



Office of the County Executive

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**COUNTY EXECUTIVE JONATHAN DELAGRAVE PRESENTS 2017 BUDGET**

(As prepared for delivery)

Mister Chairman, Madam Vice-Chairman, members of the County Board, Youth in Governance Representatives, distinguished guests, and residents of Racine County.

We live in turbulent times – political campaigns filled with negative rhetoric, riots sparked by fatal police shootings, homegrown terrorism, and slow economic growth. Against this backdrop, we as a nation tend to focus on what divides us rather than our common bonds. Too often we focus on the screen of the device in our hands, rather than engaging our neighbor in discussion. We lose sight of the “big picture.”

I’m grateful for the chance to highlight our common bonds tonight. The 2017 budget is rooted in the core belief that together we can expand opportunity for all of Racine County.

The “big picture” of Racine County is wide, varied, and attractive. Our scenic lakefront and harbor is forever linked to the invaluable farmland sprawling west. The promise of urban centers is enhanced by their closeness to vast rural communities and vice versa. The amenities of the recreation and cultural sector are connected to – and catalyze – our economic vitality. As County Executive, my job is to capitalize on these local assets and share that “big picture” with others.

[PROMOTIONAL VIDEO]

You see why I'm upbeat about Racine County. This budget speaks not only to past accomplishments, but also shows our commitment to tackling big projects. Let's not be passive or timid. Now is the time to be responsive and bold.

I've emphasized three things as County Executive: a Racine County ready workforce, mental health services, and I94 economic development. These are not new challenges. But meeting them means upending the status quo and approaching old problems in new ways.

Through the leadership – and inspiration – of director Hope Otto, our Human Services Department (HSD), which includes Workforce Solutions and Behavioral Health, embodies the vision for a Racine County ready workforce and the expansion of mental health services. HSD has total operating expenses of over \$46 million, yet only has \$5.6 million on the tax levy, and over \$5 million in reserves. HSD remains on the frontlines of providing critical services and is at the forefront of innovation.

Here's a great example: HSD was awarded a competitive Family Foundations Home Visiting Grant of over \$900,000. In partnership with the Central Racine County Health Department, United Way's Imagination Library, and other community agencies, we are co-facilitating the universal Racine Family Connect Visitation program. This team will help families who want to improve children's health, nutrition, and developmental outcomes.

It's never too early to put our children on a path to opportunity. This supportive program at the start of life dovetails into the mission of Higher Expectations: aligning community efforts to focus on a 4K pilot program and kindergarten readiness.

We are as close as we've ever been to have the County unemployment rate match the state rate. In fact, our research shows that only 895 more people would need to be gainfully employed in Racine County to close the gap with the state. Newly-branded Workforce Solutions and Manager Mark Mundl are

instrumental community partners in improving the likelihood that young adults will succeed in their careers. It's no secret that increasing the number of individuals with a degree or certificate means, not only improved employment opportunities for the individual, but additional income and positive contributions for the County. To that end, we are hiring a GED Outreach Coordinator. We've also hired an Employer Engagement Program Manager who will coordinate the direct involvement of employers in the Racine Unified School District's new high school model, Academies of Racine.

Yesterday, after months of hard work and collaboration between The Grind, Workforce Solutions, and the Building and Facilities Department, we launched our own internal employment opportunity at the Dennis Kornwolf Racine County Service Center. Training Grounds is a full service coffee shop that provides real-world training for individuals to develop and refine the critical skills necessary to succeed in the private sector.

We've also made great strides in our mental health services and, for that, I'd like to recognize Aging and Disability Services Manager Michelle Goggins, and Youth and Family Division Manager Kerry Milkie, and their respective staffs. The County was awarded an 8-year, \$1.5 million grant to advance the Improving Children's Mental Health through School and Community Partnerships project. The quality and timeliness of behavioral health services also continues to see improvement. I am proud to say we can treat people same day/next day with our Alcohol and Drug Addiction outpatient therapy, versus industry norms of 4.8 days.

Another major shift is the new Racine County Alternatives Program (RCAP). RCAP is the bond-monitoring and pre-trial assessment program that was previously contracted to an outside vendor. Although we still contract out the monitoring services, Racine County is realizing new efficiencies through the direction and assistance of our Criminal Justice Coordinator, Boyd Schwartz.

We've made great strides, and I believe this is only the beginning of what could be accomplished in Racine County. Picture this: an innovative, one-stop, community campus to provide integrated mental health and social services to our residents. This new Racine County Health Recovery Campus Center would be anchored by

the existing Dennis Kornwolf building and all the services contained within. The first phase of this campus project would include a major expansion of mental health services – including our SAIL Crisis Stabilization program and outpatient services.

Future plans include ADRC offices, the participation of key community partners and non-profits, including the UW-Extension Nutrition Program, and the possibility of a future Senior Center, all in close proximity. Our vision is to have an inclusive, smart, and sustainable campus for wrap-around services for those in need. We are in the midst of a space-needs study of our service model and exploring the possibilities of utilizing neighboring buildings around our Taylor Avenue facility.

