



Waukesha County

Office of the County Executive

To: Honorable County Board Members
From: Paul Farrow, County Executive
Date: December 13, 2019

Dear Honorable County Board Supervisors:

The 2020 Waukesha County Budget reflects months of work from a team committed to serving Waukesha County Residents. The budget leverages new funding sources, partnerships, and conservative planning to ensure county residents live in safe neighborhoods, can access reliable infrastructure, and will see economic development in their community well into the future. This budget is under the conservative state revenue cap, a target that we were able to reach through innovation, strategic planning and collaboration.

Once again, the cooperation and collaboration among Waukesha County elected officials stands out as an example of what is possible when elected leaders work together. This budget would not be possible without the dedication of County Board members working to represent their constituents in the best way possible.

The 2020 County general property tax levy totals \$106.2 million, an increase of 1.76% or \$1,839,437. The increase includes a factor for tax increment district closures, a portion of unused prior-year levy capacity and a net new construction growth rate of 1.47% as compared to 1.57% in the prior year. This growth in levy is against an equalized property tax base of \$58.4 billion, which experienced a 5.7% 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.

The Justice and Law Enforcement program areas remain a priority requiring increased tax levy of \$1,050,000 or more than half of new tax levy.

- The Sheriff's Department tax levy will increase \$550,000 including the phasing in of tax levy support for another correction officer, the second of three positions as part of a three-year plan to prepare for new Courthouse Tower operations in 2021. Sheriff equipment replacement needs for both jail and non-corrections equipment replacement plans are funded at \$354,000.
- Emergency Preparedness includes a tax levy increase of \$325,000, including \$80,000 to complete the phase-out of fund balance associated with positions added in prior years to handle additional call volume needs as a result of Menomonee Falls joining county dispatch.
- A tax levy increase of \$150,000 will fund increased costs for Courts and the District Attorney. The Courts budget includes an increase in court appointed counsel and legal services of \$311,000 due to a Supreme Court ruling that increased rates. A portion of this increase will be offset with increased revenues related to fee recovery efforts.

SERVICE LEVEL ADJUSTMENTS

The 2020 budget includes changes in service levels in several areas.

- The State budget provided \$3.6 million in revenues to eliminate the wait list for children with long-term support needs.

- Mental Health Services also increase with additional state grant allocations including \$100,000 for the State Opioid Response grant and \$190,000 for the Substance Use Block grant. New grant funding includes \$100,000 for the Women’s Health & Recovery Project, \$50,000 for the Urban Youth Prevention grant, and \$158,000 for new crisis stabilization services.
- The District Attorney budget will include an increase in federal Victim of Crimes Act (VOCA) funding of \$95,000 allowing the addition of a new homicide victim witness specialist.
- The Medical Examiner’s Office will pilot a new forensic anthropology service model to assist law enforcement agencies in the region. The budget includes fund balance appropriations of \$25,000 for one-time startup costs and \$10,000 in new training revenues.
- Wanaki Golf Course will close by the end of 2020 in order to sustain operations at Waukesha County’s other two courses. The budget includes \$1.4 million in expenditures offset with \$1.2 million of revenue and \$200,000 of fund balance to insure the operation of the course for one year, while the County seeks alternatives to County ownership and/or County operations.
- Tax levy support for the Airport is eliminated in the 2020 Budget. This is a result of new land lease revenues related to new hangars and the second fuel farm supported by prior year investments.

INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

The 2020 Capital budget, with total expenditures of \$27.8 million, includes the last major year of construction funding of \$13.7 million for first phase of the expansion and renovation of the Waukesha County Courthouse. 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 a new 62,000 square foot, four-story, eight-courtroom tower is anticipated in 2021.

The 2020 capital budget increases \$2.8 million, largely due to a \$4.4 million project to expand three miles of CTH M (North Avenue) from two to four lanes to accommodate traffic volumes in a priority corridor. The budget also includes maintenance of existing infrastructure with total projects of \$3.7 million for repaving. Three projects in the parks will leverage partnerships to fund nearly \$1.2 million for recreational facilities including a new dog exercise area and expanded trails.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Waukesha County staff that helped prepare the 2020 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