



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Chris Abele

MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DATE: August 3, 2017
TO: The Honorable Milwaukee Board of Supervisors
FROM: Chris Abele, Milwaukee County Executive
RE: County Board File No. 17-569

I am vetoing file #17-569 which cuts the salaries of four County leaders. I ask you to sustain this veto and pass the alternate resolution I am submitting to you. My reasoning for this request is two-fold. First, as I have previously stated, this resolution only continues the dispute between the County Executive and Board about the interpretation of the ruling. More importantly, it continues a conflict that puts our department leadership in the middle of a conflict they have nothing to do with – with dangerous consequences. These consequences are not just to the impacted leaders, but also to the County – as recruitment gets more and more difficult with each negative press story on this issue. We are seeing this first hand now. I know this is not what Supervisors intended.

Second, I am looking for a way for us to move forward on this issue. While I continue to disagree with the legality and intent of this resolution and the previously passed ordinance, I have heard many of you state in committee or on the Board floor that a) it is not your goal to negatively impact the livelihoods of County leadership; b) you think the impacted County leaders are doing a good job; and c) you are open to changing the pay grades based on up-to-date data and appropriate comparisons.

With that in mind, the resolution I am proposing takes what the Board intended – to match State salary structure and provides accurate and up-to-date information. I ask that you update your resolution to include these accurate State salary grades.

If leadership salaries are cut, we will continue to see an exodus from the County and a difficult hiring environment. We have already seen three top leaders leave in the last few months. There will be more. I do not believe this is your goal and ask that you take up my proposed good-faith compromise as soon as possible so we can put this issue behind us and focus on the issues our constituents care about.

Sustaining this veto gives us a chance to work through mediation and/or any other process that could lead to resolution. Overriding the veto will only put more fuel on the fire and will do nothing to move the County forward.

2
3
4 **A RESOLUTION**

5 Changing certain departmental/division leadership positions to match State pay grades
6 for similar positions
7

8
9 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors (County Board)
10 approved File No. 17-569 on July 27, 2017, that, among other things, changed five
11 departmental/division leadership positions to a revised pay grade 903E with a maximum
12 pay of \$126,111, that will result in significant pay cuts for the incumbents of four filled
13 positions; and
14

15 WHEREAS, it is anticipated that File No. 17-569 will be adopted on August 3,
16 2017, when the County Board is scheduled to next meet; and
17

18 WHEREAS, the affected positions include:

- 19
- 20 • DAS Director
- 21 • DOT Director
- 22 • DHHS Director (vacant)
- 23 • Chief Human Resources Officer
- 24 • DAS Budget Director
- 25

26 ; and
27

28 WHEREAS, during the Committee on Personnel meeting on July 27, 2017, when
29 File No. 17-569 was considered, members of the Committee suggested to the County
30 Executive's Chief of Staff to "make a case" for allowing these positions to remain at their
31 current salary level; and
32

33 WHEREAS, the County Executive and the County Board dispute the
34 interpretation of Judge DiMotto's court ruling but both want to find a way to move
35 forward; and
36

37 WHEREAS, to that end, the County Executive is, in good faith, bringing the
38 following resolution to the Board for approval in order to prevent further damage to the
39 identified individuals; and
40

41 WHEREAS, while Supervisors stated their desire to match State salary structure,
42 they did not have the most recent pay grades when they made their decisions; and
43

44 WHEREAS, below is a comparison to the most up-to-date pay grades for both
45 State of Wisconsin and City of Milwaukee pay grades:

POSITION¹	Milwaukee County²	State of Wisconsin	City of Milwaukee^{3,4}
DAS – Director	\$134,602	Pay Min/Max: (\$103,480-\$170,747)	Pay Min/Max: (\$110,688-\$154,960)
Transportation Director	\$134,577	Pay Min/Max: (\$95,826-\$158,122)	Pay Min/Max: (\$117,979-\$165,165)
Budget Director	\$147,567	Pay Min/Max: (\$82,139-\$135,533)	Pay Min/Max: (\$103,841-\$145,381)
Human Services Director	Vacant	Pay Min/Max: (\$103,480-\$170,747)	Pay Min/Max: (\$117,979-\$165,166)
Chief Human Resources Officer⁵	\$137,987	Pay Min/Max: (\$88,712-\$146,390)	Pay Min/Max: (\$110,688-\$154,960)

46 ; and

47

48 WHEREAS, comparisons to similar positions in similar-sized counties yielded
49 results that showed that Milwaukee County department heads are underpaid; for
50 example, both Hennepin County, MN and Marion County, IN pay similar positions at a
51 higher level; and

52

53 WHEREAS, a comparison to actual salaries for City of Milwaukee officials shows
54 that Milwaukee County counterparts are underpaid an average of \$5,000 before the
55 Board’s recent salary cut and \$17,500 after the cut, creating a major pay disparityⁱ; and

56

57 WHEREAS, the currently filled positions have not received any raises since
58 accepting their current position, except across-the-board cost of living increases
59 (COLAs) authorized by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors; and

60

61 WHEREAS, the currently filled positions accepted offers of employment with
62 Milwaukee County at annual salaries, adjusted for COLAs, that were set prior to County
63 Board confirmation; now, therefore,

64

¹ Position titles vary between each of the jurisdictions. The City Director of Public Works is compared in the absence of a Director (or Secretary) of Transportation. The City Health Commissioner is compared in the absence of a Director (or Secretary) of Health and Human Services. The HR Director is compared in the absence of a Chief Human Resources Officer.

² Milwaukee County salaries current as of 7/31/17. File No. 17-569, if adopted, will reduce these salaries to a maximum of \$126,111.

³ The Milwaukee County Department of Audit (02-79) produced an audit, by direction of the County Board, in April 2002 titled *Salary Survey of Selected Top Managers and Elected Officials*, a salary analysis for 27 high level County management positions that concluded: “We believe that the City of Milwaukee is the jurisdiction most comparable to Milwaukee County based on population, budget, job market, housing costs, taxes, benefits, quality of life and the labor market.”

⁴ City of Milwaukee DOA - \$145,099; Public Works - \$147,335; Budget - \$145,381; HR - \$136,630; Health Department - \$147,336.

⁵ State and City HR structures do not oversee the benefits/pension systems.

65 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby
66 authorizes the Chief Human Resources Officer, in conjunction with the Comptroller, to
67 develop pay grades for each of the positions listed below that match the State pay
68 grades for the identified positions in order to enable Milwaukee County to retain and
69 recruit quality employees:

70

- 71 • DAS Director
- 72 • DOT Director
- 73 • DHHS Director
- 74 • Chief Human Resources Officer
- 75 • DAS Budget Director

76

77 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chief Human Resources Office shall
78 provide a report of the new pay grade structure for the aforementioned five positions to
79 the County Board as soon as possible.
