



Thomas Report



Milwaukee County Supervisor Johnny L. Thomas, 18th District
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E-NEWS

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Finance & Audit
(Vice-Chair)

Economic &
Community
Development

Personnel

YOUR OPINION COUNTS

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with your thoughts.

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE : January 27, 2009
TO : Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker
FROM : Milwaukee County Supervisor Johnny L. Thomas, 18th District
SUBJECT : **Potential year-end deficit driven by excessive overtime costs**

This memo is in response to the overtime and spending restrictions that were announced earlier this month. I also understand that these actions action may continue into 2009. While I understand we face lower projected sales tax and property tax collections, the mismanagement displayed by both you and your department heads has also contributed to a year-end deficit that is considerably higher than it otherwise would have been.

In particular, it's disappointing that staffing problems at the Behavioral Health Division and the House of Correction, which were both under your control in 2008, led to higher overtime costs. I believe that the hiring of additional workers over the past year would have been a more cost effective tool in addressing these overtime issues.

Doesn't it seem contradictory that, as the economy slipped into a recession and shortly before you issued a hiring freeze, you doled out raises to department heads already earning more than \$100,000 per year? While the County Board was unable to stop all of these raises, I'm pleased that, after facing widespread criticism from the public, you ultimately withdrew the 26% pay raise you proposed for your Chief of Staff. This move will save taxpayers \$18,581.

Every year, the County Board returns a portion of its budgeted funds to Milwaukee County. In fact, since 2002, the Board has returned more than \$1.3 million in unspent dollars. Last year, this and other sound money-savings actions developed by the County Board contributed to a \$7 million surplus. This was accomplished without any hiring or spending restrictions. I believe it is irresponsible to order these types of restrictions with only 26 days remaining in 2008. I respectfully ask that, in the future, you work with the County Board earlier in the year to avoid excessive departmental deficits.

Good managers keep a close eye on the bottom line year-round. I welcome any efforts to improve our relationship and be more proactive as we head into 2009. We can begin that collaboration by working together to convince the State to support the sales tax that county voters recently approved. We can work together to ensure essential maintenance and improvements to our parks, transit system, and emergency medical services.

Johnny L. Thomas
Milwaukee County Supervisor, 18th District
Vice-Chair, Finance and Audit Committee

cc: Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

NOT FIT TO GOVERN

Leadership can be difficult to define, but anyone can spot the absence of it. County Executive Scott Walker's narrow view on the current economic struggles facing Milwaukee County clearly reveals his lack of leadership and his inability to serve as a competent County Executive, let alone Governor. As the economy worsens and balancing the budget becomes increasingly difficult, Scott Walker's short-sighted behavior will compound the challenges that our residents face. At a time when Milwaukee County suffers from the nation's second highest unemployment rate, we need money to create jobs and fuel our economy. Instead, the County Executive is turning his back on County residents.

Under Scott Walker's mismanagement, the county's infrastructure has not been adequately maintained, resulting in the crisis we face to renovate our parks and repair our transit system.

As the Vice Chair of the County Board's Finance and Audit Committee, I support Chairman Lee Holloway's decision to submit a stimulus plan on behalf of County residents. We need to stimulate jobs and bring lasting value to our County. In the absence of any form of leadership from the County Executive, the County Board has responded as true stewards of the county in an effort to address critical infrastructure needs and plan for the future.