

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: December 28, 2023

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

From: Guy Smith, Executive Director, Milwaukee County Parks

Subject: From the Executive Director of Milwaukee County Parks Requesting Approval to Release Funding From 2024 Adopted Budget Amendment 42

File Type: Action Report

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**REQUEST**

Milwaukee County Parks is requesting approval to release funding appropriated in 2024 budget amendment 42 from the departmental contingency account.

**POLICY**

The 2024 Adopted budget included the passage of amendment number 42 which contained the following:

“Amend the narrative of Agency 900 – Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture to include the language as follows: An appropriation of \$500,000 is included in an allocated contingency account within the department to pay for park enhancements. The department shall provide a list of recommendations to the County Board of Supervisors for review and approval no later than the March 2024 meeting cycle. The projects should include high-priority enhancements to activate park spaces which, among other things, may include better lighting for safety and splash pad access.”

Wisconsin State Statutes:	
Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	
Specific Adopted Budget:	2024
Specific Adopted Budget Amendment:	42
Specific Adopted Capital Project:	

**BACKGROUND**

Milwaukee County Parks reviewed the adopted amendment, major maintenance needs as well as the Parks Department’s 3-year Strategic Plan to build a recommendation that is responsive to the preferences outlined in the appropriation. Milwaukee County Parks considered this funding in the same category as ARPA or CARES funding - a one-time infusion that should not be considered ongoing or require future budgetary appropriations. The table below outlines expense categories recommended for funding by Milwaukee County Parks.

<b>Park Recommendations 2024 Budget Amendment 42</b>		
	<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Amount</i>
1	Tiefenthaler Park improvements – design improvements to aquatic facility, soil remediation, lighting upgrades, completion of path project	\$100,000
2	Seasonal labor funding	\$100,000
3	Parks Strategic Plan Implementation – striping courts for sport courts such as basketball or pickleball, creation of Park comprehensive plans, offsetting cost to provide free picnic areas	\$100,000
4	Pavilion upgrades – Kitchen appliances, equipment upgrades	\$80,000
5	Walker Square Park grounds improvements	\$50,000
6	Seasonal labor incentives (aquatics, park workers)	\$50,000
7	Community center exercise equipment	\$20,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

Additional explanation for the initiatives funded with this budget amendment is outlined below:

1. Tiefenthaler Park improvements – Tiefenthaler Park has been a focused area for reinvestment in recent years with the historic upgrade to the Kellogg PEAK Initiative community center, new installations of peace posts and upgrades to the basketball courts, and planned pathway upgrades through a County ARPA project. Building on these positive investments, Parks seeks to begin planning and design for improvements to aquatic facility which is currently a wading pool and could become a splash pad or other water feature that benefits youth in this high equity need park. Funding may also be needed to begin soil remediation in Tiefenthaler as there are known subsurface soil issues, begin planning lighting upgrades, and allow for the completion of the ARPA funded pathway repaving project in case of unforeseen expenses.
  2. Seasonal Labor – funding will help staff aquatic facilities and splash pads, aid park operations and increase capacity to maintain parks and host special events.
  3. Parks Strategic Plan Implementation – Beginning in 2024 and lasting for 3 years, the Parks Department will be introducing a strategic plan that will also support the County’s vision. That strategic plan will contain actions, goals, and key performance indicators that will require additional funding to be achieved. This specifically includes adding striping to existing tennis courts to accommodate pickleball as well as painting basketball courts, developing comprehensive plans for individual parks, and providing free picnic areas that will require a revenue offset.
  4. Pavilion upgrades – Through Amendment 01 in the 2023 budget, Parks was fortunate to have invested significant resources in exterior improvements to various pavilions primarily focused on painting and aesthetic upgrades. Through this amendment funding, Parks seeks to fund similar improvements to the interior of pavilions specifically focused on upgrading outdated kitchen appliances (stoves, refrigerators, microwaves, coffee makers), and other needed equipment upgrades to improve functionality and attractiveness to renters.
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5. Walker Square Park grounds improvements – Walker Square Park is a heavily used small park in Milwaukee’s Walker Square neighborhood. Due to the use that this park receives there is damage to the turf and grounds that require repair. This funding would support repairs to the physical condition of Walker Square Park.
6. Seasonal labor incentives – For the past 2 years Parks has offered various incentives to seasonal employees to bolster our recruitment and retention of staff in order to open facilities. In particular seasonal lifeguards are needed to open pools and Parks offers retention and recruitment bonuses to seasonal employees to help fill our workforce. This funding would ensure that funding is available for recruitment and retention bonuses to aid in opening aquatic facilities in 2024.
7. Community Center exercise equipment – King and Kosciuszko Community Centers are oriented towards provided affordable access to gym and weight room equipment, but investment has been lacking in the kind of equipment that is provided. This funding would allocate additional resources to the community centers in order to upgrade exercise equipment and infrastructure needed to support healthy lifestyles.

**ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

The following table outlines how each initiative aligns with the county strategic plan.

<b>Park Recommendations 2024 Budget Amendment 42 Alignment to Strategic Focus Areas</b>			
Initiative	Creating Intentional Inclusion	Bridge the Gap	Invest in Equity
Tiefenthaler Park improvements		2C	
Seasonal labor funding	1A		
Parks Strategic Plan Implementation			3A
Pavilion upgrades			3B
Walker Square Park grounds improvements		2C	
Seasonal labor incentives	1B		
Community center exercise equipment			3A

The table below outlines how specific locations for projects are reflected on the Parks Equity Index. Higher numbers indicate a larger equity need. Projects that are labeled “systemwide” involve the improvement of multiple locations. In these cases, the Park Equity Index will be used as a consideration to further prioritize improvements.

<b>Parks Racial Equity Score By Impacted Location - Amendment 42</b>		
Initiative	Location	Parks Equity Index Score
Tiefenthaler improvements	Tiefenthaler	10
Walker Square improvements	Walker Square	10
Community center exercise equipment	King	9
Community center exercise equipment	Kosciuszko	8

Milwaukee County Parks respectfully requests approval to release funding from the departmental contingency account and authorization to transfer the funding into corresponding accounts and new capital projects to effectuate the outlined initiatives.

**FISCAL EFFECT**

Funds for the requested initiatives are appropriated in the 2024 budget. Any ongoing expenses will be included in the 2025 departmental budget request.

**TERMS**

None


**VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

None

**PREPARED BY:**

James Tarantino, Deputy Director, Milwaukee County Parks

**APPROVED BY:**

Guy Smith, Executive Director Milwaukee County Parks 

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Resolution  
Fiscal Note

**CC:**

David Crowley, County Executive  
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office  
Sheldon A. Wasserman, Supervisor District 3, Comm on Parks & Culture Chair  
Steven Shea, Supervisor District 8, Comm on Parks & Culture Vice Chair  
Felesia A. Martin, Supervisor District 7, Comm on Parks & Culture Member  
Juan Miguel Martinez, Supervisor District 12, Comm on Parks & Culture Member  
Steve F. Taylor, Supervisor District 17, Comm on Parks & Culture Member  
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Mgr, Office of the County Clerk  
Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services  
Joseph Lamers, Fiscal & Budget Director, DAS  
Vince Masterson, Fiscal & Strategic Asset Coordinator, DAS  
Pamela Bryant, Capital Finance Manager, Comptroller's Office  
Justin Rodriguez, Capital Finance Analyst, Comptroller's Office  
Allyson R. Smith, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk  
Ciara Miller, Research & Policy Analyst, Office of the Comptroller  
Anthony Rux, Budget & Management Analyst, DAS-PSB