervisor to focus more on long-term departmental goals rather than being frequently diverted by immediate equipment concerns. By having a dedicated employee to handle equipment issues, the Zoo can provide a more consistent and efficient service to staff, which will enhance safety.

The Mechanical Maintenance Grounds Worker will also improve overall operational efficiency by reducing the amount of time supervisors and managers spend troubleshooting, diagnosing and repairing equipment. This will lead to better resource allocation, ensuring that equipment is maintained and operational without taking staff away from their primary responsibilities.

3B: Enhance the County's fiscal health and sustainability: Creating a Mechanical Maintenance Grounds Worker to handle in-house equipment repair and maintenance will result in savings for the Zoo in both time and money. By keeping the Zoo's equipment in optimal condition, the lifespan will be extended, reducing the need for costly replacements. This proactive approach will help prevent expensive repairs and downtime, leading to more efficient use of

resources and fewer operational disruptions.

FISCAL EFFECT

The maximum salary impact on the Zoo's budget from creating a Mechanical Maintenance Worker Grounds position and eliminating one Facilities Grounds Worker role is \$9,981. However, due to the overlap between the two pay ranges (outlined below), the actual fiscal impact could result in a net-zero tax levy change, depending on the starting salary of the new position.

Position Description	Action	Pay Grade	FTE	Annual Salary Range (based on 2088 hours)
Mechanical Maintenance Worker Grounds	Create	NR17	1.0	\$41,509 - \$62,285
Facilities Grounds Worker	Abolish	NR14	(1.0)	\$34,870 - \$52,304

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Amos Morris, Executive Zoo Director, Amos.Morris@milwaukeecountywi.gov,
 Vera Westphal, Deputy Zoo Director, Vera.Westphal@milwaukeecountywi.gov,
 Matthew Haseman, Facilities Director, Matthew.Haseman@milwaukeecountywi.gov
 David Engelmann, Grounds, Horticulture & Forestry Manager,
David.Engelmann@milwaukeecountywi.gov

PREPARED BY:

David Engelmann, Grounds, Horticulture, Forestry Manager
 Vera Westphal, Deputy Zoo Director

APPROVED BY:

Amos Morris, Executive Zoo Director

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution, Fiscal Note, DHR Report, JEQ, OSBP Report

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
 Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk
 Clarence H. Kinnard, Personnel Committee Coordinator
 Allyson R. Smith, Finance Committee Coordinator
 David Crowley, County Executive
 Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive
 Margo Franklin, Chief Human Resources Officer
 Tony Maze, Director of Total Rewards
 Christine Carlson, HR Compensation Manager

Vera Westphal, Deputy Zoo Director
Matt Haseman, Facilities Management Director,
Dave Engelmann, Grounds, Horticulture, Forestry Manager
Steve Cady, Research and Policy Director
Joe Lamers, Director, Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance
Anthony Rux, Sr Analyst Budget and Management
Mary Polaris, HR Business Partner