

Mayor Rhodes-Conway: City of Madison passes 2021 budget with lowest levy increase in five years

Posted on Thursday, Nov 12, 2020

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Last night the Madison Common Council approved the 2021 Capital and Operating Budgets. The Council adopted a \$166.4 million Capital Budget and a \$349.5 million Operating Budget that was about \$28,000 below the allowable levy increase.

“This was a very difficult budget for the City of Madison. We started with a \$16 million deficit due to the pandemic, but ultimately we were able to move forward in a way that still supports critical investments in housing, homelessness, youth jobs and more. We also made progress on reimagining public safety with important new investments in a Violence Prevention Unit and an alternative crisis response team for behavioral health emergencies,” said Mayor Rhodes-Conway.

Achieving a balanced budget required a combination of service changes and reductions, employee furloughs, use of the City’s “rainy day” fund, and fee increases. “We are facing significant economic challenges,” said the Mayor, “and we employed a number of strategies and sacrifices to ensure we can continue to deliver core services to all Madison residents. I want to thank the Common Council for their efforts to strengthen the COVID relief fund, increase affordable housing and support street outreach for the homeless.”

“Taxpayers will be pleased to know that we accomplished all this while holding the property tax increase to the lowest level in over five years. The levy increase for City government will be 2.37 percent, the lowest since 2015. The 15-year average has been 4.3 percent,” said the Mayor.

Madison’s 2021 budget:

- Launches a COVID flexible fund that will help us deal with emerging issues including the eviction crisis. The City will work with community partners to allocate this \$725,000 to support families in our community.
- Increases our investment in affordable housing by stepping up investment in developer – supported affordable housing to over \$6.0 million annually, compared to just \$4.5 million annually two years ago. We are also working to support low and moderate income families to purchase and improve their homes through our Consumer Lending programs, and are inviting proposals for innovative ways to support affordable housing. All told, these programs will invest \$51.9 million in affordable housing over the next 6 years.
- Provides \$3.0 million for a new, permanent men’s homeless shelter with matching funds from the County.
- Creates a new Violence Prevention Unit in Public Health Madison & Dane County and doubles our investment in a public health and community-based approach to violence prevention in partnership with the County.
- Invests in the young people in our community with \$890,000 in youth programming and jobs for youth.
- Creates an alternative crisis response team that pairs a community paramedic with a specially trained crisis worker to respond to behavioral health emergencies.
- Fully funds the Civilian Oversight Board and Office of the Independent Police Monitor which will soon begin its work focusing on continuous improvement in policing policies and procedures.
- Provides \$21.7 million over the next 6 years to complete flood mitigation projects that will make Madison resilient against flooding, along with adding \$9.9 million for

energy

improvement projects getting us to our 100% Renewal Madison goals.