

Brown County Board: Seek opioid settlement funds or officer from Green Bay mayor following colossal failure

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(Green Bay, Wis.) – Brown County Board Chairman Patrick Buckley and Public Safety Chairman Keith Deneys are holding the Mayor of Green Bay Eric Genrich accountable for the consequences of the city's failure to have itself included in the payments being made to local governments to fight the opioid crisis.

Over the past year, several drug manufacturers and distributors have settled lawsuits that have resulted in billions of dollars being available to states and local units of government for battling the impact of opioids on their communities. Green Bay apparently attempted to join in the opioid litigation by pursuing a novel legal 'negotiating class' theory but, on September 24, 2020, the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against Green Bay's approach, stating that, ". . .*the negotiation class. . .simply is not authorized by the structure, framework, or language of Rule 23.*"

However, Genrich had nine months *after* that ruling to join the litigation that Brown County was already a part of, along with almost every county in the state and sixteen Wisconsin cities. Had Genrich taken that step, it has been estimated that the City of Green Bay would have been in line to receive approximately \$1 million to spend on local opioid remediation efforts. Brown County is currently projected to receive approximately \$8 million to use for opioid prevention, treatment, recovery, and enforcement efforts.

Buckley and Deneys are calling on Genrich to set aside the dollars for opioid

remediation that the city would have received had it joined in the litigation with Brown County, to use for opioid prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts, *or in the alternative* to dedicate an officer to work with the Brown County Drug Task Force (DTF) on opioid enforcement efforts. The city of Green Bay has seen double the number of opioid deaths than the rest of the county combined has experienced. Most recently, a 6-month-old infant died due to being exposed to fentanyl in the city of Green Bay.

At the direction of the Public Safety Committee, a letter was drafted by the Brown County Corporation Counsel to request *either* funds from the city for opioid remediation efforts, *or* the dedication of a police officer by the city to work with our DTF, which will be voted on by the full County Board of Supervisors at its April 19, 2023, meeting.