

THU PM Update: JFC approves no new state money for broadband expansion with federal money on way

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— The Joint Finance Committee passed today on putting new state money into broadband expansion grants as majority Republicans said they planned to rely on coming federal dollars instead for the work.

The committee's motion on the Public Service Commission, which passed 12-4, included no new state money for the grants after Dem Gov. Tony Evers had called for putting \$750 million into a new continuing appropriation. The gov then wanted to spend at least \$75 million annually on the grants.

Dems slammed the move, noting it would be the first time in a decade that the budget didn't include state money for expanding broadband infrastructure. The 201-23 budget included \$125 million for the work, well short of the \$495 in requests the PSC received for the grants.

Rep. Tim McGuire, D-Kenosha, called the committee's decision "embarrassing" considering how important broadband is to emerging technologies and the economy.

But Rep. Alex Dallman, R-Green Lake, countered the state doesn't have the capacity for such a large infusion of cash in the program considering the federal funds that are expected to come to Wisconsin and the number of workers available to lay the fiber network.

According to the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, the PSC expects to find out by month's end how much federal money it will receive in the latest round of funding for broadband work. The agency expects between \$700 million and \$1.1 billion.

The PSC estimates it would cost perhaps \$1.8 billion to expand reliable broadband services to areas of Wisconsin that currently lack it.

“This takes time,” Dallman said. “It isn’t just magic dust that we can throw down and we have fiber in the ground tomorrow.”

— The GOP-controlled Joint Finance Committee is proposing a \$2.3 billion capital budget for 2023-25, the co-chairs said late this afternoon.

Co-chair Mark Born, R-Beaver Dam, called the proposal “historic” and the largest in at least two decades. Half of the projects will be funded with cash from the state’s \$6.9 billion surplus.

The proposal is a big reduction from the \$3.8 billion that Dem Gov. Tony Evers had proposed. The gov had called for funding nearly \$2 billion of that with cash.

Ahead of today’s hearing, Born and Co-chair Howard Marklein, R-Spring Green, also announced JFC will:

*propose \$2 million to help cover the costs of Green Bay putting on the 2025 NFL draft. It will be part of a broader package for the Department of Tourism.

*include money to cover higher-than-expected costs to construct a new secure facility for the state’s most serious juvenile offenders in Milwaukee. But it won’t include money to construct a second facility and to plan for a third. Evers called for \$83 million to construct a second type 1 facility in Dane County and \$4 million to find a location for a third in northeastern Wisconsin.

Follow the Budget Blog for developments:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/category/subscribers-only/budget>

— The Joint Finance Committee will meet once next week, taking up five areas of the budget on June 8.

The agenda includes: Transportation, Corrections, Justice, Safety and Professional Services and Administration.

The committee has been targeting mid-June to finish its work on the budget. After next week, it will have more than a dozen areas to take up, including: Public Instruction, the UW System, Health Services, Children and Families, taxes and shared revenue.

See the hearing notice:

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/raw/cid/1728751>

— The budget-writing committee will also meet June 8 to take up a request from the Department of Natural Resources to release the funds needed to buy an integrated law enforcement records management system.

The system was authorized in the 2021-23 budget with the requirement the agency come back to the committee to request the money.

See the hearing notice:

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/raw/cid/1728749>

— U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin says she will back a bill to raise the debt limit after it cleared the House.

“Extremist Republicans were pushing for devastating cuts that would have hurt Wisconsin families — including gutting veterans’ benefits,” the Madison Dem said this afternoon. “We successfully protected our veterans, those on Social Security and Medicare, and investments in our Made in Wisconsin economy.”

That sets up another split vote from the state’s two senators. Republican Ron Johnson, of Oshkosh, said earlier this week he was a likely no on the bill, arguing it didn’t control spending enough.

See Baldwin’s statement:

<https://twitter.com/SenatorBaldwin/status/1664335793765097482>

— The Evers administration believes the \$447.5 million in federal COVID-19 funds it still had at last count won’t be impacted by the debt limit bill.

Gov. Tony Evers had said his administration was preparing for the possibility the federal government will claw back unspent COVID-19 funds as part of a debt ceiling bill. While he said agencies were studying the issue, he cautioned it wasn't clear how the remaining funds could be impacted because the bill wasn't done.

The gov's office said this afternoon that after reviewing the bill that cleared the House last night, the administration believes unspent funds already sent to the state will remain intact.

Earlier this spring, the Evers administration posted an update that it had \$447.5 million in remaining COVID-19 funds that had not been obligated or expended.

The gov's office added it remained to be seen how the debt ceiling bill would impact federal funds that had been set aside for states to seek for projects.

According to national media, the bill negotiated with the White House wants to claw back about \$27 billion in funding to federal agencies that was intended to combat the pandemic.

The National Association of Counties today posted an analysis of the bill that concluded it doesn't rescind State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund dollars.

See the chart on COVID-19 money spent and what remains:
<https://badgerbounceback.wi.gov/exploredata#reportsBBB>

See the NAC legislative overview of the bill:
<https://www.naco.org/resources/legislative-analysis-counties-fiscal-responsibility-act-2023>

— Gov. Tony Evers today said while he is “jazzed as hell” to celebrate Pride Month, it’s also important to consider the challenges LGBTQ+ people still face.

“Today we continue to see harmful, anti-LGBTQ rhetoric and legislation right here in Wisconsin, across the United States, and unfortunately, around the world — rhetoric that we know hurts our kids, emboldens hate and violence and threatens the safety, security and dignity of LGBTQ people,” Evers said.

Evers made the comments today while kicking off the first day of Pride Month by raising the Progress Pride Flag over the state Capitol, which he said sends a message to the community: “you belong here.”

He did not take questions from the media after the event.

