



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DAVID CROWLEY

MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Date: May 13, 2025

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, County Board of Supervisors

From: David Crowley, County Executive

Subject: Reappointment of Aaron Hertzberg to the position of Director of the Department of Administrative Services

Pursuant to Wisconsin State Statute Sec. 59.17(2) and subject to confirmation by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, I am pleased to reappoint Mr. Aaron Hertzberg to the position of Director of Milwaukee County's Department of Administrative Services. The appointment length is four years, at which point it will be again subject to your confirmation.

Aaron Hertzberg has served Milwaukee County for the past seven (7) years. He began his employment in 2018 as the Director of Economic Development. He was originally appointed to lead Administrative Services in 2021.

As Milwaukee County's Executive Director of Administrative Services over the last four years, Aaron has capably led initiatives to build a DAS strategic plan. The plan ensures the core functions of Milwaukee County provide a strong base for departments and elected offices. Those core functions include:

- Central Business,
- Facilities Management,
- Information Management Services,
- Economic Development,
- Economic Inclusion,
- Risk Management, and
- Procurement

Under Director Hertzberg's leadership, DAS has provided a stable platform to empower Milwaukee County's vision to become the healthiest county in Wisconsin by achieving racial equity.



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The four pillars of DAS's strategic plan: 1. Employee Engagement, 2. Operational Excellence, 3. Customer Service, and 4. Racial Equity which underpins all their efforts and helps to define the results he's driving with his team.

Mr. Hertzberg inherited the team during a challenging period of the COVID-19 pandemic with tough financial pressures and declining employment rates across Milwaukee County. He helped to forge a branded recruitment campaign, leveraging Milwaukee County's strategic plan as a tool to bring talent to the organization that was committed to public service and having a positive impact on our community.

The effort helped to increase position fill rates within DAS by more than 10%, while increasing the gender and racial diversity of the employee base. Additional efforts to engage employees including improved employee on-boarding, mentor and training programs, employee newsletters, goal setting, feedback loops, and team development. All told the efforts have demonstrated success with DAS employee engagement scores increase by 9.5% in his tenure, among the highest rates of increase across Milwaukee County.

Director Hertzberg often frame's DAS work as an internal support function helping to ensure the infrastructure is place for constituent facing departments and elected offices to best serve the community. He's a leader that believes that when DAS does its work well, others are better positioned to meet community need. Ensuring DAS does it's work well has been a priority focus for Aaron.

That's why he has put priority focus on both Operational Excellence and Customer Service. In 2024, his team rolled out new customer service feedback loops that offer the opportunity for internal and external customers of DAS to rate and provide feedback directly to the Department. Early indicators demonstrate success. More than 80 percent of feedback received has been positive, a sign the team is meeting its charge.

Director Hertzberg also put a focus on training work with HR and outside partners to provide unique racial equity and customer service training programs. With a focus on continuous improvement, 47 DAS leaders and project managers have completed LEAN Six Sigma Yellow Belt Certification through a program offered by the University of Wisconsin School of Business. This has helped to create a culture focused on improving processes and procedures not only in DAS, but across Milwaukee County.



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To that end, Director Hertzberg serves as chair of the Administrative Manual of Procedures, or AMOP, Committee. The Committee works with Strategy, Budget and Performance, Human Resources, the Office of Equity and Corporation Counsel to review, approve and promote procedures that help ensure transparency, consistency, and equity of Milwaukee County practices.

Under his leadership, DAS has led a generational overhaul of Milwaukee County's facilities footprint, while advancing private development opportunities. The effort to "right-size" facilities has been a major priority that has helped save millions of dollars in maintenance obligations, reduced County risk and brought-in cash to support the Milwaukee County budget. Through these efforts he's demonstrated a knack for complex problem solving and strategic negotiations. He has an ability to align interests in public-private and public-public collaborations to effectuate our vision through real estate transactions and facilities projects. Major highlights include:

