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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Amended 2019 budget creates watchdog position, adds health outreach positions, and establishes neighborhood COP houses

The Milwaukee Common Council today adopted an amended 2019 City of Milwaukee budget in the amount of about \$1.54 billion. The budget would add specialized positions to tackle the most pressing health-related issues facing the city.

It establishes an Inspector General Position to act as a watchdog for city agencies including the Health Department and adds four Community Outreach Liaisons and one Health Project Coordinator while creating a \$425,000 special purpose account to address elevated blood level follow-up and lead hazard remediation, family and community health visits and communicable disease prevention.

“The struggles we went through this budget process speak to structural elements facing the City of Milwaukee including poverty, infrastructure issues, health and public safety,” said President Ashanti Hamilton. “Despite these challenges we worked collaboratively to allocate our resources in the most impactful manner possible. I hope the State of Wisconsin will be a collaborative partner as we continue sound fiscal stewardship while addressing those challenges.”

The budget also establishes four neighborhood COP houses in areas of high crime. Those centers will be operated in partnership with the Milwaukee Police Department and Milwaukee Promise Zones organizations.

The budget also adds \$1 million to the Local Street Reconstruction Program to address areas plagued with potholes and pavement issues.

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Additional budget amendments include a \$200,000 seed fund to encourage entrepreneurialism in providing healthy food options in food deserts; \$25,000 to expand Big Clean MKE from its inaugural four aldermanic district clean-up to a city-wide initiative; and directing city agencies to collaborate with community groups for better monitoring, security and maintenance of city-owned vacant homes.

Finance and Personnel Committee Chair Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs said she looks forward to the impact this budget will have on the City of Milwaukee. “And hopefully some of the things that we have added through our amendments will help to improve the quality of life for the people that we each represent and will help to make Milwaukee a better place.”

An average homeowner will pay \$52 more compared to 2018’s budget. The levy total will be \$280,995,907 which was a 3.4% increase from the year before.

The budget will now head to Mayor Tom Barrett who will have until the close of business on November 26 to sign the budget.

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