



2010 Budget
Message to Finance & Audit Committee
November 4, 2009

Today, I appeared in front of the County Board's Finance and Audit Committee (as I do each year) to talk about the upcoming county budget.

In my comments, I mentioned that wages and benefits make up 48% of the costs of county government. I also referenced the report from the Public Policy Forum that projects major structural deficits into the future if significant structural changes are not implemented in this budget.

With that, I thanked the committee members for already approving many of our reforms. So far, the Finance and Audit Committee members have signed off on reforms that save just over \$17 million. My original plan would save \$32 million and I encouraged the Supervisors to go even further, so we could save enough money to eliminate a wheel tax or a tax levy increase in the budget.

Furthermore, I asked them to reconsider votes against some of our innovative measures to contract out for services. In total, our ideas would save \$5.8 million and maintain (or even improve) services. They would save \$1.7 million even if they just approved our idea to contract out housekeeping and security. Nearly every private company in the county contracts out for their cleaning services and both the Federal Courthouse and the Reuss Federal Building contract out for security. We should too.

While some observers thought that the members of the Finance and Audit Committee would not vote for any of our wage and benefit reforms, they did and I applauded them for it. Now, I hope that they will go a step further and approve enough reforms to remove the wheel tax and the property tax levy increase left in the budget.

Scott Walker
Milwaukee County Executive