

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE: May 18, 2020

TO: The Hon. Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman,
Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Nicole W. Stickler, Legislative Liaison

SUBJECT: Update on Status of Issues Related to Government Affairs

Issue

The 2020-2022 supervisorial term begins with a number of developments on public policy issues impacting Milwaukee County and involving other governmental partners. The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an update on the status of policy deliberations with federal, state and local governments.

Local

Delinquent Property Tax Penalty & Interest Waiver - As a reminder, the State of Wisconsin passed 2019 Act 185 (Act 185, the Act) April 15, 2020 to deal with many issues associated with the pandemic and COVID-19. Act 185 Section 105(25) allowed for the deferment of interest and penalties on delinquent property taxes which occur after March 31, 2020. Property taxes that are unpaid after March 31 could be delayed for an assessment of interest and penalties until October 1, 2020 instead of the date of their missed installment payment. The State placed a requirement in the Act that both the County and community had to approve a similar resolution which would allow for such deferment. Any community must wait for the County to pass a resolution before the community's resolution could be effective.

The Board of Supervisors received an informational report on this subject last week in Committee of the Whole and may consider resolutions to exercise this new authority in this month's cycle, if introduced and referred to committee.

A number of Milwaukee's municipal governments have contacted supervisors and Board staff to discuss their desire for the County to pass a resolution so that they may exercise their new authority, as well.

Unified Emergency Operation Center – Milwaukee County and its nineteen municipalities have established a unified emergency operations center to collaborate and deploy a cohesive countywide response to COVID-19 in our communities. The exercise is a demonstration of the robust partnership and spirit of collaborative innovation that exists in the relationships between the County and its municipal partners. Missions frequently overlap and it has been valuable to have collaborative leadership to identify challenges and opportunities to resolve them through strategic deployment of assets including equipment, personnel and attention.

Federal

CARES Act - As a reminder, Congress enacted the CARES Act in March in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and deploy federal assets to boost recovery and response efforts across various public and private sectors. The \$2.2 trillion piece of legislation included \$150 billion in funding for state governments as well as local governments with populations of more than 500,000. The funding was distributed directly by the U.S. Treasury and was distributed to the State of Wisconsin, the City of Milwaukee, Dane County and Milwaukee County. Funds are not allowed to be used to replace budgeted revenue lost as a result of the pandemic. Rather funds are to be spent responding directly to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Milwaukee County received the least amount of direct funding among Wisconsin's recipients because the U.S. Treasury administratively decided to reduce the funding earmark of counties with municipalities within their border that independently qualified for funding, as well. This surprising action drastically reduced Milwaukee County's access to federal capital. In our case, the County's appropriation was reduced by \$102.7 million, or the same amount that the City of Milwaukee independently received. Our reduction resulted in \$62 million for Milwaukee County with the balance of our allotment redirected to the State of Wisconsin's balance. The State of Wisconsin received \$1.9 billion, inclusive of the \$102.7 million that was previously directed at Milwaukee County. Dane County received \$95 million.

Milwaukee County has requested that Governor Evers, who is responsible for determining how the federal funds received by the State of Wisconsin will be utilized, to redirect the \$102.7 million back to Milwaukee County to be spent locally on the recovery of our community rather than in Madison to fund the State's recovery. Governor Evers has not released a plan for how the \$1.9 billion coronavirus relief funds will be utilized by the State of Wisconsin, however his staff has indicated that plans will be announced soon.

Additionally, the CARES Act made separate funding available for the airport and transit, as reported by Director Lamers during Committee of the Whole last week. If there is interest among the Board, I can prepare a factsheet identifying all the federal funds made available for Milwaukee County related to COVID-19.

Next Action: Congress and the White House have begun negotiations on a fifth package to stimulate the economy and the federal government's continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The House on Friday passed the HEROES Act, which sought to spend \$3 trillion dollars in the next phase of negotiations. The legislation passed on a partisan vote and the Senate and White House have indicated that it is dead on arrival to further legislative progress. The Senate has introduced a bipartisan proposal that includes \$500 billion for additional direct and flexible aid to all states, counties and municipalities, signaling the start of a bipartisan dialog on the subject. The White House has indicated that it wants to see how states and local governments are utilizing the \$150 billion already distributed before additional funds will be sent.

Negotiations will likely begin following the Memorial Day break at the beginning of June.

State:

Restoration of Milwaukee County's Coronavirus Relief Fund Allocation: As shared earlier in this report, Milwaukee County has requested that Governor Evers, who is responsible for determining how the federal funds received by the State of Wisconsin will be utilized, to redirect the \$102.7 million back to Milwaukee County to be spent locally on the recovery of our community rather than in Madison to fund the State's recovery. Governor Evers has not released a plan for how the \$1.9

billion coronavirus relief funds will be utilized by the State of Wisconsin, however his staff has indicated that plans will be announced soon.

Small Business Grants: In the meantime, Governor Evers today announced two grant programs that are available through the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation that can be of direct assistance to small businesses and especially minority owned businesses in Milwaukee County. The grant programs utilize federal funds received by the State. The two programs are [the Ethnic Minority Emergency Grant](#) for small businesses and the [We're All In](#) grant program. These opportunities are in addition to the Small Business 20/20 Program and the Payroll Protection Program. **Supervisors are encouraged and requested to share these resources widely within their networks in order to ensure that Milwaukee County small and micro businesses have quick access to this limited capital.**

Closing

I will report monthly through this file to provide the most timely information on developments to public policy discussions impacting Milwaukee County at the federal, state and local level. If you have any questions or wish to have additional staff support for discussions with Milwaukee County's government partners, please don't hesitate to reach out. I am available by email at - nicole.stickler@milwaukeecountywi.gov or via telephone at: 414-278-4992.