



# Dane County Board of Supervisors Monthly Update August 2020

## Members named to Public Protection and Judiciary Committee Fines and Fees Subcommittee

A subcommittee was appointed to lead a comprehensive review of fines and fees assessed in the civil and criminal justice systems. The subcommittee will review the current fines and fees assessed in the civil, human services and criminal justice systems and determine how Dane County can reduce or eliminate these fees, fines and costs. The review will include an analysis of the financial hardship and justice hardship placed on African American individuals, individuals of color and low income individuals and their families because of fees. The Subcommittee was established earlier this year and includes 14 members representing various roles in the criminal justice system as well as members of the public. The subcommittee will meet monthly, starting in September, and hopes to be completed within a year. It will make a report of findings and recommendations to the Public Protection and Judiciary Committee and the Health and Human Needs Committee.

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## COVID-19 Update and additional funding for Public Health

The Board voted Aug. 13 to include increasing staff capacity and testing resources for Public Health Madison and Dane County. Resolution 2020 RES-147 adds 57 LTE staff and provides overtime pay for staff reassigned to contract tracing and testing. Of those 57 positions, 17 are Disease Intervention Specialists, 20 are COVID-19 Response Specialists, and 20 are bilingual COVID-19 Response Specialists. The resolution adding these positions also includes an additional \$1 million for testing. An additional resolution creates a Deputy Director position for PHMDC to increase leadership capacity to shape the strategy of the response over the short, medium, and long-term for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Funds for these positions will come from the federal CARES Act funding Dane County received a few months ago.

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## Board makes Juneteeth a paid holiday for employees

The Board voted Aug. 13 on a [resolution](#) making Juneteenth a paid holiday for Dane County government employees. The resolution states Juneteenth is a day to reflect upon how the community can work to create a better, more equitable future for all members of the community, one where African Americans in Dane County and everywhere can realize the freedom and equality first promised by the Emancipation Proclamation over 150 years ago.

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## **Analysis to be completed on Dane County's cash bail assessments**

A 2018 report from Dane County Circuit Court Judge Nicolas McNamara to the Public Protection and Judiciary Committee found that from 2012-2016, Dane County released individuals charged with a crime on signature bonds rather than cash bail 81% of the time. That means 19% of criminally charged individuals were assessed cash bail. That percentage is well below the national average. According to the Brennan Center for Justice more than 70% of individuals incarcerated in jails across the nation are there pre-conviction, because of their inability to post cash bail. The report from Judge McNamara will be used as a starting point for the Dane County Criminal Justice Research and Innovation Team to review all criminal misdemeanor and criminal felony charges from 2016 to 2018 when cash bail was assessed, pulling data from the Dane County Circuit Court, the Clerk of Courts, and the Sheriff's Office. The analysis will look break down individuals who were assessed bail based on race, gender, and age, among several other factors. It will be completed in-house, and has no budget impact.

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## **Resolution creating strong alternatives to incarceration**

Board leaders announced Aug. 2020 the introduction of a resolution endorsing far-reaching criminal justice reforms, including the development of a behavioral health triage center and a Dane County community justice center. This resolution brings to life recommendations developed by community and stakeholder collaborative bodies of the past, as well as the voices of current stakeholders and community members. A critical component of providing services for those experiencing a mental health crisis is ease of access without needing to involve law enforcement. A mental health triage center in Dane County would be a resource not just for people in police custody, but also a space available to anyone having a behavioral health crisis—underscoring that care available at a triage center should be accessible, compassionate, and equitable. In addition to the triage and restoration center, the resolution also calls for planning and piloting of a community justice center to provide an alternative vehicle for justice in Dane County.

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## **Redistricting Commission application deadline extended**

The application period for the Dane County Redistricting Commission was extended until September 11 to allow for a more diverse, representative pool of candidates. The 11-member commission will be appointed by Chair Analiese Eicher and Clerk Scott McDonell. Under Section 59.10 of the Wisconsin Statutes, county governments in Wisconsin must create new county board district boundaries every ten years, immediately after the federal census. The Commission is tasked with submitting at least three draft supervisory district maps to the County Board no later than May 31, 2021. Anyone interested in applying for the Dane County Redistricting Commission needs to complete an application available on the Dane County Planning and Development Department's website:

<https://www.danecountyplanning.com/Projects/Redistricting>

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