



Waukesha County

Office of the County Executive

To: Honorable County Board Members
From: Paul Farrow, County Executive
Date: December 10, 2021

Dear Honorable County Board Supervisors:

This 2022 Adopted Budget is an example of what is possible when local government utilizes creative solutions to tackle complex community issues. The budget includes multiple examples of the County addressing important priorities while improving services and keeping taxes low. Thank you for responsibly representing your constituents throughout the budget development process.

Residents have said public health, public safety, and low taxes are what matters most to them. Each year, my goal is to create a budget that reflects those concerns. Through your support and collaboration, this budget delivers once again. We are tackling the backlog in the courts due to the COVID-19 pandemic; we are closing an underused juvenile detention facility and reinvesting resources to expand youth mental health services, which are more important than ever; we are investing in a safer courthouse facility that can meet residents' needs for decades; and we are leveraging new sources of revenue to offset the toll of pandemic response. These ambitious initiatives will improve the safety, health and quality of life of residents while maintaining our conservative fiscal values.

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 state mandated tax levy cap, a target that we were able to reach through innovation, strategic planning and collaboration.

The 2022 County general property tax levy totals \$109.5 million, an increase of 1.57% or \$1,689,728. The increase includes a factor for tax increment district closures, prior-year unused levy capacity and a net new construction growth rate of 1.57% as compared to 1.64% in the prior year. This growth in levy is against an equalized property tax base of \$65.0 billion, which experienced a 6.32% increase. Once again, we are holding tax levy growth within statutory limits to minimize impacts to homeowners and businesses in order to sustain services required in a county with increased development and a growing population.

The Justice and Law Enforcement program areas remain a priority, requiring increased tax levy of \$1,252,000 or nearly three-quarters of new tax levy.

- The Sheriff's Department tax levy will increase \$825,000 and includes funding for three additional correctional officers to provide supervision of 17-year-olds held at the jail with sight and sounds separation from adult inmates. The additional positions are expected to provide additional jail staffing flexibility and help reduce reliance on overtime. Sheriff equipment needs for both jail and non-corrections equipment replacement plans are funded at \$404,200 in 2022.
- Emergency Preparedness, which includes emergency dispatch operations for the Sheriff's Department and 31 municipalities, includes a tax levy increase of \$215,000, helping cover the costs of existing staff and provide additional coverage resources.
- A tax levy increase of \$153,000 will fund the cost to continue for Circuit Courts and the District Attorney's Office and help offset revenues that have minimal growth or are decreasing.
- Tax levy for the Medical Examiner's Office increases \$59,000, which includes funding for additional temporary staff, contracted medical services, and medical supplies to help manage an increasing case load and cost of testing.

SERVICE LEVEL ADJUSTMENTS: The 2022 budget includes changes in service levels in several areas.

- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is budgeting additional resources to help meet the state-mandated elimination of the waitlist for participation in the Children’s Long-Term Support (CLTS) program. In order to promote stability in services provided and counter staffing turnover, the budget includes 4.0 FTE additional social worker positions (3.0 FTE newly created and 1.0 FTE transferred from the Adolescent and Family Services Division), estimated to cost \$346,100 and additional contracted case management staffing of \$966,500. This higher service capacity is funded with a projected increase in federal CLTS revenue of \$965,900 and an additional \$403,800 of tax levy allocated to this program area overall.
- HHS will initiate the new Youth Intensive Services program in 2022 to expand mental health and substance use treatment services to adolescents. The program is budgeted at an estimated \$1.25 million and staffed with 11.00 FTE positions, including seven reassigned from other divisions and four new position creations. Support will also be provided through contracted third-party agencies, budgeted at \$180,000. This program will be mostly funded with federal Medicaid revenues through the state’s Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) program. For new programs such as this, Medicaid only provides limited reimbursement in the first year, so the department is strategically using \$266,500 in one-time General Fund balance until full reimbursement can be achieved in 2023. This fund balance will be recouped through state funding provided through the Wisconsin Medicaid Cost Reporting cost settlement process.
- HHS - Public Health continues to budget for potential COVID-19 disease investigation and pandemic response needs in 2022, with a specific allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant funding and related expenditures at \$459,300. The budget assumes funding for the first six months of 2022. HHS will continue to monitor conditions and will only spend grant funds based on anticipated need, which could include a request for additional grant-funded appropriations if evaluation warrants it.
- In July of this year, the County Board approved an ordinance authorizing HHS to cease secure detention services at the Juvenile Center and to seek a contracted solution with other counties to care for the diminishing number of juveniles in this area. This ordinance abolished 8.50 FTE, while reclassifying an existing position and creating 2.00 FTE new positions to monitor and coordinate care for juveniles going forward, resulting in a net savings of about \$450,000, which HHS was able to use to offset other programmatic needs.
- The 2022 budget includes \$63,000 for the creation of a 1.00 FTE administrative assistant position in the HHS-Veterans’ Services Division to address an increasing number of clients and workload to help ensure that veterans receive timely service.

INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

The 2022 Capital budget, with total expenditures of \$28.5 million, increases by \$9.3 million from the 2021 budget, and includes \$16 million for the Courthouse Project Step II: Renovate 1959 Courthouse. The project will improve security, address aging and out-of-date facility systems, and ensure that facilities can support the next fifty years of growth in the County. The 2022 budget will fund the completion of the design phase and begin the construction phase, which is expected to continue through 2026. The capital budget also includes about \$1.5 million to rehabilitate Moorland Road from Interstate 94 to Bluemound Road in the City of Brookfield.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Waukesha County staff that helped prepare the 2022 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