



## Waukesha County Budget Task Force FAQ

### Task Force Overview

#### Why was the Task Force created?

The County Executive created the Task Force to gather public input and provide direction for future county budgets. Waukesha County is a fiscally conservative, well-planned county that for decades has held the highest attainable bond rating (AAA/Aaa) as a measurement of its credit worthiness. Its data-driven decision making and conservative approach to budgeting have made it stand out as one of the nation's top performing counties. Gathering public input into the budget process has always been an important part of the county approach to fiscal management and the Task Force will play an important role in continuing that practice.

#### What is the goal of the Task Force?

The Task Force will examine the county's future capital and operating needs, review all revenue options available to the county under state law, and will ultimately make recommendations to the County Executive and the County Board as to how its members believe the county should approach its budgets over the next 5-10 years.

#### What is the Task Force timeline?

The Task Force will conduct business during multiple meetings between May and June 2024. The final report is due to the County Executive and the County Board by August 31, 2024.

### Task Force Membership

#### Who was selected to serve as the Task Force members?

The Task force is made up of 35 Waukesha County residents, appointed by the County Executive, including a number of County Board Supervisors, municipal elected officials, business leaders and the public. Other County Board Supervisors or members of the public will be encouraged to attend meetings but are not considered members of the Task Force.

#### How were Task Force members be selected?

The County Executive chose Task Force members that collectively represent a broad base of backgrounds, experience, and perspectives as well as geographic balance across the county.

### **What is the role of Task Force Members?**

Task Force participants will attend a series of four meetings taking place during the months of May and June 2024. They will receive information on county finances and operations and will participate in large and small group discussions about issues affecting the county's near and long-term future. They will also be asked to provide their opinion on a variety of county-related issues and help create a Task Force Final Report that will be submitted to the County Executive and the County Board of Supervisors.

## **Task Force Operations and Outcomes**

### **Are the final Task Force recommendations binding?**

No. The Task Force will make recommendations in the form of a final report to be considered for action by the County Executive and the County Board. The Recommendations will be considered along with other important factors that go into the county's budget and planning process.

### **Is the purpose of the Task Force to recommend a county sales tax?**

No. There is no preordained outcome to the Task Force's recommendations. The Task Force members alone will determine what recommendations, if any, are included in the final report. Any discussion of a county sales tax will be presented by the Task Force facilitator in the context of all other revenue options available to the county under current state law.

### **Will county services be reduced because of the Task Force recommendations?**

There is no preordained outcome to the Task Force's recommendations. The Task Force members alone will determine what recommendations are included in the final report. Any recommendations, like service reductions, will be considered for action by the County Executive and the County Board.

### **What will be in the Task Force's final report?**

The final report will include a summary of the Task Force process, comparative data between Waukesha and other counties, a series of financial analysis and budgetary projections, an accounting of the budget scenarios considered, and examination of the county's revenue options available under state law, and final Task Force recommendations.

## **About Waukesha County**

### **Is Waukesha County facing a financial hardship?**

While Waukesha County has adhered to an award-winning, fiscally conservative approach to budgeting and financial management, like all local municipalities, the county must make tough decisions in order to effectively manage the high cost of inflation, conform to new state regulations and mandates, as well as balance its desire to keep taxes low and provide high-quality services. Despite these priorities, and the county's track-record fiscal prudence, in 2005 the state-imposed limits on the amount of taxes the

county can levy each year. The result of that formula-based limit is a tax levy far below what the county needs to fund its programming and keep the public safe and has led to yearly cuts in services.

**How is the County Board of Supervisors involved in the Task Force?**

The County Board will play an important role in the Task Force. Not only are some County Board Supervisors serving as members of the Task Force itself, but the full County Board will be presented with the final report and will likely be asked to act on individual Task Force recommendations in the form of county ordinances and future county budgets.