



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR INFORMATION CALL

March 20, 2016

Ald. Terry Witkowski
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Initiative seeks to ramp up effort to collect millions owed to City of Milwaukee, taxpayers

Monday news conference set for 1:15 p.m.; Council's Judiciary and Legislation Committee will hear file at 1:30 p.m.

The Common Council could create an **Outstanding Debt Work Group** to push for ways of collecting tens of millions in debt owed to city taxpayers under proposed legislation to be heard tomorrow (**Monday, March 21, 2016**) by the Common Council's Judiciary and Legislation Committee at **1:30 p.m. in room 301-B at City Hall**, 200 E. Wells St.

The measure (Council file number **151687**), authored by **Alderman Terry L. Witkowski** and co-sponsored by **Alderman Ashanti Hamilton** and **Alderman Nik Kovac**, will be the topic of a **news conference** involving all three aldermen in the third floor Council Chamber Anteroom at **1:15 p.m. Monday**.

Alderman Witkowski, chair of the Council's Public Safety Committee, said the city has four separate contracts with third-party vendors to collect delinquent taxes, forfeitures, judgments and fees owed the city, yet as of November 2015 the city's parking collections vendor reasonably expects to collect only \$16.3 million of the \$34.6 million owed for unpaid parking citations.

"The city is paying different fees for the same collection services under these vendor contracts, so the gravity of the (collection) problem is immense," Alderman Witkowski said. "Very simply, we need to look more closely at our policies and practices for collecting delinquent taxes, forfeitures, judgments and fees owed the city, to make sure we are using the best possible practices to recover those millions in outstanding debt."

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Outstanding debt collection/ADD ONE

Alderman Witkowski said recent changes in State of Wisconsin statutes make it possible to contract with the Wisconsin Department of Revenue to collect delinquent taxes, forfeitures, judgments and fees owed the city at no charge to the city. He said the Department of Revenue may be more effective in collecting unpaid debt, especially unpaid parking citations, owed by parties living outside the City of Milwaukee.

“This initiative (Outstanding Debt Work Group) is important for the future, because a review and possible update of the city’s current outstanding debt collection practices may result in more effective debt collection at a lower cost, and benefit city residents by making more non-property-tax revenue available to fund city services,” Alderman Witkowski said.

Monday’s Judiciary and Legislation Committee meeting will be televised live on the City Channel (Channel 25 on Time Warner Cable and on AT&T U-Verse Channel 99) in the City of Milwaukee. It can also be viewed via streaming video on the city website at www.city.milwaukee.gov/Channel25.