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(ITEM ) A resolution by Supervisors Johnson, Jr., and Broderick authorizing an appropriation transfer of \$150,000 from the Appropriation for Contingencies to support the Metro Milwaukee Foreclosure Mediation Program, by recommending adoption of the following:

**AN AMENDED RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, the Metro Milwaukee Foreclosure Mediation Program (MMFMP) was created in 2009 as a response to the foreclosure crisis in Milwaukee County; and

WHEREAS, MMFMP allows qualifying homeowners facing foreclosure the opportunity to work with their mortgage company and a third-party mediator to explore options to either stay in their home or negotiate a respectable exit; and

WHEREAS, since its inception, MMFMP has helped 613 Milwaukee County families stay in their homes; and

WHEREAS, each foreclosure that is avoided is estimated to save local communities and stakeholders approximately \$40,000 and is key to maintaining neighborhood stability; and

WHEREAS, the \$458,550 dedicated by the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) in 2012 is depleted and DOJ has notified MMFMP that it will no longer provide funding for the program; and

WHEREAS, due to the withdrawal of funding by DOJ, MMFMP estimates a \$146,500 shortfall in unmet budgetary needs; and

WHEREAS, MMFMP is exploring alternative funding including fee revenue, City of Milwaukee Community Development Block Grant funds, and private donations, but at this time no additional funds have been received to offset the budget shortfall; and

WHEREAS, in response to the decrease in funding, MMFMP informed the Milwaukee County Civil Division of Judges that mediation fees for participants would increase from \$150 to \$400 and for mortgage servicers from \$150 to \$600; and

WHEREAS, in a letter dated March 31, 2015, ten Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judges expressed their concern that the increase in cost would deter participants, who are already financially stressed, as well as discourage mortgage servicers from applying for mediation; and

WHEREAS, the Judges also state that the program has many benefits for courts with fewer hearings and improved case management and that the community benefits from lower court costs and fewer foreclosed properties; and

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WHEREAS, with 255 mortgage foreclosure actions filed in April 2015 in Milwaukee County and with MMFMP receiving mediation requests in March and April of this year that exceeded the levels during those months for the prior two years, it is evident that the community still needs the services MMFMP provides; and

WHEREAS, the Committee on Judiciary, Safety, and General Services, at its meeting of June 11, 2015, considered this resolution for informational purposes only; and

WHEREAS, at its meeting of June 11, 2015, the Committee on Judiciary, Safety, and General Services heard testimony from the former Executive Director and current Mediator of Milwaukee Metro Mediation Services, Inc. (MMMS), and the Clerk of Circuit Court that MMMS received funds from the City of Milwaukee and a settlement with Green Tree Servicing LLC leaving a remaining budget deficit of \$56,000, which MMMS needs from Milwaukee County to maintain operations for the remainder of 2015; and

WHEREAS, the Committee on Finance, Personnel, and Audit has jurisdiction over the appropriation transfer per Section 59.60, Wisconsin Statutes, and at its meeting of June 18, 2015, recommended adoption of this resolution as amended (vote 9-0); now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors (County Board) supports the work the Metro Milwaukee Foreclosure Mediation Program (MMFMP) is doing in the community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County Board hereby authorizes the Department of Administrative Services to process an appropriation transfer of \$56,000 from Org. Unit 1945 – Appropriation for Contingencies to Org. Unit 2000 – Combined Court Related Operations to fund the unmet budgetary needs of MMFMP.

jmj  
06/18/15  
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