The gov first raised a Pride flag over the building in 2019. Last year was the first time he raised the Progress Pride Flag, which includes additional stripes representing LGBTQ individuals of color, the transgender community, as well as those who are living with and who have died from HIV/AIDS.

Evers' office says the flag will fly over the East Wing and will not disrupt the other flags that regularly fly over the Capitol. The U.S. flag and Wisconsin state flag will continue flying on the pole above the Progress Pride Flag.

See Evers' release:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2023/gov-evers-announces-progress-pride-flag-to-be-flown-state-wide-in-celebration-of-pride-month-2>

— Sen. Mark Spreitzer, chair of the Legislative LGBTQ+ Caucus, says the caucus will reintroduce in the coming months a series of bills “to ensure that full equality is a reality in Wisconsin.”

The Beloit Dem said the caucus will introduce measures to:

- *Repeal Wisconsin's ban on same-sex marriage;
- *Update state statutes with gender-neutral language to recognize LGBTQ+ marriages;
- *Ban conversion therapy; and
- *Prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or expression.

The bills were part of the caucus' "2021 Equality Agenda," a package introduced last session.

The caucus today also started circulating a resolution recognizing June as Pride Month.

See the resolution:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/230601PrideMonthresolution.pdf>

— The Wisconsin Elections Commission today rejected a challenge to Republican Paul Melotik's nomination signatures for suburban Milwaukee's 24th AD.

Commissioners unanimously approved 342 of the 369 signatures Melotik submitted, despite

Assembly Democratic Campaign Committee Executive Director Morgan Hess' challenge to 294 of them. Hess argued some information on the papers such as the candidate's mailing address and party affiliation was obscured. State law requires at least 200 valid signatures to get on the ballot.

A photocopying issue resulted in the lack of printed information, commissioners and staff said.

WEC staff found most of the papers were "substantially compliant" with state law and recommended keeping all the signatures except those on one whole page. Staff also recommended striking signatures from nine other people because they do not live in AD24.

The one eliminated page lacked part of the header that shows Melotik is running in a special election.

Dem Commissioner Mark Thomsen said he appreciates the staff approach of looking for substantial compliance with state law over strict compliance.

"It just seems to me that we should be looking to expand democracy," he said. "And I sort of like our staff's approach on substantial compliance. And my thoughts are we should let the voters have an election and not take this election away."

Fellow Dem Commissioner Ann Jacobs said she would have preferred to strike 30 more signatures, but it wouldn't be enough to remove Melotik from the ballot, and she didn't want to hold the commission up. She called the papers "terrible."

"Almost every page has a failure in printing," she said. "And my gut is that if I were to see papers like this again, now that we've had a decision on it, and we can exhort the people listening, I don't think I would be voting in favor of a lot of these pages. Because this is not rocket science."

Republican Commissioner Bob Spindell recommended revising the instructions for printing and circulating nomination papers.

"I think we should put that they must be readable, must be well printed and so forth," he said. "Obviously, these were not well printed, and I think we maybe need to point that out, as Ann said."

The election to fill now Sen. Dan Knodl's seat is set for July 18. Dem Bob Tatterson, who lost a bid for the 24th AD in November, turned in 396 signatures.

Knodl, R-Germantown, won the 8th SD in an April special election.

BILLS CIRCULATING

LRB-2463/1, LRB-3407/1: performance grants based on improving employment rates for individuals on probation, parole, or extended supervision.

Track bills for free:

<https://notify.legis.wisconsin.gov/>

TOP HEADLINES

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: Ballpark official resigns after opposing Brewers spending request
<https://www.jsonline.com/story/money/real-estate/commercial/2023/06/01/amfam-field-official-resigns-after-opposing-brewers-spending-request/70276574007/>

AP: Governor raises gay pride flag over Wisconsin Capitol in show of support for LGBTQ+ community

<https://apnews.com/article/wisconsin-capitol-flag-lgbtq-pride-evers-conservatives-d56a723da1b9cc4488aa76df6e6b27f5>

WPR: United States files trespass lawsuit against Town of Lac du Flambeau

<https://www.wpr.org/united-states-files-trespass-lawsuit-against-town-lac-du-flambeau>

WPR: Baldwin pitches new approach to removing wolves from endangered species list

<https://www.wpr.org/baldwin-pitches-new-approach-removing-wolves-endangered-species-list>

AP: Senate races to wrap up Biden-McCarthy debt ceiling deal before default deadline

<https://apnews.com/article/debt-limit-biden-mccarthy-senate-house-default-b8c3566b0c9cb168d9706aa256e327f7>

Politico: Just don't boast: How Biden world sought to ace the debt ceiling standoff

<https://www.politico.com/news/2023/06/01/just-dont-boast-how-biden-world-sought-to-ace-the-debt-ceiling-standoff-00099671>

The Hill: Senate defense hawks hold up debt ceiling bill in protest of cuts, lack of Ukraine

money

<https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/4030399-senate-defense-hawks-hold-up-debt-ceiling-bill-in-protest-of-cuts-lack-of-ukraine-money/>

CBS News: Who voted against the debt ceiling bill in the House, and who voted for it?

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/debt-ceiling-bill-house-roll-call-votes/>

New York Times: Talk of Racism Proves Thorny for G.O.P. Candidates of Color

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/01/us/politics/republicans-race-scott-haley.html>

NPR: Mike Pence expected to announce 2024 run for president

<https://www.npr.org/2023/05/31/1145681323/mike-pence-expected-to-announce-2024-run-for-president>

The Hill: Senate passes measure to halt Biden's student debt forgiveness

<https://thehill.com/homenews/education/4030071-senate-passes-measure-to-halt-bidens-student-debt-forgiveness/>

FRIDAY'S CALENDAR

<https://www.wispolitics.com/category/events/>

- No events listed.

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