



December 15, 2014

Dear Citizens of Waukesha County:

Each spring I, along with the budget team and key staff, embark on the process of creating the County's budget with the goal of continuing to provide Waukesha County's outstanding services while also holding the line on taxes. This process requires strategic thinking and making difficult decisions, but also provides the opportunity to examine new and innovative ways to save tax dollars. This budget is no exception. I am proud of the innovations, partnerships and strategic decisions made throughout this budget that will continue our commitment to being a low tax leader. In fact, a **County homeowner, with a median valued home estimated at about \$246,300, will see no change from last year on the county portion of their property tax bill.**

I am proud of the relationship between the Executive and Legislative Branches in Waukesha County and appreciate your willingness to work with my administration on the passage of the 2015 Budget.

TAX IMPACT ON HOMEOWNERS

The 2015 County general property tax levy totals \$100.5 million. County Departments have worked diligently to be innovative, use technology to improve efficiency and seek collaborative efforts to control spending. Expenditures in the budget total \$277.4 million. The Budget contains \$261.2 million in operating appropriations and the remaining \$16.1 million is dedicated to our capital project budget for infrastructure investments. Total expenditures are down \$4.7 million from the 2014 budget. This budget maintains our low employee per capita ratio of 3.5 employees to 1,000 residents by controlling positions and limiting net personnel cost increases to 1.45%.

COLLABORATION & COOPERATION

Waukesha County values collaboration and working with other governments to gain economies of scale and streamline government services while saving money. The 2015 budget includes the implementation of several collaborative capital projects funded in the prior 2014 budget. As a result, the capital budget is reduced about \$11.9 million. The operating budgets are increased, reflecting project impacts and other initiatives as follows:

- The Radio Upgrade project (Project expenditure of \$9.5 million) will be implemented in mid 2015. Radio Services expenditures increase \$734,700, offset with both Radio Services fund balance and increased charges to users, based on the formula in the 2014 Trunked Radio System Contract Addendum.

- A jointly operated single stream recyclable processing facility (Project expenditure of \$7.7 million) with the City of Milwaukee begins operation in 2015. The Material Recovery Facility (MRF) Fund budget includes an expenditure increase of \$1.0 million for the new vendor contract offset with an additional budgeted revenue increase of \$1.1 million in material sales with revenue sharing increasing from 50% to 80%.
- A new collaborative effort in the 2015 budget is a contract with Walworth County for Waukesha County to serve as its Medical Examiner, allowing a third forensic pathologist position to be funded. A similar contract will be implemented with Washington County. This increases expenditures and revenues \$442,000.
- A full year operation of the on-site Waukesha Employee Health and Wellness Center is included in the 2015 budget based on the contract signed in 2014 with the City and School District of Waukesha. The County is estimated to save \$3.1 million in health care costs over a 5 year period.
- At mid-year, the 2015 budget implements a more cost-effective shelter care operation for boys and girls by partnering with the private sector. This change is projected to result in an annual savings of \$130,000 which will allow the Department to invest in other Health and Human Services priorities.

INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

The County has consistently demonstrated its value of prudent financial planning by continuing to make sound strategic investment decisions to maintain our critical infrastructure. The 2015 capital budget spends \$16.1 million, and strikes a balance between maintaining our infrastructure to ensure economic viability and delivering critical core services to the people who need them most.

In the 2015 Budget, building infrastructure improvements total about \$5.3 million including new more energy-efficient equipment and roofing upgrades. The budget also includes \$1.5 million in 2015 to demolish the east wing building (constructed in 1963) of the former Health and Human Services (H&HS) Building, and construct additional parking.

The 2015 capital budget devotes more than \$6.8 million for key highway improvements including \$3.8 million for road surface repaving and intersection signal and safety improvements. Almost \$1.3 million will involve rehabilitation work and \$1.1 million is included for project design work to widen CTH M (North Avenue).

Parks and Land Use capital spending mostly includes \$1.6 million for pavement, trails and facility projects at the parks. County technology projects include \$1.0 million to complete an upgrade the County's election system through process improvements and automated system enhancements.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Year-after-year, through strategic planning, innovation and partnerships, we are able to ensure streamlined services and cost-savings to our taxpayers. I would like to thank the Waukesha County staff that helped prepare the 2015 County Executive's Budget and the County Board Supervisors that sat beside me in countless meetings. I have had the honor and privilege of signing ten budgets during my tenure as Waukesha County Executive. Although this budget will be my last, I am confident that the next person that sits behind this desk will ensure that Waukesha County will continue to "Lead the Way" long into the future.

Sincerely,



Daniel P. Vrakas
County Executive