There are no increased tax dollars in 2017 for this proposed expansion. We expect to use revenue from the Behavioral Health Department and reserves from our Human Services Department to get this project through the first phase.

An example of the benefits of such an integrated service model comes in the form of an attendee at the recent Convoy of Hope event. There, a woman shared her struggles concerning an ex-spouse, disabled son, and limited social security. Within a few hours, she had a resume and a lead on employment, an appointment to learn about the various benefits for which her son may qualify, and an advocate to assist with her property and financial entanglements with her former spouse.

I'm proud of our staff, led by Human Services Navigator Curt Pruitt, who gave their time and expertise to the Convoy of Hope. This woman, who entered the event with fear, doubt, and insufficient income to support her household of four, left brimming with hope and optimism. With your help, my vision of the Health Recovery Campus Center is to recreate this service model as an everyday occurrence for residents of Racine County.

Last year, I foreshadowed the challenges facing Ridgewood Care Center to stay sustainable without a significant county tax levy increase. True to past promises, the County is navigating its options and conducting its due diligence deliberately

and wisely. Where that will lead is not yet certain, but the level and caliber of serious interest from reputable buyers speaks to the tremendous work Administrator Liam Doherty and his staff, along with Building and Facilities, have done in operating and maintaining Ridgewood. We will continue to navigate the future of Ridgewood responsibly and transparently.

Turning to the Public Works and Development Services Department, Director Julie Anderson and her staff continue to deliver high quality services. The recently upgraded GIS system helps realize abundant benefits and the County is teaming up with municipalities to utilize the same software for permit tracking and other land use coordination. Register of Deeds Tyson Fettes continues to proactively upgrade the GIS mapping tool to better serve our residents by, among other things, adding maps of medication drop-offs, bike paths, and parks.

Road maintenance remains a high priority and, at this time, the impact of the state transportation budget on Racine County remains to be seen. Increased local funding will enable us to address many of the necessary maintenance projects and repairs on our roads. But we implore state leaders to recognize that further delays on the I-94 project make it difficult to attract new investments and retain businesses along this critical stretch into Wisconsin. We completed the Highway K/Deback Farms industrial park. We want to continue that momentum.

The 2017 budget will include repaving 2 miles of County Highway U from County Highway K north through Raymond Town Center to County Highway G. We will also reconstruct 1.6 miles of County Highway X from County Highway Y to Bankers Road at a cost of \$1.5 million.

The Reefpoint Marina enjoyed another banner year, continues to be recognized as one of the premier marinas on the great lakes, and, for the first time in many years, has occupancy of over 500 boats. This represents a nearly 50 percent increase since we made the forward-looking decision to retain Siegel-Gallagher for marina operations.

In anticipation of the expected closure of the Western Racine County Service Center in Burlington by early-2018, we partnered in a joint facility study to help determine the best course forward. We remain committed to providing efficient

and necessary services to all of Racine County and that includes a strong presence on the west end.

Last fall, I introduced Finance Director, Alex Tillman, and some big plans for the Finance Department. The removal of siloes from finance areas and creation of a single umbrella to serve departments and the legislative branch has been a necessary departure from and improvement on past practice.

We selected a new enterprise resource planning system, Tyler Munis. This change will bring us up to date with cloud based technology and government focused financial and payroll/HR systems. The initial roll out of financials will be in January 2017, with Payroll and HR following shortly after.

We are evaluating our banking and investment service needs, and a competitive bid will ensue in the coming year. This will enable us to obtain the best rates and service for the County, while giving local institutions the chance to compete for our business.

The Finance Department and HR Department, under Director Karen Galbraith, are working together to collaborate with the City of Racine and Racine Unified on a shared employee clinic. The City and County have operated a joint clinic for the last ten years, and the addition of Racine Unified is a prime example of intergovernmental cooperation at its finest – eliminating duplicated services, expanding clinic offerings and hours, and saving taxpayer dollars on employee health insurance costs.

Corporation Counsel Jon Lehman and his staff have become more integrated into critical 24/7 operations in high-risk areas, and that has led to improved oversight on policy development and risk awareness. In collaboration with our insurance consultants, M3, Corp Counsel has also better positioned the County through new cyber liability coverage and more reliable property insurance coverage.

The lifeline of any efficient business today is information technology. I commend our IT Department, led by Director John Barrett, as they have been instrumental in virtually every County-venture: our new e-mail, a successful new website and

brand, the introduction of Microsoft Office 365, Bodycam installation, Tyler Munis implementation, and the replacement of Public Safety Servers.

Our County Clerk, Wendy Christensen, is spearheading the upgrade of the voting machines in each municipality in Racine County. This project is long overdue, as our voting machines are over 20 years old and will no longer be supported with maintenance agreements or certified parts by the end of 2018.

