

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: August 11, 2022

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

From: Cassandra Libal, Director, Office of Emergency Management

Subject: From the Director, Office of Emergency Management, providing an informational report regarding an anticipated 2022 operating deficit.

File Type: Informational Report

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**POLICY**

Ch. 56.02 of Milwaukee County's Code of General Ordinances requires county departments to submit a written report to the county executive, the committee on finance of the county board, the office of the comptroller and the department of administrative services whenever such person has reason to know or believe that a net deficit of at least one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00) or an overtime deficit of at least one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) will occur or is projected to occur for the division of county government under the supervision of that person.

**BACKGROUND**

For the May fiscal report, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) forecasted an annual deficit of (\$201,056.01) for 2022. This includes an increase of expenditures (\$252,094.50), partially offset by increased revenue of \$51,038.49. The deficit is primarily caused by the following issues:

- 51006 - SALARIES-WAGES BUDGET (Projected deficit driven by unmet V&T) (\$90,866.00)
- 52000 - OVERTIME (Projected deficit due to higher than budgeted actual experience) (\$143,650.74)
- 54000 - SOCIAL SECURITY TAXES (Projected deficit due to higher than budgeted Wages and Overtime noted above) (\$17,944.05)

Within the first two quarters of 2022, the Office of Emergency Management has experienced scheduling concerns associated with COVID-19. Additionally, we have experienced significant staffing shortages and turnover. These staffing concerns have resulted in a higher than budgeted utilization of overtime funds to support statutorily mandated 911 communications services that provide public safety to the community.

## **Corrective Action Plan:**

OEM plans the following corrective actions:

- a) Add additional part-time dispatcher positions to cover scheduling conflicts at an hourly rate instead of the higher overtime rate.
- b) OEM has worked with Compensation to conduct a wage study to provide competitive wages for dispatchers and staff within the 911 Communications Division. In order to achieve the first phase of compensation equity within the marketplace, OEM abolished the 911 Supervisor position and leveraged the funding (\$70,428.80) for that position to:
  - Reclassify Lead Dispatchers (3) to Dispatch Operations Supervisor (17H to 28M; ~\$29,370.60).
  - Reallocation of Dispatchers (14) from 16Z to 16Z4 (~\$51,469.60)

Within the regional market, OEM Dispatchers' starting salary is as much as \$20,700 (35%) below other counties within the SE Wisconsin region. Although 16Z4 does not meet the recommendation from Compensation for full equity, it was the first step that was affordable with budgeted dollars for FY22.

These efforts are intended to increase retention and reduce turnover by increasing the opportunity for long-term employees that had previously been capped by the pay scale, allowing them to earn competitive salary increases in the future.

- c) OEM has worked with Human Resources to improve recruiting efforts and aggressively hiring new employees to fill existing vacancies. As a result of these efforts, we have experienced an increase in qualified applicants.d)

## **Next Steps:**

OEM will continue to monitor the fiscal situation and will keep the board updated on efforts to reduce the projected deficit. In accordance with Ch. 56.02, DAS will submit a follow-up report in three months.

## **ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

By reporting on the potential deficit within this area as early into the year as possible, the department is demonstrating a commitment to protecting the County's fiscal health and sustainability.

## **FISCAL EFFECT**

This report is informational only. Although it is not needed at this time, OEM may need to request an emergency funds transfer at a future date to close the anticipated deficit prior to the end of the year. OEM will make a separate report and request at that time.

## **TERMS**

N/A

**VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

Cassandra Libal, Director, Office of Emergency Management  
Christopher McGowan, Deputy Director, Office of Emergency Management

**PREPARED BY:**

Cassandra Libal, Director, Office of Emergency Management

**APPROVED BY:**



Cassandra Libal, Director, Office of Emergency Management

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None

cc: County Executive David Crowley  
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office  
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk