

3  
4  
5 **A RESOLUTION**  
6

7 Requesting the Superintendent, House of Correction and the Office of the Sheriff study  
8 restoring visitation at the House of Correction (HOC) and Milwaukee County  
9 Jail/Criminal Justice Facility (CJF)  
10

11  
12 WHEREAS, a 2002 study of security at the Jail/Criminal Justice Facility (CJF),  
13 the "Milwaukee County Jail Security Review," which recommended video calling as one  
14 method among others of enhancing security and preventing possible escape, while  
15 reducing staffing requirements (File No. 02-181), and teleconferencing was  
16 implemented in the 2004 capital project WC021, afterward ending the practice of  
17 visitation; and  
18

19 WHEREAS, a capital project, WJ05901: CCFS Video Conferencing, was on the  
20 2013, and 2014 Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan but was not included in any of  
21 those Adopted Capital Budgets; then File No. 14-48 noted the older County-owned  
22 video system installed in 2003 had failed, and was beyond repair, only permitting phone  
23 calls; and the Office of the Sheriff tried a newer system with the contemporary vendor  
24 as noted in File No. 14-156; and  
25

26 WHEREAS, in File No. 14-551, Milwaukee County approved a contract with a  
27 firm which provided "a video visitation system for the Milwaukee County Jail at zero cost  
28 to Milwaukee County for a period of two years with two one-year renewal options" which  
29 enabled remote video calls from anywhere for a fee and free video calls in-person at  
30 County correctional facilities, and enabled the County to move beyond obsolete  
31 technology used at the time without the cost of purchasing or maintaining new  
32 technology; and  
33

34 WHEREAS, under this system and prior to COVID-19, the public could go to the  
35 CJF to video call an occupant or remotely video call a CJF occupant from anywhere in  
36 the world for a fee; and  
37

38 WHEREAS, beginning with the contract approved in File No. 14-551, Milwaukee  
39 County began charging incarcerated individuals, a "captive audience," who are primarily  
40 persons of color and low-income individuals, beyond the cost of providing that service  
41 and has earned profit from this arrangement; and

42 WHEREAS, in File No. 21-1004, Milwaukee County approved a three-year  
43 “Professional Service Agreement with Inmate Calling Solutions LLC d/b/a ICSolutions  
44 from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2024” with three options for annual renewal  
45 thereafter or a month-to-month basis for communication services at the Milwaukee  
46 County Jail and House of Correction; and

47

48 WHEREAS, the contract approved in File No. 21-1004 lowered the charge per  
49 minute to 16 cents only by requirement of the Federal Communications Commission on  
50 July 28, 2021 via 47 Code of Federal Regulations Part 64, and Milwaukee County is still  
51 profiting off of persons of color and individuals with low incomes; and

52

53 WHEREAS, concurrent to the approval of File No. 21-1004, Milwaukee County  
54 also approved in File No. 21-763 a commitment to reduce or eliminate the cost of video  
55 calling services for those detained in Milwaukee County facilities and authorized the  
56 issuance of a request for information to precede a Request for Proposals “to help  
57 provide the technological infrastructure to efficiently provide free or ultra-low-cost video  
58 and voice calls”; and

59

60 WHEREAS, under the present system of paying for video calls, Milwaukee  
61 County generates revenue off people in our care and their friends and families, which,  
62 as noted in the February 14, 2022 *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article, “Families pay  
63 \$5.1 million per year for calls with loved ones in the Milwaukee County Jail. Supervisors  
64 are considering making them free.”, the cost of paying the call fees can be burdensome  
65 on a jailed population which tends to be low-income and persons of color; and

66

67 WHEREAS, as noted in Section 108.02(a) of the Milwaukee County Code of  
68 General Ordinances, “Racism has been, is, and will continue to be, a public health crisis  
69 until race is no longer a predictor of quality or length of life in Milwaukee County.”; and

