



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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2016 Budget Address – For Immediate Release

Chairman Kubicki, Vice-chairwoman Breunig, members of the County Board, circuit court judges, elected officials, distinguished guests and fellow citizens of Kenosha County.

It is my pleasure to present to you the 2016 Kenosha County budget.

The budget before you tonight permits us to meet our many Federal and State mandates, and continues our efforts toward strengthening our infrastructure, which leads to economic development, and, in turn – motivates the private sector to create jobs. Jobs are still the #1 issue on people's minds.

The Kenosha County market continues to be the red hot Industrial Development Market. We lead the region and the Midwest when it comes to economic development.

None of us in this room are surprised that Kenosha County is the place where people and businesses want to be.

Some of this is because of the work we do here, the strategic planning we do every day, and will continue to do as part of this budget.

But, this budget hasn't come before you without challenges:

On the state and federal level, legislative and policy changes have real dollar and programmatic impacts here. Just to name a few:

- Elimination of the Local Government Property Insurance Fund, resulting in at least a \$45,000 increase next year.
- A \$400,000 increase cost for foster care based on a State-required assessment screening tool.
- Hopefully delayed for a year, is a state requirement to increase information on the tax bills, which our Treasurer Teri Jacobson estimates will be a cost of more than \$200,000 annually in 2017.
- A freeze on Medical Examiner fees and passing along the full cost of indigent burials to the counties.
- A \$48,000 loss in revenue that had funded an intoxicated driver program.

Those are more than three-quarters of a million dollars in hard cuts and there probably will be more.

Among the other wildcards are:

- A still unknown cost for state-approved drug testing for income maintenance recipients, if it receives federal government approval; and
- The potential unfunded costs of bringing 17 year-old first time, non-violent offenders back to the juvenile justice system. While the public policy change may have strong merits, the Legislation does not address the costs to counties, which we expect would be very significant.

We have, or will, absorb those impacts to meet those Legislative challenges.

Now that you have seen how some of the outside state and federal pressures have affected our county, let me now explain what this budget before you tonight includes.

This budget limits the increase for operations to 1.3%, with two-thirds of that increase going to law enforcement.

This budget puts more money into mental health.

As you are aware, our costs have been erratic after local emergency hospitalization options were drastically reduced.

We will, however, be proactive and implement some new practices.

Starting in 2016, we will work more collaboratively with Sheriff David Beth and his department, Racine County, our attorneys, the judicial system, the county's Health Division and Human Services Department, and contracted agencies to provide proven mental health treatment options to those who need it at a workable and reasonable price point. This budget moves this forward.

This budget also provides for the start-up of a new collaborative initiative, a collective impact model that helps communities improve educational outcomes with a cradle to career initiative.

We would be one of the partners, along with Kenosha Unified School District and area businesses to work with students strategically to set them toward a productive career path.

This budget continues to aggressively pursue road projects that keep us ahead of the infrastructure curve, and not chasing it, like others.

We will do our annual paving to keep county highways in top condition.

This budget provides funding for KABA's High Impact Fund for continued support of countywide economic development.

We will continue to bring to you in this budget cost-effective opportunities for improving our Downtown foot print, in our Civic Center Campus.

It makes sense to continue to be tactical in our approach to address our long-term space needs. With your support, we addressed the deferred maintenance long overlooked to the exterior of our County Courthouse. It is now beautiful.

With this budget, we begin the process of doing needed renovation to the courtrooms. We plan to renovate the courtrooms one at a time. The first one is in this budget.

This budget also provides for initial project planning to provide adequate space for our countywide Emergency Operations Center, now tucked in a corner of the underground parking structure of the Public Safety Building without cell phone reception.

We currently do not have the appropriate space or infrastructure to meet the needs of the county or participating municipalities during emergencies.

This is a public safety issue.

Part of that project will include relocating the Medical Examiner offices from the Job Center and the morgue, currently at Kenosha Hospital, to the PSB.

We thank United Hospital System for assisting us when we desperately needed to move the morgue out of the old, behemoth Brookside building.

We can improve the critical chain of evidence by putting all of the ME services under one roof.

Spring of 2016 will be the groundbreaking for the Brookside Care Center addition and renovations.

Thank you for your continued support of this project, which will ensure the stability of our county nursing home for generations to come. Bids are going out in November.

These infrastructure improvements, as the others you have supported in the past, will continue to help enhance our quality of place.

This budget also provides for additional public safety and redundancy safeguards:

- Backup generators for the PSB and the Human Services Building
- Completion of the Public Safety Software project
- The county's portion for critical hardware upgrades for Joint Services' 9-1-1 system

In addition to continuing to address infrastructure, we make investments in our employees.

This budget continues to address succession planning, staff retention and quality recruitment efforts.

We have many, many awesome employees. They seek excellence and it shows. Here one recent example:

- The Kenosha County Ceridian Implementation Team received the 2015 Customer Success Award for its work transitioning from a legacy mainframe payroll processing system to a single, easy to use application for Human Resources, Benefits and Payroll. There was quite a team involved.

This major initiative resulted in moving the last department from paper time cards to an automated timekeeping system.

No more paper timecards!

All of our 24-7 operations are now using automated scheduling software, which will allow them to more effectively manage their staffing.

Both of these systems will allow us more real-time access to information, which will create many more efficiencies countywide.

This budget holds our workforce insurance costs flat again with some adjustments to the plan.

Work continues on the market study for Corrections staff, and this budget allows for a market-based Classification and Compensation study for the rest of our staff starting in January. This is a critical process to retain and attract employees.

Compensation and benefits are, no doubt, a key component for recruitment and retention.

But, just as critical, studies show, is training for effective management.

We need to continue to foster an organizational culture that people want to be a part of and one that will inspire and encourage more effective work environments at every level of our operations.

This budget provides for strong leadership and supervisory training programs.

Our Information Technology Division, which constantly seeks to lead the way on innovation for county services, will launch an internship program in partnership with local colleges and universities with a modest amount of money.

This will provide meaningful work opportunities for students in developing critical skills to prepare them for the workforce.

Innovation continues to be a fundamental building block to achieve efficiencies in county government.

As with prior years, the 2016 budget will include strategic investments in technology.

While prior years focused on core infrastructure (servers, routers, switches) and key business applications (such as Consolidated Health, Tax Billing and Land Info), the 2016 budget is focused in two areas:

Focus #1 – We are ready to undertake the replacement of key financial systems that help run the County. The key financial system also referred to as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) includes our general ledger, accounts payable, purchasing, fixed assets and budget.

Our existing system has been in place for nearly 20 years and is time to move to a system that provides new capabilities and functions in line with today's requirements.

Focus #2 – Making what is Good Great. With the investments made in previous years, we have a sound and robust technology platform.

The vision of Good to Great is to refine and enhance key technologies that have been previously installed. This includes:

- Our Human Capital Management system that supports payroll and our benefits. Next, we'll focus on recruitment and eliminate paper employment applications, as well as smooth out the new employee process.
- The Enterprise Content Management system really made great strides in 2015.

We have been able to convert over 2.5 million paper documents to electronic images.

For the DA's files alone, progress has been made to scan or destroy over 300 banker boxes of records that no longer clutter the shelves.

The goal is to continue expanding the scope to other areas in the County.

While there are a number of projects identified, I am confident that IT will continue to deliver exceptional service to the County as it has demonstrated in the past.

This budget limits the increase for operations to 1.3%, with two-thirds of that increase going to law enforcement.

This budget lowers the tax rate from \$5.14 to \$5.12 per one thousand dollars of valuation on a home valued at \$100,000. That's a decrease on the total tax bill for county purposes for that home from \$513.72 to \$512.41 – a decrease of \$1.31.

FYI, if the City of Kenosha retired its three oldest TIFs – those started in 1979, 1989 and 1994 – the tax rate would drop to 9-cents per thousand of valuation, or about \$9 dollars on a home valued at \$100,000.

Hopefully, the city will put some of those TIFs on the tax rolls.

This budget addresses State and Federal changes and continues some of the most cost effective and efficient ways to perform our statutory and federally mandated services.

Our message is clear: Kenosha County is the place where businesses want to be and people want to live because we continue to make the important infrastructure investments that assist to attract private sector businesses and jobs; we strive for excellence by investing in our employees to ensure we are attracting and retaining the best and brightest and provide solid and consistent leadership for all our departments and divisions; It's all of us, working together, to continue to make Kenosha County stronger, that safeguards our continued vibrant future.

Thank you all the members of the County Board for all you do, and may God Bless Kenosha County.

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