
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Common Council makes cuts in approved budget, preserves property tax relief

The 2013 amended city budget approved today by the Milwaukee Common Council provides some property tax relief for residents, while holding steady on crucial city services.

The 2013 tax levy approved by the Common Council is \$250.39 million, up 0.96 percent from 2012's \$248 million levy, and \$20,878 less than the Mayor's proposed 2013 budget levy.

The 2013 tax levy means the owner of an average Milwaukee home will see a \$42 decrease in the city portion of their tax bill, which with a modest \$17 increase in fees for solid waste and other services, provides \$25 in relief to homeowners.

Alderman Michael J. Murphy, chair of the Council's Finance and Personnel Committee, said that for the fifth year in a row, the Common Council has found ways to reduce the Mayor's proposed tax levy, while still maintaining public safety and services.

"This level of fiscal prudence is vital, as so many of our constituents still face difficult economic situations," Alderman Murphy said. "I'm very pleased that we are able to continue the trend of reducing the budget that is proposed by the Mayor."

While the Council's budget was originally slated to defund all aspects of a proposed intergovernmental agreement with Milwaukee County for public safety services, Alderman Murphy proposed a substitute amendment that would allow the city to negotiate with the county through the end of the year to try and reach a deal over which entity answers 911 calls from mobile phones. Currently, those responsibilities are split between the city and the county. But Alderman Murphy said the level of service could be increased significantly if a deal was reached where the county would pay the city to handle all mobile 911 calls.

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Common Council Adopts 2013 Budget/ADD ONE

The Council also approved changes to the Mayor's proposed budget that increase the amount of overtime funding available to the Milwaukee Police Department by \$350,000, and fund several more public health nurse positions with the goal of further reducing the infant mortality rate. With the urban forestry division facing a backload of tree stumps in need of removal and replacement, the Common Council increased funding for those services by \$500,000.

Common Council President Willie L. Hines, Jr. said the Finance and Personnel Committee and the Council handled the 2013 budget with efficiency and responsibility.

By cutting funding for a police squad car and five police motorcycles, the Common Council was also able to divert \$104,000 into a new Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative special fund. And in an effort to expand public safety and diversity in the Fire Department's workforce, Council members signed off on an amendment that finds funding for 13 additional Fire Cadet positions, to start with the scheduled class in September 2013.

"The Council worked diligently to pass a budget that provides relief to taxpayers, while maintaining the level of services our residents deserve," President Hines said. "That is no small feat, and I commend the leadership and guidance of Alderman Michael Murphy and the hard work of the Finance and Personnel Committee."