

MILWAUKEE COUNTY



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

SHERIFF DENITA R. BALL

File # 26-XXX

Date: April 17, 2026

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

From: Brian Barkow, Chief Deputy, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office

Subject: From the Chief Deputy, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, requesting approval to create Section 56.34 within Chapter 56 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances relating to internet mortgage foreclosure sales auctions and authorizing those auctions by a registered auctioneer.

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) respectfully requests authorization to create Section 56.34 within Chapter 56 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances. This ordinance would enable the Sheriff or a registered auctioneer (per Wis. Stat. Ch. 480) to conduct internet-based mortgage foreclosure sales in accordance with Wis. Stat. § 846.16(1g)(b).

Project Background: Sheriff Auction Modernization.

The Sheriff Auction Modernization project was initially introduced with the intent to improve and streamline the auction process. However, over the past few years, progress has been limited due to competing priorities and resource constraints across the involved teams and departments.

During this time, available capacity was consistently directed toward higher-priority initiatives, which made it challenging to dedicate the sustained focus needed to move this project forward. As a result, the project remained on hold until sufficient resources and alignment could be established.

POLICY

Wisconsin State Statutes: Wis. Stat. §§ 846.155, 846.16(1g)(b)

Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances: Proposed Section 56.34

Board Resolution: File 18-694

BACKGROUND

In 2018, the Wisconsin Legislature enacted Acts 208 and 339 to allow counties to conduct online sheriff sales and set bidder eligibility standards. Following this, the County Board passed Resolution 18-694 in support of internet-based sheriff sales. Since then, MCSO and DAS-IMSD have explored the feasibility of an online auction system through an RFI process and internal stakeholder coordination (including Procurement, Clerk of Court, Register of Deeds, and Treasurer's Office). The online auction model is intended to improve transparency, prevent unethical bidding practices, and ensure more equitable access to foreclosure auctions. Several jurisdictions (e.g., Detroit, Miami-Dade) have adopted similar models with success.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

- 2B: Break down silos across County government to improve service coordination
- 3B: Enhance the County's fiscal health and sustainability
- 3C: Promote fair and transparent access to public services

FISCAL EFFECT

No fiscal impact to the County is expected. All costs will be borne by the selected auction vendor, and no additional operating or capital expenses are anticipated. (See attached fiscal note.)

TERMS

The ordinance authorizes the use of a registered auctioneer to conduct internet-based foreclosure sales. A formal procurement process will follow Board approval.

PREPARED BY:

Ismeil Dalieh/Patricia Carravetta/Rosario Estrada

APPROVED BY:

Brian Barkow, Chief Deputy, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office

Brian Barkow

ATTACHMENTS:

- Ordinance
- Fiscal Note