

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE  
INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

**DATE:** February 14, 2025

**TO:** Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Celia Benton, Economic Development Director, Department of Administrative Services

**SUBJECT:** An informational report providing an update on the Courthouse Cafe

**REQUEST**

This report is for informational purposes only.

**POLICY**

N/A

**BACKGROUND**

Elliott's Deli Group, former operator of the Milwaukee County Courthouse Cafe, decided not to renew their lease and ended their service on June 30, 2024. Their subcontractor, Illy Grocer & Cafe, LLC, ("Illy") continued operation under the existing lease on a month-to-month basis with an expectation to negotiate a 1-year lease. In October, Illy decided not to enter into a one-year lease and their last day of operation was October 31, 2024.

The Economic Development Division was tasked to support the Facilities Division with finding a temporary food service operator that would provide a fresh perspective to the Courthouse Café. There is an expectation to go through a formal Request for Proposal in the future, but due to the value of café operations at the Courthouse for jurors, attorneys, judges, and Milwaukee County employees at the Courthouse, there was a decision to expedite the selection process for a temporary option.

After broad outreach including through Director Benton's extensive small business network, 40 interested parties explored the space. After meeting with many food service operators, the Economic Development Division, along with leadership at Department of Administrative Services, has selected a new café operator: Antigua Latin Restaurant LLC ("Antigua"). Antigua has a long-established track record and has been in business with nearly 20 years serving the Milwaukee Community. Antigua met all of Economic Development's criteria that includes an extensive leadership team with a wealth of experience, strong financial history, a diverse, and balanced meal options for breakfast and lunch.

Antigua is a family-owned Latin-inspired restaurant with a brick-and-mortar location at 6207 W. National Avenue, West Allis, WI 53219. Besides the restaurant, Antigua has a catering business as well as an empanada food truck. In addition, Antigua is a certified Minority-Owned Business Enterprise (MBE) and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE). Antigua will be providing breakfast, lunch, and snack options from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. These are similar hours as the prior café operators.

Milwaukee County and Antigua will be entering a food service contract for 12 months with 2 six-month renewal options, at Milwaukee County's discretion to renew. Milwaukee County used a Lessor/Lessee lease structure for previous café operators. Facilities recommended to utilize a food service contract to better align our interests and clarify responsibilities for Milwaukee County and the food service operator.

Once the food service contract is fully executed, Antigua will renovate the space. Antigua's initial scope of renovations include removal of nonworking equipment, purchasing new kitchen equipment, painting & wallcovering, lighting and incorporating natural elements (plants, vertical gardens, and stone accents) to enhance the overall atmosphere. In addition to Antigua's upgrades, the Facilities Division will complete necessary repairs, including replacing the grease trap, repairing the ductwork for the grill vents, replacing the condenser units, and deep cleaning the walk-in refrigerators.

There is a target of completing this work in the next few months for Antigua to have a grand opening this Spring. In the meantime, Antigua is exploring grab and go breakfast and lunch options and coffee service prior to an official opening. Please see below for a tentative menu for grab and go:

### **Breakfast**

#### **Grab-and-Go Options:**

- Fresh Fruit Cups
- Yogurt Parfaits with Granola
- Breakfast Sandwiches Ready to go
- Breakfast Burritos (Egg, Cheese, and Bacon or Veggie)
- Overnight Oats with Assorted Toppings
- Bagels with Cream Cheese or Peanut Butter
- Protein Boxes (Hard-boiled eggs, cheese, almonds & fruit)

### **Lunch**

#### **Grab-and-Go Options:**

- Chef's Salad with Dressing
- Chicken Caesar Wrap
- Turkey and Swiss Sandwich
- Quinoa Salad with Roasted Vegetables
- Charcutier Box (Assorted cold cuts, cheese, crackers, fruits and nuts)
- Hummus and Veggies Box
- Salad Wraps with chips

In addition, a Farmer's Fridge was added on the ground floor of the Courthouse by security near the 10<sup>th</sup> street entrance. Farmer's Fridge offers a variety of fresh food options from their vending machines. The dining room at the cafe remains open.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

This report is for informational purposes.

**ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

1C: Increase the number of County contracts awarded to minority and women-owned businesses.

**FISCAL EFFECT**

The food services contract will have a net zero impact on the Facilities Management Division's budget. Any staff time and work will be absorbed in the Division's existing budget or at the expense of Antigua Café.

**VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

Celia Benton, Economic Development Director, Department of Administrative Services:  
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Rami Peltz, Leasing Manager, Department of Administrative Services:  
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**PREPARED BY:**

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Leasing Manager, Economic Development, Department of Administrative Services

Sean Hayes  
Interim Director, Facilities, Department of Administrative Services

Sara Torres, Contracts Manager, Procurement, Department of Administrative Services

**APPROVED BY:**

*Celia Benton*

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Celia Benton, Economic Development Director, Department of Administrative Services

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Courthouse Café Renderings (Antigua Latin Restaurant, LLC)

cc:

David Crowley, County Executive

MaryJo Meyers, Chief of Staff, Office of the County Executive

Liz Sumner, Comptroller

Members of the Committee on Community, Environment and Economic Development

Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services

Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors

Allyson Smith, Committee Coordinator

Clarence Kinnard, Committee Coordinator

Steve Cady, Director of Research and Policy