

A.J. Nino Amato – October 16, 2024
VoteNoMadison.com / 608-514-3317

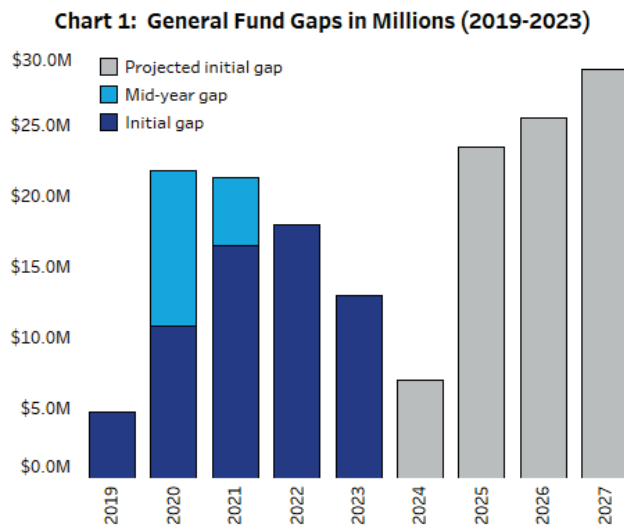
CITY OF MADISON DEFICIT FACTOR #1: Heads-In-The-Sand Leadership

The City’s finance departments shared the graph below (**Deficit factor #1**), with the mayor and city council members during the 2023 city budget process – confirms that the mayor and city council members were in fact, warned and knowledgeable of fiscal crisis during the 2023 city budget process, which would hit in 2025.

So contrary to Mayor Satya’s “rosy political financial spin” during the 2023 mayoral campaign – the mayor knew dam well there was a coming fiscal crisis, which would hit during the 2025 City Budget Process and after she was re-elected.

Worse yet, when the mayor was challenged by her opponent, Gloria Reyes during the last ten days of the election about the forthcoming fiscal crisis in the 2025 City Budget Cycle, **Mayor Satya opted to “gaslight the voters,” during the campaign, by saying**, “*Joe Biden is in the White House and Tony Evers is in the State House and the City of Madison will likely get more state revenue sharing dollars and more pandemic rescue funds in the coming years.*”

Gloria Reyes and those of us who have been following the growing structural deficit and the exploding city debt service under Mayor Satya – dam well knew that Governor Tony Evers did not have the bi-partisan support from the GOP controlled state legislature to give Madison more revenue sharing dollars. The mayor also knew, the U.S. House was taken-over by the MAGA GOP during the mid-term 2022 congressional elections – and it was a “fools bet” to even think, the Biden-Harris Administration would ever get another round of post-pandemic rescue funds for local units of government.



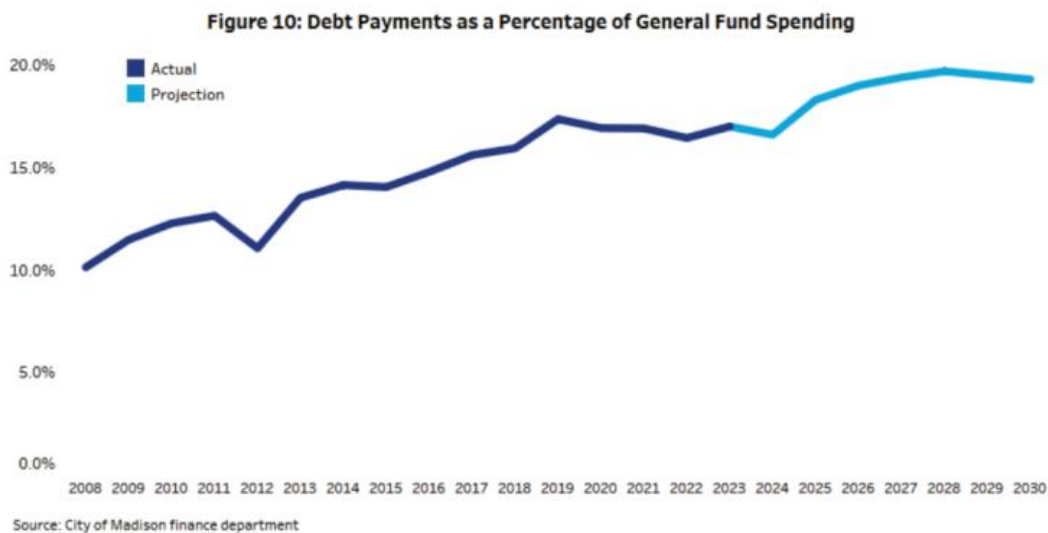
Source: City of Madison Finance Department; initial budget gap reflects projected shortfall between projected revenues and cost to continue (including scheduled wage increases and debt payments) at time of mayor’s proposed budget.

