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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Willie L. Hines, Jr.
Ald. Michael Murphy
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Council Adopts 2010 City Budget that Maintains Vital Services, Lowers Solid Waste Charge

The amended 2010 city budget adopted today by the Milwaukee Common Council included an average 8% cut per department, but maintains key city services and a lower solid waste charge than what was proposed by Mayor Tom Barrett.

Crafted from among what Ald. Michael J. Murphy, chair of the Council's Finance and Personnel Committee, called "dire choices" seen during the most severe recession of the last 50 years, the adopted budget restored one of two Milwaukee Fire Department fire companies slated to be cut in the mayor's proposed budget and significantly reduced proposed 2010 furlough days for all Milwaukee Police Department personnel.

The Council approved a \$42.54 quarterly solid waste charge for properties of one to three residential units – significantly less than the mayor's proposed charge of \$44.22 per quarter. Also, Council members voted to freeze their own wages for two years (the same freeze affecting most other city workers) and restored funding cuts to the city Arts Board.

The 2010 tax rate approved by the Common Council is \$8.90 per \$1,000 of assessed value – a 10.1% increase from the \$8.09 final tax rate for 2009. The tax levy rose 4.4% – going from more than \$236 million for 2009 to \$247.4 million for 2010. The mayor's budget called for a levy increase of 4.4%. The new tax levy means that the owner of a \$150,000 home will see a \$121.50 increase in the city portion of the tax bill, from \$1,213.50 to \$1,335.

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Common Council Adopts 2010 Budget/ADD ONE

Common Council President Willie L. Hines, Jr. said the 2010 budget process showed “how key players delivered under significant pressure.” “I want to commend and thank the members of the Council’s Finance and Personnel Committee – under the leadership of Alderman Murphy – for their diligence and hard work in the face of the most difficult of choices and options,” President Hines said.

“But I also want to thank the Pension Board, AFSCME District Council 48, the (Barrett) Administration, the Council and others who found savings, and who made difficult sacrifices to help us come up with this budget,” he said.

Ald. Murphy said he believes the Council’s adopted 2010 budget “makes improvements and efficiencies” that will be seen by Milwaukee residents in areas like recycling, sanitation and solid waste collection, and fire protection services. He said increases in costs such as energy and health care – in addition to the continued effects of the economic downturn – trumped any and all difficult city budgets in recent memory.

“It was very tough sledding, but I think the Common Council fulfilled its legislative responsibility by improving the mayor’s budget,” Ald. Murphy said. “In the end the Council worked well together to make the necessary reductions that would enable the city to provide the services citizens expect at a price we can live with.”

-30-