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Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors: Lipscomb calls for Fair Deal with Madison to solve fiscal challenges

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MILWAUKEE – County Board Chairman Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., is calling for a "Fair Deal" with the State of Wisconsin that addresses a growing imbalance in the tax revenue sent to Madison by Milwaukee County and what the county receives back in state support for mandated services.

Lipscomb has proposed establishing the "Fair Deal for Milwaukee County Workgroup," which will be asked to "identify and propose options for enhancing the long-term fiscal stability of Milwaukee County, enhanced public services and increased state funding of mandated services," and will be co-chaired by Lipscomb and County Executive Chris Abele, if approved by the County Board.

"Each year, we strive to pass a responsible budget that balances the needs of our constituents with the limited resources available to Milwaukee County, but each year that balance is harder to strike. Milwaukee County is overdue for a "Fair Deal" with the State of Wisconsin that properly funds mandated services, provides us the tools to meet our long term obligations and invests in essential quality of life services of health and safety, transportation, and parks," said Chairman Lipscomb.

State aid to Milwaukee County has remained essentially flat in recent years despite the fact that the county sends $400 million more in tax revenue to Madison.

Insufficient state support has exacerbated the challenge of resolving Milwaukee County's structural deficit, which county officials wrestle with every year. The structural deficit arises as the normal inflationary cost to continue providing public services at the same level outpaces the flatter growth rate of current revenue sources.

Lipscomb's resolution calls for forming the "Fair Deal for Milwaukee County Workgroup" immediately upon the adoption of the 2019 budget to begin developing proposals for reforming the "state-county funding structure, in order to sustain and improve basic public services; address long deferred maintenance; and permit needed investments in the sustainable future of our communities."

Lipscomb's proposal will be considered Monday, October 1, 2018, during a special 10:30AM Committee of the Whole meeting where the County Board of Supervisors will also receive a presentation by County Executive Abele on his 2019 Recommended Budget proposal.