A special thank you to my entire Cabinet: Julie Anderson, Hope Otto, Karen Galbraith, Liam Doherty, Jon Lehman, John Barrett, Alex Tillman, Jackie Bratz, and M.T. Boyle. The 2017 budget represents their consistent hard work, laser focus, sharp pencils, and faithful vision. I couldn't ask for a better team.

I am also grateful for the support and partnership of you, the County Board, and our County elected leaders: Sheriff Chris Schmaling, County Clerk Wendy Christensen, Register of Deeds Tyson Fettes, Treasurer Jane Nicholai, Clerk of Courts Sam Christensen, and District Attorney Rich Chiapete. Like the immortal Coach Lombardi, I recognize that "Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work."

We listen to our constituents, and I listened to you, our County Board, and your clear and repeated pleas to address the Sheriff's Office overtime issue. Therefore, this budget incorporates an increase of jail staffing by ten correctional officers. The Jail has been chronically understaffed for years, which has the direct effect of high-turnover and high overtime costs.

This is not just a crisis in waiting. It is a crisis now. In 2015, 18 correctional officers resigned, with many attributing their resignation to the forced non-stop overtime. On a single day in June, there were 16 overtime shifts in the Jail. This is not abuse, it is the grim reality. The Jail is woefully understaffed in comparison to similar sized jails and the proposed staffing increase will bring us more in line with those other jails. It will reduce turnover, reduce liability and save money.

I also commend the Sheriff's Office for its continued proactive approach to the heroin epidemic. This conversation has gone national in the past year, but we

have been engaged in it for years. I am adding two new metro drug personnel to further combat this scourge on society.

Earlier, I hinted at big ideas. Allow me to highlight some additional investments aimed at transforming our communities, adding vitality, and creating employment opportunities.

I am pleased to support the Racine County Economic Development Corporation (RCEDC) and to capitalize the County's high impact Revolving Loan Fund with a \$750,000 investment. The RLF has helped finance several recruitment and expansion projects this year. These projects include Cree, United Natural Foods, Kerry Ingredients, Seda Packaging, Unico, and, most recently, Norco. These RLF dollars have resulted in more than \$126 million in capital investment in Racine County. With three new Class A industrial buildings available and a new business park in Caledonia to fill, it is necessary to continue to invest in this success.

It is also time to invest in our youth. The world of youth sports is changing, and I think now is the time to cultivate the promise and potential of our youth by modernizing our sports and recreational facilities. Independent organizations, competitive regional leagues, travel teams, and tournament play are the new reality of youth sports. The explosion of tournaments and travel leagues can have a significant economic impact for hosting communities.

As it stands, Racine County sits on the sideline while this opportunity passes by. We have no field turf baseball fields or viable venue to host quality baseball tournaments. Union Grove High School has the only turf football field in Racine County. We have no ice rinks.

Enter Pritchard Park.

Pritchard Park is located on HWY 11, east of Regency Mall. Looking at the vast park, you will see an underutilized grass field, rusting goal posts, a couple of pedestrian baseball diamonds, and a parking lot. I see a site bursting with potential to become a cornerstone of Racine County youth sports.

Picture this: a state-of-the-art turf mixed-use football field with bright lights, a concession stand, and an adjacent practice field. To the north: four field turf baseball fields with hitting tunnels to host youth tournaments. In winter, two small skating rinks for hockey and family outings. A Sports Hall of Fame path winding through the woods with fixed exercise equipment. And possibly an all-accessible, all-inclusive miracle playground for children and families of any age and ability.

I have included \$2.25 million in the budget for the first stage of making this vision a reality. I am confident the mall and neighboring businesses will benefit with additional visitors and tourists to the area. Future tournaments and sporting events will serve as gateway experiences for first-time visitors, inspiring subsequent trips and vacations to the area.

Of course, my vision of a thriving health recovery campus and a youth sports complex depends on you – not just the County Board, but residents and public partners alike. These projects require community investment from businesses, non-profits, private and public schools, and individual citizens. I am committed to their success and I welcome your ideas and input at future listening sessions.

Prudent and responsible budgeting has gotten us to this point. Like past budgets, this budget continues prudent, responsible principles of financial management. Therefore, after six consecutive years of keeping the countywide tax levy flat, the time has come to increase revenue. I propose increasing the budget by \$900,000 dollars in order to pay down our long-term debt. I am very proud that Racine County has not increased the budget for the last six years. I also believe that we need to take care of our financial responsibilities today and make sure we do not leave a burden for the future generation. Anything less is short-sighted.

In 2017, we are bonding \$6.85 million, while maintaining \$15.8 million in unrestricted reserves and a total reserve balance of \$51 million. We continue to earn a strong AA1 bond rating.

In conclusion, it is time to look forward and build upon the solid foundation that has been painstakingly laid by years of hard work. Investments in good

government, economic development, skilled workforce, public safety and mental health, and the promise of our youth: these are our shared obligations to the community and at the core of the budget I submit to you. I ask for your support in meeting our deepest challenges and expanding opportunities for all of Racine County.

Thank you.

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