

1 By Supervisors Bowen, Haas, Johnson, Stamper and Mayo
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4 **A RESOLUTION**
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6 reaffirming Milwaukee County's support of an approved advisory referendum for a
7 dedicated sales tax to support county transit, parks, recreation and culture programs
8 and the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program and property tax relief in light of
9 efforts to seek taxpayer funds to help replace the BMO Harris Bradley Center
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12 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee Board of Supervisors approved File No. 08-217 on
13 June 26, 2008, that established an advisory referendum on November 4, 2008, that
14 asked all County voters the following question:
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16 *Shall the State of Wisconsin grant Milwaukee County the authority to provide*
17 *property tax relief of at least sixty-seven million dollars (\$67 million) by levying a*
18 *one percent (1%) county sales and use tax to be used to remove the following*
19 *three items from the property tax levy: parks, recreation and culture, transit and*
20 *emergency medical services (EMS)?*
21

22 ; and
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24 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County voters approved the advisory referendum on
25 November 4, 2008, by a margin of 52 to 48 percent; and
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27 WHEREAS, a Milwaukee Journal Sentinel editorial on November 5, 2008, was
28 headlined: *People Have Spoken: It's time to move forward on a Milwaukee County*
29 *sales tax increase to protect parks, transit and other key services and to offer property*
30 *tax relief; and*
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32 WHEREAS, despite the support from the voters, media and effort by many
33 policymakers, the State Legislature and governor have yet to adopt and sign into law
34 authority to enact the referendum as approved by Milwaukee County voters; and
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36 WHEREAS, since that time, Milwaukee County Parks, Recreation and Culture
37 functions have been cut even further, including fewer park maintenance workers, less
38 aid for museums and cultural groups; and
39

40 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee County Transit System has steadily reduced bus
41 routes and frequency while raising the cash fare to one of the highest in the country
42 while relying on almost \$17 million in federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality
43 (CMAQ) funding that will be exhausted early in 2014 to maintain service; and
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45 WHEREAS, the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program, which helps
46 operate the countywide paramedic services, was targeted for major cuts in 2012 as the

47 County Executive proposed to eliminate the entire \$3 million subsidy to specific
48 municipalities before the County Board restored half of the funding; and

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50 WHEREAS, the Bradley Center was opened in 1988 due to the generous \$93
51 million donation by Jane Bradley Petit, in memory of her father, Harry Lynde Bradley;
52 and

53
54 WHEREAS, the Bradley Center is now 24-years old and needs to be replaced in
55 order to attract and retain our professional basketball franchise, provide space for other
56 sporting teams and quality space for major concerts and other events; and

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58 WHEREAS, the Bradley Center was recently renamed the BMO Harris Bradley
59 Center in recognition of the BMO Harris Bank's pledge of more than \$1 million per year
60 in naming sponsorship rights; and

61
62 WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce has been
63 instrumental in putting together a coalition of sponsorship commitments from other
64 major local businesses that is expected to provide an estimated \$18 million over the
65 next six-years for building maintenance and other things to increase revenue that will
66 serve as a bridge to the building of a new facility; and

67
68 WHEREAS, Senator and Milwaukee Bucks owner Herb Kohl, after contributing
69 \$25 million toward the construction of the University of Wisconsin's Kohl Center, has
70 also pledged a significant personal contribution towards a new facility to replace the
71 BMO Harris Bradley Center; and

72
73 WHEREAS, the Journal Sentinel has lauded these efforts (*Bradley Center*
74 editorial May 22, 2012) to rally support for a much needed new facility and suggested
75 that a public-private partnership will be needed to complete the process and that
76 taxpayers will need to step up; and

77
78 WHEREAS, currently residents in five Milwaukee area counties (Milwaukee,
79 Ozaukee, Racine, Washington and Waukesha) pay 0.1% (one-tenth of one-percent)
80 sales tax toward the construction costs of Miller Park, home of our professional baseball
81 franchise, with the tax currently estimated to sunset sometime in 2017; and

82
83 WHEREAS, Transit, Parks, Recreation and Culture and EMS need the
84 community to rally behind dedicated sales tax funding to save these programs and
85 services, similar to the current effort to build a new sports and entertainment facility; and

86
87 WHEREAS, no public tax dollars should be authorized to rebuild the BMO Harris
88 Bradley Center until dedicated sales tax funding has been secured to preserve the
89 aforementioned County programs and services, as supported by the passage of a
90 public referendum; and

91 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors envisions a first-class
92 County that has a robust transit system, vibrant parks, recreation and culture amenities,

93 effective emergency medical system and a state-of-the-art sports and entertainment
94 facility; now, therefore,

95
96 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby
97 reaffirms the results of the 2008 advisory referendum voters approved that asked the
98 State to grant Milwaukee County the authority to provide property tax relief of at least
99 sixty-seven million dollars (\$67 million) by levying a one percent (1%) county sales and
100 use tax to be used to remove the following three items from the property tax levy:
101 parks, recreation and culture, transit and emergency medical services (EMS); and
102

103 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Board hereby applauds the
104 private sector in its efforts to secure the immediate future of the BMO Harris Bradley
105 Center and the replacement of the aging sports and entertainment facility in the coming
106 years to, among other things, preserve a local professional basketball team; and
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108 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Board opposes the use of public
109 tax dollars for the replacement of the BMO Harris Bradley Center unless dedicated
110 sales tax funding has also been secured for the county programs and services identified
111 above, which the voters already approved by referendum; and
112

113 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
114 envisions a Milwaukee County that has a robust transit system, vibrant parks, recreation
115 and culture amenities, effective emergency medical system and a state-of-the-art sports
116 and entertainment facility hosting a professional basketball franchise; a goal that can be
117 achieved if the private and public sector work together to make it a reality; and
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119 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Director of Intergovernmental Relations is
120 authorized and directed to communicate this resolution to State policymakers, local
121 business groups and any other parties deemed beneficial in helping to achieve the
122 goals of this resolution.