DEFICIT FACTOR #2: The mayor's exploding debt service!

During Mayor Satya's first City of Madison budget cycle, following her April 2019 election and 2023 re-election, the city's capital budget and the city's annual debt service started to explode, year after year.

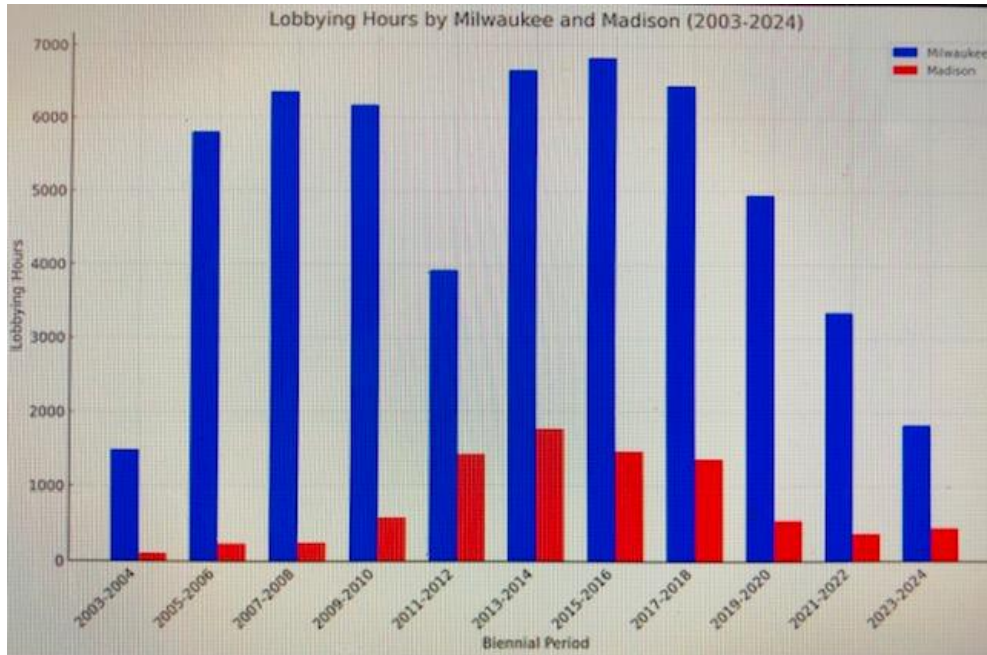
FACT: With the growing share of the annual increase in the city's property taxes and increase city service fees, ended up going towards the mayor's explosive annual operational costs to cover the capitol debt service payments. **The Wisconsin Policy Forum first warned taxpayers about the City of Madison's** rising borrowing in 2019 and the future structural budget deficit that was looming larger each year under Mayor Satya. With each of her record spending multi-million dollar politically motivated capital projects, the record increase debt service of \$63 million dollars in in 2025, impacts the annual operating budgets, increases the city's fiscal crisis.

FACT: ***"The mayor's proposed 2024 Capital budget was \$266.5 million capital expenditures, which represents a 27.1% decrease from 2023's record high of \$365.6 million."***



DEFICIT FACTOR #3: "The mayor is not walking her talk."

