



Office of the Comptroller

Milwaukee County

Liz Sumner • Comptroller

DATE: January 16, 2026
TO: Supervisor Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Cynthia (CJ) Pahl, Director of Financial Services, Office of the Comptroller
Isaac Rowlett, Interim Director, Office of Strategy, Budget, and Performance
SUBJECT: 2025 Report of Departmental Surpluses and Deficits

In the event of a surplus, State Statute 59.60 (5)(g) and County Ordinance 34.07 (5)(a)(3) allow the County to transfer surplus funds into a Debt Service Reserve. The transfer must have the approval of 2/3 of the voting members of the County Board.

The 2025 unaudited fiscal year result is currently estimated to be approximately \$14.2 million. This amount is a preliminary report of the annual results since the 2025 year-end audit has not been completed. Upon completion of the year-end audit the final year-end result will be provided.

Under State Statute, the one-time annual surplus of the County is required to be applied against the tax levy requirements of the subsequent year's budget, in this case, the 2027 budget. In 2024, the year-end surplus was \$13.9 million, with \$5.0 million being reserved for 2026 operations and \$8.9 million in funds transferring to the Debt Service Reserve. It is recommended that the amount of surplus available to offset the 2027 budget be maintained at \$5.0 million consistent with the distribution of most prior year surpluses. Transferring any remaining surplus to the Debt Service Reserve would be consistent with actions taken in previous years when surpluses exceed \$5.0 million. This would make any funds transferred to the Debt Service Reserve available for purposes of servicing outstanding debt, which can offset fiscal issues that may arise in the 2026 fiscal year or in future fiscal years. Including approved 2026 transfers in and out of the Debt Service Reserve, a 2025 year-end contribution of \$9.2 million would result in a Debt Service Reserve balance of approximately \$140.0 million.

Recommendation:

The Office of the Comptroller and Office of Strategy, Budget, and Performance recommend the approval of the attached resolution to transfer all but \$5.0 million of the remaining 2025 year-end surplus to the Debt Service Reserve.

A blue ink signature of Cynthia J. Pahl.

Cynthia J. Pahl, Financial Services Director
Office of the Comptroller

A black ink signature of Isaac Rowlett.

Isaac Rowlett, Interim Director
Office of Strategy, Budget, and Performance