

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: November 7, 2022

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Sequanna Taylor, Chairwoman, Committee on Intergovernmental Relations

From: Emily Petersen, Government Affairs Liaison, County Board of Supervisors

Subject: Informational Report on the 2023-2025 State Biennial Budget

Background

In advance of the 2023-2025 State Biennial Budget process, this file is submitted as an informational report providing background on the budget process, current Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors (“County Board”) policy positions, and action steps the County Board may wish to consider moving forward.

Budget Process

The 2023-2025 Biennial Budget process began in June 2022 with Governor Evers’ request for agencies to submit their budget proposals by September 15, 2022. After agency requests are submitted, the Secretary of the Department of Administration and the Legislative Fiscal Bureau complete reviews and publish summaries of the requests. After receiving departmental and agency requests, the Governor prepares a recommended budget. The Co-Chairs or Committee may decide to remove non-fiscal policy items from the Biennial Budget. With removal, policy items are submitted as separate standalone bills.

The Governor is expected to deliver the Biennial Budget Message on or before the last Tuesday in January unless the Legislature extends this timeline. This signals the transition to the legislative process of reviewing and amending the Governor’s Biennial Budget. The Executive Budget Bill is formally introduced to the Legislature and referred to the Joint Committee on Finance with briefings and hearings held throughout the Spring along with review by the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau. Capital budget requests, filtered through the Building Commission, also are reviewed as part of the biennial budget process. Decisions of the Building Commission are submitted as an amendment to the budget bill and reviewed by the Legislature alongside the standard budget review process.

The Joint Finance Committee considers and votes on all proposed changes to the Biennial Budget sending a single substitute amendment to the Assembly and Senate. Then each house may caucus, debate, and adopt more modifications. A Conference Committee may be established to resolve differences between the different versions of the budget (Governor’s/Joint Finance/Assembly/Senate). Ultimately, Legislature adopts and forwards to the Governor a budget bill.

The Governor may issue budget vetoes since he has the authority to partially veto any bill containing an appropriation. The Governor has the ability to selectively delete portions of the bill and reduce appropriations. Deletions cannot create new words or sentences. Vetoes can be overruled by a 2/3 vote in the Legislature.

County Board Policy Positions

One of the most comprehensive policy platforms that Milwaukee County maintains is the Fair Deal ([File No. 19-161](#)). The Fair Deal establishes the following lobbying platform:

- An opportunity to provide County government with additional options for local control over their own financial destiny, with new, additional revenue, and a reduction in the reliance on property taxes, through enabling legislation and a binding County-wide referendum.
- Increased, fair, contributions from the State of Wisconsin (the State) toward the provision of current and new State-mandated services provided by local governments.
 - State shared revenue payments and other State aids should, at a minimum, match the rate of inflation required to provide cost-effective public programs and services.
- Full reimbursement of the tax levy costs incurred by the Office of the Sheriff to provide expressway patrol services. Milwaukee County is the only county mandated by the State to patrol the expressways that are vital arteries in the State's economic engine.
- An equal split of Circuit Court and Register of Deed fees collected by the County, and, currently, disproportionately remitted to the State.
- Acceptance of Federal funds to expand Medicaid coverage for 80,000 State residents, help reduce local government health care costs, and provide \$190 million per year of additional revenue to the State.
- Ensure that 2017 Wisconsin Act 185 (relating to juvenile correctional facilities, youth aids, etc.) provides adequate funding by the State to avoid a funding gap for counties operating said facilities.
- Rejection of any reduction or offset for existing funding in the above recommendations below the amounts received in the 2019 Adopted Budget or future budgets.

One of our most significant efforts is the pursuit of a local option sales tax and a reduction of reliance on property taxes, which has been established through File No. [21-547](#), but also through File Nos. [19-831](#), [19-161](#), and [18-751](#).

The Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors sets its own legislative agenda through the adoption of policy, per Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances (MCGO) 1.25(4). Adopted policies can be found at the County Legislative Information Center (CLIC).

Next Steps

There are opportunities for the County Board to engage in the State Biennial Budget process, including public hearings held by the Joint Committee on Finance, in partnership with the Wisconsin Counties Association, directly with legislators who represent Milwaukee County in the State Legislature, and through the Office of Government Affairs.

Current County Board policy positions form the basis of lobbying efforts with respect to the budget (MCGO 1.25(4)). If there are other policy preferences and priorities that Supervisors wish to elevate for the state budget, Supervisors can continue to work with staff to introduce legislation that established County policy positions with lobbying instructions.

Finally, more information on the budget will be available after its introduction by the Governor in January and the legislature begins its own review. This will be the most critical time for the County Board to engage with policymakers as new concerns and priorities arise. Some of these will align with standing adopted County Board policies but some will require flexibility as staff works to analyze the proposals and their effects on Milwaukee County. Updates will continue as the budget process unfolds.

cc: Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk
Steve Cady, Director, Research Services Division