- Closing the deal to build the Couture development, a \$191M mixed-used project that includes 322 housing units and an integrated multi-modal transit facility.
- Securing over \$1M in grants to support locally driven economic development in historically under-invested communities.
- Led an \$11M CARES Act Supported Small Business Recovery Program.
- A \$3.5M Community Navigator Employment program during the peak of pandemic safety measures
- Management of a revolving loan fund with \$1.3M in active lending.
- Over 4,400 jobs created through property sales for private development with workforce and sub-contracting goals.
- Disposition of over 2M square feet of excess real estate.
- Exiting partnerships at the Milwaukee Regional Medical Complex (MRMC), empowering the expansion of Children's Hospital, Froedtert and the Medical College of Wisconsin, while turning a profit for Milwaukee County.
 - Selling the Water System servicing the MRMC
 - Existing the Wauwatosa Fire Service Agreement, saving over \$32M
 - Reducing county maintenance obligations at the campus
 - Ensuring construction of Bus-Rapid Transit facilities on campus.



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- Negotiating a unique public-private partnership to create the Mental Health Emergency Center. The partnership helped ensure private health systems were helping to provide the highest level of acute care in the region and has allowed Milwaukee County to expand upstream resources in communities where they are needed most. Aaron also helped ensure the MHEC the new facility moved from Wauwatosa to an area services were needed in the City of Milwaukee and adjacent to the new Coggs Health and Human Service Building.
- A plan to build a new Marcia P. Coggs building to better residents served by the Department of Health and Human Services. The plan reduced Milwaukee County's footprint by more than 140,000 square feet and included plans to sell the Historic Coggs Building to create much needed affordable housing and, office space for Behavior Health Services.
- Creation of a multi-jurisdictional partnership with the State of Wisconsin to build a new \$200M Forensic Science and Protective Medicine facility on land at the MRMC. The facility, set to open in 2026 addresses the dire facilities condition of the Medical Examiners Offices and pairs their new facility with the Office of Emergency Management and the State's Milwaukee Crime Lab, creating new opportunities for collaboration.
- Successful spend down of \$116M in ARPA funds invested in capital projects, a tripling of Milwaukee County's average capital budget.
- A partnership to construct a new Nature & Culture Museum of Wisconsin, reducing County operational commitments and ensure a sustainable future for the beloved Milwaukee County Collections.
- Projects to build new penguin and rhino exhibits at the Milwaukee County Zoo.
- Lighting retro fits in heavily facilities like our 5 Senior Centers, Community Centers and the Mary Ryan Boys and Girls Club.
- And I could go on...

While advancing this long list of projects, Director Hertzberg and his team have worked to create Milwaukee County's first Climate Action Plan, laying out our path to become climate neutral by 2050. This has also included the creation of Milwaukee County's first Sustainability Design Standards and environmental considerations in capital project scoring, which will help set a new trajectory for how we evaluate and approach capital projects.



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Most recently, the Director has helped to lead revived efforts to advance plans for the Investing in Justice Criminal Courthouse project, seeking to replace the aging and unsafe Public Safety Building. This generational effort helps to address Milwaukee County's single largest capital project concern over the last several decades. If undertaken, this will be the largest investment in public safety in the Milwaukee County and lead to more efficiency and improved supports for all those in and around the criminal justice system.

Perhaps Director Hertzberg's most proud moments come from creating opportunities for career development for both employees and up-and-comers: Mentorship programs, support for i.c.Stars (technology workforce development programs), and youth-apprentice programs.

The mentioned lighting retrofit program included contract responsibilities to hire youth-apprentices, exposing trades-minded high school students to career opportunities and eventual hiring. The IJCC project includes a youth-apprentice program to engage students in design and pre-construction phases of the project, helping to inspire the future architects, planners and engineers of Milwaukee County and beyond. And an industrial land sale near Rufus King High School included requirements to hire student-interns interested in converting shipping containers into functional amenities.

These accomplishments truly speak for themselves and to Director Hertzberg's dedication to the mission and vision of Milwaukee County and to all Milwaukee County Changemakers.

Thank you Chairman Johnson and committee members for your time and consideration of this appointment.

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