

Milwaukee County Executive Crowley: Signs \$21.9 million in fiscal health challenge initiatives

Posted on Wednesday, Jun 29, 2022

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MILWAUKEE, WI - In its latest Committee of the Whole session this month, the Milwaukee County Board unanimously approved \$21.9 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to be allocated in one-time investments that provide long-term cost savings for Milwaukee County. The investments are the results of a Fiscal Health Challenge spearheaded by the Office of Strategy, Budget, and Performance to find opportunities to generate cost-savings, revenue enhancements, and operational efficiencies. In addition, numerous projects address deferred infrastructure maintenance needs and provide energy efficiency savings which help advance Milwaukee County's climate action goals.

"When we began the process of allocating ARPA funding we knew we had to approach the process in a manner that enabled us to preserve access to critical services for our community and create a solid foundation for Milwaukee County to continue being the economic engine of the state," said County Executive David Crowley. "I applaud the Office Strategy, Budget and Performance, the ARPA Taskforce, and the entire County Board for their focus on investing in the financial health and security of Milwaukee County. County services - from parks, to transit, to mental health - are relied upon by hundreds of thousands of people each year. Our residents count on us to be able to sustain the services and programs that aim to keep Milwaukee healthy, working, and moving. By signing this legislation today, we help ensure critical services can continue for our community."

The Fiscal Health Challenge provided departments the opportunity to submit proposed projects that make limited, one-time investments in strategies that will impact the structural deficit caused by a perfect storm of stagnant state aids, state-

imposed limitations on revenue generation, and increased demand and cost for critical services.

Projects approved by the County Board include:

- \$1.5M for King Community Center Building Improvements: Updates to Community Center façade not updated since 1976, replacing a leaking roof, and replacing windows and doors with more secure, more energy efficient upgrades. This project provides funding for deferred maintenance that needs to be addressed in the County's capital plan, while also providing ongoing cost savings through energy efficiency upgrades and reduced needs for routine building repairs.
- \$69,300 for Boat Launch Electronic Pay Stations: Install new payment kiosks at boat launch sites to offer the ability to collect cashless payments and printed receipts to be displayed on customer dashboards which the Parks Department estimates will increase boat launch revenue by 20% (or approximately \$7,500 a year). The new pay stations will also provide staff time savings through automation and use of modern equipment.
- \$6.4M for Golf Course Irrigation/Cart Path Upgrades: Replaces irrigation systems at four golf courses and installs new cart paths at two County golf courses. The project will replace obsolete irrigation systems with modern energy efficient infrastructure that will also produce staff time savings. The Parks Department projects \$107,000 in annual cost savings and \$200,000 of revenue annually as result of the upgrades.
- \$2.7M to Convert Parkways to Bike/Pedestrian Trail: Converts two underutilized and difficult-to-maintain parkways to bike/pedestrian paths. Bike and pedestrian trails will reduce infrastructure maintenance needs in the future, while also encouraging healthy and active lifestyles.
- \$1.5M for Parks System-wide Boiler Replacements: Replaces outdated and unsafe steam boilers which remain in operation at five Parks buildings. Currently used steam boilers require physical maintenance every 3 days to ensure safe operations. The new heating systems will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create operational efficiencies, and provide opportunity for increased revenue generating activity due to building safety improvements.
- \$3M for Parks Energy Efficient Light Upgrades: Replaces inefficient and aging lighting that will in turn improve the safety of park users within County parks and parkways, particularly at night and early morning. Parks Department estimates 10-40 percent savings in electricity costs.

- \$696,534 for Milwaukee County Historical Society Record Management Improvements: Project is needed to help bring Milwaukee County in compliance with state law requiring changes to electronic record management. The change is also needed support a project to dispose of physical records, which will significantly defray the current cost of \$300,000 per year to store records off-site.
- \$125,000 for Department of Transportation Building Solar System: Complete a feasibility study of installation of solar panels on the roof of the Transportation Building.
- \$550,000 for Mass Spectrometer in Medical Examiner's Office: Allows the lab to decrease turnaround time and frees up the lab to generate revenue by soliciting toxicology work from other jurisdictions.
- \$1.9M for a new Point of Sale System at the County Zoo: Invests in a new point of sale system to achieve cost savings, provide expand payment options and increase revenues, and continue the Zoo's Main Entrance Modernization program
- \$1.8M to Create Milwaukee County Onsite Health Clinics (\$1.8m): Creates three onsite health clinics for County employees to increase access to care and reduce costs to the County. Through implantation of onsite clinics, the County could see a drastic reduction in medical claims through reduced urgent care and emergency room visits, combined with an increase in preventative care. Benefits to employees include employee retention, elimination of the most common barriers of accessing healthcare, including but not limited to; transportation, childcare, and the ability to take time off to go to the doctor.
- \$275,000 in Parks Building Occupancy Controls: Installs remote building controls and automated systems which will provide for more efficient management of Parks facilities. Parks Department estimates \$50,000 a year in cost savings on energy and staffing costs.
- \$1.2M to Zoo Network Upgrade: Improves internet capacity and speeds at the County Zoo. The current network has stability issues caused by aging and damaged equipment.
- \$227,260 for Lead Drinking Water Testing in County Facilities: Advance Milwaukee County's analysis of lead in water supply sources in County facilities. Projected to reduce risk, liability to the County, and improve health outcomes.