

To: County Board Chair Eicher
From: Carrie Springer
Re: August 2020 State and Federal review

Initiatives from Governor

On August 24th the Governor issued Executive Order 84 calling for a special session of the legislature on the use of force by law enforcement. The order called on the legislature to consider nine proposals in this area on a number of topics including: creating use of force standards, prohibiting no-knock warrants and some choke holds, and increased training for law enforcements. The legislature gaveled it in, but took no action so far. The Speaker announced a task force on the issue. Community members can apply to be part of the task force until September 18th.

Governor Evers also issued Executive Order #87 in late August ordering the flag at the Capitol to be flown half-staff to honor Dane County Deputy Sheriff Treadwell.

All other executive orders in August dealt with the response to the emergency in Kenosha.

Governor Evers appointed Nia Trammell and David Conway to the Dane County Circuit Court on August 25th. Trammell was serving as the deputy secretary for the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services before her appointment and Conway was serving as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Western District of Wisconsin.

The administration also announced near the end of the month that they submitted an application for the FEMA Lost Wages Assistance program. If approved, it will pay for an additional \$300 per week to unemployment recipients. This is the program offered as somewhat of a replacement the original \$600 federal additional unemployment supplement that has expired.

The administration also announced \$32 million to support testing on UW System campuses. This is separate funding just for testing and is in addition to the \$95.6 million in CARES Act funds set aside for the System. UW-Madison received \$8.3 million to pay for testing, equipment, and staff as well as state support to buy 134,000 tests for their campus.

Governor Evers' task force on student debt released their report and made a number of recommendations including loan forgiveness and counseling, financial literacy education, a Borrower Bill of Rights, tax relief for those with debt, and increasing need-based aid.

He also issued nine more pardons in August, bringing his total to 56.

Other state items:

- DOR and the Fiscal Bureau announced in late August that tax collections dipped less than expected. Overall they were down less than 1% which meant \$105.9 million more was transferred into the state rainy day fund, bringing that total to \$761.8 million. That means a budget repair bill unlikely to be needed to balance the books.
- DATCP announced COVID-19 Food Security Network Support Grants and a few in Dane County received awards including the City of Stoughton Food Pantry, Community Action Coalition, Deerfield Community Center, and Extended Hands Pantry.
- The PSC announced they are further extending their shutoff moratorium until Oct 1st.
- The DNR pulled back its emergency rule regulating PFAs in fire-fighting foams after the Natural Resources Board voted 7-0 to postpone a decision on the emergency rule because it received pushback from industry groups.
- The Department of Military Affairs hired their newly created sexual assault response coordinator.

Federal news

Congress and the White House remain at an impasse on the next round of COVID relief. The Senate could not get enough votes to pass what they are calling a “skinny” bill this week. The bill would only provide about \$500 billion total and left out many important issues such as another stimulus check for individuals and relief for state and local governments. It included the \$300 a week increase in unemployment, another round of funding for the Paycheck Protection Program, and liability protection for schools and businesses – a top priority for the Senate leader. The administration signaled earlier in the week that they would be comfortable with a \$1.5 trillion price tag, but after Leader McConnell put the “skinny” bill on the floor without the votes to pass it many are now doubting there will be a final agreement before the election.

Both the House of Representatives and the Senate brought the head of the USPS in for questions about delivery delays and reports of sorting machines being dismantled. The House has already passed a bill to provide \$25 billion outside of the large COVID relief bill being debated. It passed on a bipartisan vote with 26 Republicans joining Democrats (257-150). The Senate has not taken up the bill yet.

Senator Baldwin and Representatives Pocan, Moore, and Kind sent a letter to the President asking him to restore full federal funding to Wisconsin for the National Guard work being done to help with COVID testing. The WI National Guard mission was extended, but on August 3rd the President announced a cut in federal support for many states that will force states to make up the difference.