70

71 WHEREAS, it is commonly understood that digital forms of communication, while  
72 allowing convenience especially over distance, are not equal to genuine live  
73 interpersonal contact with friends and family, which may decrease rates of recidivism,  
74 obtaining and maintaining employment, and maintain or improve interpersonal  
75 relationships; and

76

77 WHEREAS, a November 2011 Minnesota Department of Corrections titled, “The  
78 Effects of Prison Visitation on Offender Recidivism,” hereto attached to this file, found  
79 “visitation significantly decreased the risk of recidivism, a result that was robust. . . The  
80 results also showed that visits from siblings, in-laws, fathers, and clergy were the most  
81 beneficial in reducing the risk of recidivism. . . The findings suggest that revising prison  
82 visitation policies to make them more ‘visitor friendly’ could yield public safety benefits

83 by helping offenders establish a continuum of support from prison to the community.”;  
84 and

85

86 WHEREAS, a 2012 Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction report  
87 titled, “An Overview of Research Findings in the Visitation, Offender Behavior  
88 Connection,” hereto attached to this file, found “there are significant positive outcomes  
89 for inmates who experience visitation during incarceration.”; and

90

91 WHEREAS, according to a 2016 Prison Policy Initiative (PPI) online article titled,  
92 “Seeing eye to eye: understanding the limits of video visitation,” the PPI found the  
93 following limitations to prison video calling:

94

- 95 • “Video communication increases the formality of the conversation, regardless of  
96 the relationship between the two communicators. . .”
- 97 • “With video communication, there is less opportunity for visual signals that  
98 facilitate listener understanding.”
- 99 • “The process of establishing trust takes longer via video communication than in  
100 face-to-face conversations were almost spontaneous trusting behaviors can  
101 occur.”
- 102 • “The absence of mutual eye contact and a shared visual field disrupts  
103 communication and decreases conversational fluidity, which in turn limits the  
104 ability to discuss more complex topics and concepts.”
- 105 • “Video communication has a higher frequency of social distance indicators than  
106 in-person communication, suggesting that it is more difficult for people to express  
107 intimacy and social communication with video communication.”
- 108 • “The decreased content and process coordination in video communication leads  
109 to shorter conversations, reduced interactivity, and less complex utterances.”

110

111 ; and

112

113 WHEREAS, in File No. 22-102, Milwaukee County approved receipt of a United  
114 States Department of Justice grant of \$744,565 from the federal 2021 Office of Juvenile  
115 Justice and Delinquency Prevention Fiscal Year 2021 Second Chance Act Addressing  
116 the Needs of Incarcerated Parents and Their Minor Children for the House of Correction  
117 to “develop and deliver a family centric program (FAM) to provide a safe and supportive  
118 environment for incarcerated parents to strengthen relationships with their children.”;  
119 and a return to in-person visitation would likewise be family-centric; and

120

121 WHEREAS, in pursuit of a healthier and more equitable Milwaukee County; and

122

123 WHEREAS, the Committee on Judiciary, Safety, and General Services, at its  
124 meeting of March 10, 2022, recommended adoption of File No. 22-432 (vote 4-0);  
125 now, therefore,  
126

127 BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby declares  
128 it is the stated policy of Milwaukee County, to restore in-person visitation at the House  
129 of Correction and County Jail/Criminal Justice Facility (CJF) to preserve human dignity;  
130 and  
131

132 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
133 hereby requests the Superintendent, House of Correction, and Office of the Sheriff  
134 investigate and report back to the Board no later than the September 2022 meeting  
135 cycle to provide:  
136

- 137 • Operational and fiscal estimates and potential grant sources relating to the  
138 requirements of resumption of in-person visitation at the House of Correction and  
139 Jail/CJF
- 140 • The potential operational benefits of in-person visitation
- 141 • What neighboring jurisdictions, peer institutions across the United States, and  
142 neighboring metropolitan areas are doing relating to visitation and video calling  
143 generally and in response to COVID-19.  
144

145  
146 03/10/22  
147 S:\Committees\2022\March\JSGS\Resolutions\22-432 resuming in person visitation at the HOC ars no edits.docx