

Reaction to County Board Budget

By Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker

The members of the Milwaukee County Board passed their version of a county budget on Monday, November 6 on a 14 - 5 vote. The "County Board Budget" raises the property tax by nearly \$9 million. My original budget had a 0% increase in the tax levy.

The "County Board Budget" raises the property tax by nearly \$9 million to fuel spending on a \$49 million pension contribution. They took the savings in 2007 from the use of a Pension Obligation Bond (POB) but they did not approve one.

My original budget took care of the pension liability with the use of POBs (like the State of Wisconsin and some 150 other governments). And unlike the "County Board Budget", I actually implement them.

The "County Board Budget" raises the property tax by nearly \$9 million to fuel spending on more government jobs.

I saved millions by outsourcing things like housekeeping, maintenance, mowing, fleet parts and maintenance. I'd rather have the savings to put into public safety and quality of life programs than into more government jobs that draw a pension.

The "County Board Budget" raises the property tax by nearly \$9 million to fuel spending on healthcare and yet they put little pressure on the unions to work with the county to make changes in health care costs.

My original budget provided leverage through positions to get our biggest union to the table to talk about lowering our costs. Now they have little incentive to bargain.

The "County Board Budget" raises the property tax by nearly \$9 million to fuel spending on an outdated aquatics system. Not only did they keep nearly all of the pools open, but also they are pouring money into pools that were built as far back as the 1930s.

My original budget called for moving the pools into the 21st century. All across America, parks systems are moving to aquatic centers and splash pads and away from deep well pools and wading pools.

The "County Board Budget" raises the property tax by nearly \$9 million to fuel spending on other odd items like restoring county funds on the Farm and Fish Hatchery for inmates at the House of Corrections.

My original budget did not waste tax dollars on programs that do not show real benefit. Inmates already have a chance to work on projects like a printing press and welding - areas that have practical uses in the real world and that actually save the county money.

The "County Board Budget" raises the property tax by nearly \$9 million to fuel spending and yet the "County Board Budget" will blow up early in 2007. Many of the positions that they restored did not include funding for the entire year. In other words, the "County Board Budget" will be out of balance early in 2007.

My original budget included some tough choices, but it was balanced for 2007. The "County Board Budget" depends on the unions agreeing to big givebacks, which is like buying a bigger house with the hope that you'll win the lottery.

In addition to raising property taxes by nearly \$9 million, the "County Board Budget" is not balanced for 2007 and it fails to adequately address the legacy costs of the county, which are eating up our budget like a virus. Thankfully, I have a BIG veto pen and I plan on using it to protect the taxpayers of Milwaukee County.