



Waukesha County

Office of the County Executive

To: Honorable County Board Members
From: Paul Farrow, County Executive
Date: December 11, 2020

Dear Honorable County Board Supervisors:

The 2021 Adopted Waukesha County Budget reflects the dedication of a team committed to serving Waukesha County residents. This year is exceptional because it also demonstrates how sound fiscal planning has positioned the County to weather one of the most challenging times in recent memory due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The budget leverages collaborative partnerships, while focusing on stable funding sources and strong management practices that prioritize planning, monitoring and fiscal prudence. These efforts will help us maintain a strong fiscal position.

This budget advances Waukesha County's proactive approach to mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic through strategic use of federal funds. Other public health and safety improvements will focus on long-term investments to make neighborhoods safer, ensure access to reliable infrastructure, and improve economic development in our communities while keeping taxes low. Once again, this budget is under the conservative state revenue cap. The 2021 Budget is a product of the collaborative work ethic of Waukesha County Board members, who demonstrate each year their dedication to taxpayers.

The 2021 County general property tax levy totals \$107.8 million, an increase of 1.52% or \$1,610,912. The increase includes a portion of unused prior-year levy capacity and a net new construction growth rate of 1.64% as compared to 1.47% in the prior year. This growth in levy is against an equalized property tax base of \$61.1 billion, which experienced a 4.75% increase. Once again, we are holding tax levy growth below statutory limits to minimize impacts to homeowners and businesses in order to sustain services required in a growing county with increased development and a growing population.

The Justice and Law Enforcement program areas remain a priority requiring increased tax levy of \$931,000 or more than half of new tax levy.

- The Sheriff's Department tax levy will increase \$600,000, including the phasing in of tax levy support for another correctional officer, the last of three permanent positions as part of a three-year plan to prepare for new Courthouse Tower operations in 2021. Sheriff equipment needs for both jail and non-corrections equipment replacement plans are funded at \$380,600 in 2021.
- Emergency Preparedness includes a tax levy increase of \$100,000, helping cover the costs of existing staff and the phasing in new software charges related to the replacement of dispatch consoles.
- A tax levy increase of \$162,000 will fund the cost to continue for Courts and the District Attorney and help offset revenues that have minimal growth or are decreasing. Non-levy revenues in the Courts budget decrease \$125,900 or 2.9%, partly due to lower trends in fine and forfeiture revenues and decreasing investment income.

SERVICE LEVEL ADJUSTMENTS

The 2021 budget includes changes in service levels in several areas.

- The Department of Emergency Preparedness is budgeting \$203,800 for an upgrade to its 911 dispatch network (Next Generation, or NG911). The upgrade will help create a faster, more resilient network

and will improve the ability to help manage call overload, natural disasters, and transferring of 911 calls based on location tracking. This project is funded mostly with \$122,300 of federal grant revenues.

- The Department of Health and Human Services anticipates receiving an additional \$925,500 of funding as part of an ongoing effort to eliminate the wait list for the Children with Long-Term Support (CLTS) needs program. This funding will cover case management and contracted support services to help ensure children with severe and chronic disabilities can remain safely at home. Similarly, the budget includes an increase of \$155,000 in Children’s Community Option Program funding to further supplement the needs of CLTS clients.
- The budget incorporates additional state revenues that were received during 2020 for Children and Family Services. The additional revenues of \$772,000 funds county staff and contracted resources to support services for child protective and juvenile justice cases.
- Ownership of Wanaki Golf Course will transfer from the County to a private operator following the 2020 golf season, and results in a reduction of revenues and budgeted fund balance by \$1.4 million and expenditures by \$1.3 million. The sale of Wanaki Golf Course represents a solution reached by stakeholders to continue golf operations at the course while allowing the county to focus efforts on sustaining operations at the remaining two County-run golf courses (Naga-Waukee and Moor Downs).

INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

The 2021 Capital budget, with total expenditures of \$19.2 million decreases by \$8.6 million from the 2020 budget as major construction for the first phase of a two-phase project to modernize the courthouse nears completion. In order to perform the necessary upgrades to the existing courthouse, the new court tower must first be built, to allow portions of the current courthouse to be vacated. Completion of the new 62,000 square foot, four-story, eight-courtroom tower is anticipated in June 2021 with \$1.6 million of funding to finish the project. The initial budget and concept for phase two, renovation of the existing courthouse, begins in 2021 with \$1.2 million (major construction planned for 2023-2026).

The 2021 capital budget also includes \$4.9 million to complete the expansion of three miles of CTH M (North Avenue) from two to four lanes to accommodate traffic volumes in this priority corridor. Another \$4.7 million is budgeted to maintain existing infrastructure through the County’s Highway Repaving Program. In the Parks and Land Use area, the budget includes \$1.9 million to build a 3.5-mile multi-use trail from the City of Pewaukee to the City of Brookfield.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Waukesha County staff that helped prepare the 2021 Waukesha County Budget and the County Board Supervisors who worked hard to deliver a budget that will continue our commitment to the taxpayers of Waukesha County to remain a low-tax leader.

Sincerely,



PAUL FARROW
County Executive