

The State Of The County



- We are (still) headed for strategic, prioritized cuts and potential reductions in levels of service in order to provide the long-term stability and sustainability that we currently do not have.
- We have been in the position of having to budget by triage for at least the last nine budget cycles.
- Every department has needs beyond current funding levels.
- Staff continues to demonstrate that they can handle their responsibilities in a way that is a benefit to the board, the county, and the public despite those needs.
- The county has kept its head above water, but **economic and demographic forecasts** and trends in high-cost, mandatory services and programs highlight the need to mitigate risk in a proactive manner
- (i.e. get ahead of the curve).

Looking Ahead...

- 74% of U.S. Business Economists expect a recession in the US by the end of 2021.
 - **National Association of Business Economists, August 2019.**
- Nationwide, income inequality is the highest it has been since the census began to track it in 1967.
- Counties are experiencing an increase in crisis contacts, and county staff are stretched thin with the increasing number and complexity of these contacts.
- **State-To-County: As of the 2019 budget, counties are funding 63% of child welfare services statewide; state statute requires a funding level of 9.89%.**

Looking Further Ahead?

- **The lack of a short- or long-term plan** for county facilities coupled with ongoing budgetary shortfalls and a reliance on referendum funding has built the county a fragile house of cards with maintenance costs that will only increase.
- Some Big Unanswered, Expensive Questions:
- County-City Building
- Law Enforcement Center
- Jail
- Health Care Center
- Gilfry Center
- County Annex
- Downtown Library

The Good



- The Emergency Management Office has performed admirably in the face of several hazardous weather events and declared disasters. The Highway Department was also very involved in disaster recovery. **Overall, the county and municipalities did well and we've all learned a lot for next time.**
- Net New Construction came in higher than expected.
- **Departments did a good job of meeting the 0% target.**
- The Business Park has a lot of big projects going in.
- The 'H2O' properties continue to sell rapidly.

The Bad



- The salary plan remains below ‘market’ rates in many areas.
 - Personnel costs will likely need to increase for the County to remain competitive and to retain employees.
 - **The county’s vacation policy is having a negative impact on hiring.**
- Water issues remain a frustrating issue for all involved.
 - The county is an active participant in regional conversations.
 - Everyone is waiting to see what comes of the Speaker’s Task Force and the Year of Clean Water. Both likely to provide jumping off points for next steps.
 - **We should be looking at what additional funding will be a part of the county’s efforts in this area.**

The Ugly

- **Levy caps are still in place.**
 - **Tools to generate revenue are virtually non-existent.**
 - In 2011, Act 32 intensified the levy cap by changing it to 0% or Net New Construction.
 - This is our 9th budget under that, particular, regime.
- Governor Evers proposed giving counties a minimum 2% increase in his budget. Portage County came in just over that number, and we are still falling short of current needs.



(Some) Department Snap Shots

ADRC



- The ADRC's new scratch kitchen offers a new and improved menu for its customers. There have been some hiccups along the way, but the overall change has been impressive and is increasing in popularity.

Circuit Courts

- The Justice Coalition continues to tackle important issues in Portage County. Ongoing conversations surrounding domestic violence, non-monetary bail, and current programming highlight how Portage County excels in this area.

Corp. Counsel



- **Children in Need of Protection and Services (CHIPS) and TPR cases are still a priority.** A position was previously added to this department—with some HHS funding—to help reduce the ongoing out-of-home placement expenses in the HHS budget. **The funding from HHS goes down each year.**

County Clerk

- **Increased funding may be required for election related forms and educational publications due to continuous legislative changes.** The same can be said for election security plans.

District Attorney

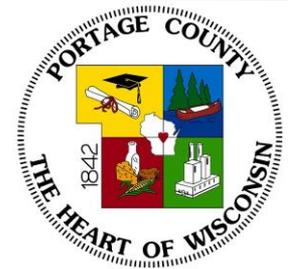


- The required work of the 980 committee for housing sexually violent persons when individuals is ongoing.
- DA has continued to increase diversions for low-risk offenders.

EMS

- **Contract negotiations completed for next four years.**
- Addressing the ‘corners’ of the county and other harder-to-get-to areas is an ongoing concern. **Expanding and reinforcing EMRs countywide is part of the solution.**

Facilities



- Utility costs continue to rise despite our best efforts of energy conservation.
- Any new building project—or even renovation—should include a renewable energy project.
 - We have received SolSmart’s Bronze Designation.

Family Court Commissioner

- Family Law Information Center (FLIC) increased fees in response to a budgetary concern. Still a very affordable service given what county residents have access to.

Parks



- Primary focus has been on recovery from the disaster.
- Revenues will take a small hit, but overall the department is making positive, reasonable changes for park users.

HHS

- Hiring a new psychiatrist has been very impactful.
- Mandated, without limits services like CPS will continue to pose difficult challenges for HHS staff and will also affect the budget moving forward. **There are many mandated services in HHS that already pose significant budget/staff challenges.**

Health Care Center



- The Health Care Center decertified an additional 10 beds bringing our licensed bed total down to 70 beds.
- **Reimbursement opportunities and ‘payer sources’ all continue to work against us more often than they work for us.** Regulatory framework continues to intensify, and the new Patient-Driven Payment Model or “PDPM” is the latest addition to that framework.

Highway

- **Wheel Tax revenue is accumulating and will enable the county to avoid borrowing for road projects every year.** Borrowing every other year instead saves tax payers money in borrowing costs and interest payments.

Solid Waste



- Recycling market is still severely depressed.
- Advanced Disposal was bought out by Waste Management.

Justice Programs

- **A request for more Treatment Alternatives and Diversion Program (TAD) grant funding has been completed.**
- Diversions and delayed prosecution continue to save money while providing better outcomes for county residents. That said, some people also refuse to enter programming.

Sheriff's Office



- **Ongoing conversations about the EMS Coordinator position and how we can change it up to make it a more effective part of our countywide EMS system.**
- Negotiations with Deputies under way.

Treasurer

- Has re-engaged several area banks to help facilitate the tax payment processes. The response has been very positive across the board.

Goals for Budget Process



- Same as last year.
- **Establish a prioritized budgeting process with the board.**
- Use CPI and market rates to adjust fee structures.
- Consolidate when possible to reduce personnel over time.
- Delay filling new positions.

- **Evaluate non-mandated, non-self-funded programs.**
- Reduce levels of service where we can.

- Increase transparency & collaboration.
- Create more stability and predictability.
- **Slow, steady and achievable growth that we can afford.**



THANK YOU.

**QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND
SUGGESTIONS ARE ALWAYS
WELCOME.**