

The budget passed by the County Board overtaxes, overspends, doesn't address the pension liability, ignores our efficiency proposals and - worst of all - puts back government jobs without paying for them. It requires a "do over."

Adding these jobs back with only funding for about three months worth of pay based on the hope that the union will bail them out is like buying a big house based on the hope that you can pay the mortgage when you win the lottery. As passed by the County Board, the 2007 budget is \$6.55 million out of balance. To fix that deficit, the county had to send out layoff notices this week.

In addition, the budget keeps the savings from the use of Pension Obligations Bonds without actually doing anything to approve them. Instead, they approve a "study committee" to review the issue next year. Without approval, it adds \$6.25 million to the pension liability that they do not pay for in the 2007 budget.

Not to mention that the budget raises the property tax levy by nearly \$9 million. That is too much for the hardworking men and women of Milwaukee County. I promised the taxpayers of Milwaukee County that I would not pay for the pension scandals of the past with higher property taxes and for the 5th straight budget, I kept that promise.

As the November 24 editorial stated, this is troubling. So why didn't I just line-item veto the budget and fix all of these problems?

First, the deficit problem (because of restoring positions without full funding) cannot be fixed with a line-item veto. The only way to fix this problem in the budget was to veto the entire document and redo it in a new version.

Second, claims of supporting some vetoes made by a few Supervisors ring hollow. Of the 32 amendments added to the county budget, only three had 7 or more votes in opposition – and those three only added up to \$447,342 in tax levy. That is hardly enough to cover the \$8.4 million increase to the tax levy included in the County Board version of the budget.

The other amendments passed with more than enough votes to override a line-item veto. Unless the Supervisors were going to flip-flop their position, none of the major vetoes would be sustained. Trying to apply pressure to the entire budget was a better strategy.

Having said that, the vast majority of items included in the final version of the budget are the same as those included in my original budget. That is why an overall veto was necessary to fix the bigger issues. Clearly this could have been accomplished in a short amount of time.

Now, the county budget for 2007 clearly belongs to the County Board. Still, we are professionals and we will take every reasonable action to insure that the budget is

balanced for the next year. We worked with the County Board in the past on individual items and I am sure that we will again in 2007.