

April 19, 2023

TO THE HONORABLE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS
OF THE BROWN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Ladies and Gentlemen:

**RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE STATE TAKE ACTION
IN SUPPORT OF COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS**

WHEREAS, Brown County, like other counties in the State of Wisconsin, is currently subject to various unfunded state mandates, costing Brown County over \$15,000,000 per year. In 2022 alone, Brown County had to pay *over \$250,000* for attorneys to represent defendants in situations where a case requires a public defender and none are available, resulting in our County Courts being forced to appoint defense counsel at Brown County (instead of State) expense; and

WHEREAS, Brown County's criminal justice system has been woefully underfunded, understaffed, and overworked for nearly two decades. The County is currently experiencing a ballooning amount of unresolved cases, including a backlog of over 4,000 unissued referrals, which makes the task of recruiting local prosecutors and public defenders extremely difficult; and

WHEREAS, it is vital that Brown County be provided with the tools and investments it needs from the State of Wisconsin to ensure it can meet its constitutional obligations to all Brown County citizens currently impacted by the slogged scales of justice, and **we ask that the State, when developing its 2023-25 biennial budget, reimburse Brown County \$250,000 for the 2022 court appointed attorney fees it paid that should have been covered by the state**, and consider the requests outlined in Addendum 1 to this resolution, incorporated into this resolution via attachment and reference; and

WHEREAS, we also ask that the State consider other ways to help make our criminal justice system more efficient, by including resources in its 2023-25 budget to finance a state study of the criminal justice system to identify inefficiencies, and then to use Brown County as a test case regarding suggested improvements before considering possible state wide implementation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Brown County Board of Supervisors hereby directs that a copy of this resolution and its addendum shall be emailed by the County Clerk to the following for consideration: **1)** the Governor of the State of Wisconsin; **2)** State Senators and State Representatives representing Brown County; **3)** the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Administration; **4)** the Wisconsin State Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance; and **5)** the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Fiscal Note: This resolution does not require an appropriation from the General Fund.

Respectfully submitted,

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Approved By:



TROY STRECKENBACH,
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Date Signed: 04/20/2023

23-065R

Authored at the Direction of the Public Safety Committee
Approved by Corporation Counsel's Office

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ROLL CALL # 141

Unice Vote Taken

Motion made by Supervisor Deneys

Seconded by Supervisor Antonneau

SUPERVISORS	DIST. #	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	EXCUSED
ANTONNEAU	1	X			
DE WANE	2	X			
NICHOLSON	3	X			
JACOBSON	4	X			
THENO	5	X			
LEFEBVRE	6	X			
FRIBERG	7	X			
BORCHARDT	8	X			
EVANS	9	X			
VANDER LEEST	10	X			
BUCKLEY	11	X			
LANDWEHR	12	X			
DANTINNE, JR	13	X			

SUPERVISORS	DIST. #	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	EXCUSED
AVERY	14	X			
FULLER	15	X			
KASTER	16	X			
VAN DYCK	17	X			
HOPKINS	18	X			
ADAMS	19	X			
COENEN	20	X			
SCHULTZ	21	X			
PETERS	22	X			
SUENNEN	23				X
SCHADEWALD	24	X			
LUND	25	X			
DENEYS	26	X			

Total Votes Cast 25 X
 Motion: Adopted Defeated Tabled

ADDENDUM 1

Brown County requests for State consideration when developing the 2023-25 State Budget are as follows:

- 1) Increase starting prosecutor and public defender pay to \$35.00 per hour;
- 2) Increase all current prosecutors and public defenders pay by \$7.76 per hour;
- 3) Fully fund merit-based pay progression at up to 10% per prosecutor;
- 4) Add 7 to 10 positions within the Brown County District Attorney's Office;
- 5) Increase the number of State Public Defender staff located in its Green Bay office;
- 6) Provide \$5,000,000 annually as reimbursements to counties across the state, to cover their costs of providing court appointed counsel to defendants that qualify for Public Defender representation when the Public Defender's Office does not appoint counsel;
- 7) Increase the 'jury demand fee' to between \$96 and \$192;
- 8) Increase the 'service by mail fee' to \$7 or more;
- 9) Increase the 'foreign judgments fee' to \$25;
- 10) Increase the 'transcripts from judgment' fee to \$10;
- 11) Increase local assistance payments by \$2,700,000 to cover the increased costs of providing court interpreters and Guardian ad Litem (GALs);
- 12) Create legislation to encourage more video conferencing (e.g., for all status conferences and pretrials), which would increase the pool of attorneys willing to take (even out of county) cases, and would save on costs of transporting defendants; and
- 13) Contract directly with law firms to streamline the public defender appointment process as the State of Minnesota currently does.