

April 11, 2018

RE: Statement of Candidacy for Chairman

Dear County Board Colleagues,

It has been a tremendous honor to represent the legislative branch of Milwaukee County as Board Chairman since July 2015. I kept my initial pledge to communicate with each Supervisor in an honest and straightforward manner, and earned the unanimous support of the County Board for my re-election as Chairman in 2016. I have led this honorable body with a strong voice, always articulating the budget and policies adopted by the County Board. Now that voters have elected Supervisors for the 2018-2020 term, I ask for your vote in support of my candidacy for Board Chairperson.

We are strongest when united, and it is important that your concerns and interests are understood. I will strive to strike consensus and forge common ground while being a strong advocate for Milwaukee County and the Board of Supervisors. As your Chairman, I will be accessible and accountable to members. If you want to talk, I will answer your call. If you want to meet, I will make time for you.

Together we updated our Board rules last year and expanded the use of Legistar to modernize the referral process. I review all legislative submissions and share my initial thoughts, additional research, and suggestions for possible amendments near the front end of each legislative cycle. I make the time for this deliberative approach because it is critical that the restructured Board, where many Supervisors have numerous outside commitments, has the information needed to make good decisions.

The most significant responsibility of the Board of Supervisors is to pass an annual budget for Milwaukee County. Every year we work together to adopt a budget that balances the needs of our residents and the services they demand with limited taxpayer resources. During the 2016-2018 term, I twice crafted alternative budget proposals that allowed Supervisors to reject a \$60-wheel tax, a fee increase that our residents do not support. The 15-3 vote to adopt the 2018 Milwaukee County Budget is a clear sign of the broad consensus behind this document that earned support from a diverse coalition – even more than a super-majority of the Board.

Effectively representing the Board to the public, engaging residents, and ensuring the delivery of responsive constituent services must be a priority for the Chairperson who serves as head of our department. State required cuts have significantly reduced the Board's budget and staff resources. When I was first elected Chairman less than three years ago, we were facing the very real possibility of having only 2 or 3 staff due to the unique constraints on our department budget. Budget amendments I authored have allowed us to develop a staffing model that supports district offices and the department with 7 Legislative Assistants (LAs), 3 administrative staff, several part-time



employees, and student interns. We have managed to keep these staffing levels while maintaining Individual Office Accounts (IOAs) at levels greater than those set for 2015 before I became Chair.

My management helped to improve the professionalism and resources of Board staff. We continue to provide new training opportunities so staff can better serve Supervisors and the public. For example, the new manuals we have created for the front desk and administrative operations clearly communicate processes and expectations. We introduced to the department a new customer relationship management tool that helps all district offices track constituent contacts and create databases for County mailers. We now are in the process of increasing the capabilities of this tool to allow district offices to track IOA requests.

We have both existing challenges and new opportunities ahead. This body stood together earlier this year against the overreach of Senate Bill 777 that would have nullified the legislative branch, and many believe it is likely to be brought forward again in Madison in some form. While most of us were willing to accept the circuit court's decision in April 2017, the appeal of that case remains pending at this time. Likewise, we came very close last year to repealing the imbalance of power brought on by Act 55 land sales and authority provisions.

Beyond simply playing defense against bad ideas like the pay to park scheme, we have the opportunity to forge positive solutions and solve problems. A top priority must be real progress toward a new deal with our state government that provides for adequate funding of the many services they already mandate and allows us to sustain and improve the tremendous assets of Milwaukee County including our parks and cultural institutions, the transit system, and the Courthouse complex.

Elected Supervisors come from different walks of life, and that diversity is our strength. I will listen to what you need to best represent your constituents. Along the way, we may have our differences, but we always have a responsibility to those who elected us to make it work. Ultimately, the Board of Supervisors establishes the policies of Milwaukee County. We must then continue to work collaboratively to ensure our adopted policies are also executed. Together we will decide how best to move forward.

I again ask for your vote on Monday with the commitment that I will serve honorably and fulfill the duties of Chairperson to the best of my abilities. Please give a call if you would like to discuss my candidacy and the future of our work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Theodore Lipscomb, Sr.', written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Theodore Lipscomb, Sr.  
Milwaukee County Board Chairman