The Road to Hell is paved with career politicians who had good intentions but failed to act. For the first time in five years Mayor Rhodes-Conway is finally advocating in 2024, the need to lobby the Wisconsin state legislature to increase shared revenue options for the City of Madison, including a 2% sales tax, which was approved by the GOP legislature for the City of Milwaukee. **QUESTION:** ***If the City's Structural Budget Deficit was caused by the GOP controlled legislature – Why has the mayor spent more time over the last three months lobbying Madison taxpayers and voters when there is "no official mayoral meeting record" with Wisconsin Republican leadership since the mayor took office since 2019?***



FACT: The above graph was based on the City of Madison and the City of Milwaukee lobbying reports from the State of Wisconsin Elections Commission, which created Madison’s blogger, Alex Saloutos. To his credit, the above graph shows the City of Madison mayoral lobbying hours **(in red)**, compared to the City of Milwaukee’s mayoral lobbying hours **(in blue)**. It is obvious, that the City of Milwaukee’s lobbying efforts earned them bi-partisan support from Governor Evers and the GOP controlled State Legislature which gave the City of Milwaukee new revenue streams, which included a 2.0% sales tax in 2024.

Given the dismal lobbying effort by Madison’s former and current mayor between 2003 and 2024 – Why has Mayor Rhodes-Conway continued to blame the Wisconsin controlled GOP legislature for the city’s fiscal crisis, when she has failed to even meet with any of the GOP leadership over the last five years?

FACT: Based on Bonnie Roe’s most recent open records request, which is still posted on the City of Madison’s <https://Madison.legistar.com> reports until October 28, 2024 – and contrary to the mayor’s public statement at the city’s October 8th press conference, she was asked, “Whether her office talked with people on both sides of the political aisle, Democrats and Republicans, in her lobbying efforts with the Wisconsin State Legislature?”

- ***Her answer was, “So I can tell you that yes, we have talked to both Democrats and Republicans about the issues and will continue to do so.”***

FACT: According to the information provided by the Mayor’s Office in response to Bonnie Roe’s Open Records Request, actual meetings in reference to the state budget did not exist or were lacking. Another words, the mayor did not meet with Republicans.

ACCORDING TO THE OPEN RECORDS RESPONSE FROM THE MAYOR’S OFFICE. *“The Mayor, Mayor’s Office, and her lobbyist had NO meetings with Republicans regarding the budget. In fact, from January 2023 until September 2024 she did not have any budget meetings with either side of the political aisle.”* – Bonnie Roe

FACT: According to the open records request, only three meetings too place between the mayor and Democrat legislators.

- **Rep. Alex Joers (D)** on Sept. 17, 2024, at 2:30 pm
- **Rep. Francesca Hong (D)** on Sept. 6, 2024, at 1:30 pm
- **Rep. Mike bare (D)** on Sept. 23, 2024, at 1:15 pm

- **Rep. Samba Baldeh (D) between Sam Mungar (mayor’s chief of staff)** on July 11, 2024.
- **Rep. Samba Baldeh (D) between Deputy Mayor Linda Vakunta, in 2023** (unknown date in 2023).
- **Mayor Rhodes-Conway did email two letters to Governor Evers (D) with no record of a follow up by the mayor or members of her staff.**

DEFICIT FACTOR #4:

NO leadership experienced in fiscal management and cost-effective budgeting by the mayor, members of the City Council, and their staff.

Mayor Rhodes-Conway and the City Council leadership and their staff have unfortunately demonstrated a total lack of sound fiscal management and best practices or a willingness to establish annual performance-based measures budgeting (zero-base-budgeting), which would determine, the cost-effectiveness and outcomes of city services and programs over the last five years.

Fiscal Insanity by our elected officials who – “Keep doing the same thing over and over again and expect different results.” – Alber Einstein

The mayor and the City Council made no effort to balance the city’s annual budgets over the last five years, despite the annual warnings by the city’s finance department, community leaders and public policy experts, who appeared before every budget hearing, asking them to spend less and balance the city’s operating budget, without using one time funds.

Instead, the City Council, with the mayor’s support, during their first Common Council meeting in January of 2024, attempted to vote city council members a 60% increase, which failed by one vote.