



## State of the County

Sheboygan County has 875 employees working in 19 departments administering over 200 programs and services. The total budget for 2024 is \$191.5 million, comprised of \$53.7 million in property tax levy and the balance coming from state and federal revenue, private pay, and fee or service charges. The four largest departments are Health and Human Services (\$49.9 million), Transportation (\$29.5 million), Sheriff (\$25.5 million), and Rocky Knoll Health Care Center (\$17.4 million) and account for nearly 2/3rds of the entire County budget. The remaining departments include: Building Services, Clerk of Courts, Corporation Counsel, County Clerk, Court Commissioner, District Attorney, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Medical Examiner, Planning and Conservation, Register of Deeds, Treasurer and Real Property Listing, University of Wisconsin-Extension, and Veterans Services.

### Key Accomplishments and Milestones of 2023

**Completed Construction of Sheboygan Broughton Marsh Dam**—The Planning & Conservation Department oversaw the completion of a new dam at the Sheboygan Broughton Marsh Park, a \$3.3 million project replacing the previous dam constructed in 1938. The Marsh complex is 14,000 acres and contends with rapid water level fluctuations from large rain events. With the previous dam configuration, these rapid fluctuations uprooted invasive cattails, leading to the need for their costly removal. The new dam will permit more water to pass and allow for better drawdown capabilities which strengthen cattail roots to withstand rapid fluctuations. Other benefits include public access enhancements, new areas for launching kayaks, and improved flood control. Sheboygan County and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources were the largest funders of the project, but significant funding was also provided by Ducks Unlimited, the Sheboygan County Conservation Association and its member clubs, Sustain Our Great Lakes, Fund for Lake Michigan, and the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

**Fixed Base Operator (FBO) Services Provided at the Airport**—Sheboygan County has been actively preparing to provide FBO services at the Sheboygan County Memorial Airport, ensuring a successful transition in early 2024. Officially known as Lake Breeze Aviation, the FBO will offer a full range of services to pilots and passengers, and provide the highest level of customer service during their visit to Sheboygan County. These operations will not rely on tax levy and any revenue generated will be reinvested back into the Airport. The County is committed to the continued development of the Airport, and building a sense of community by bringing together those in the aviation community and beyond.

**New Camera Systems for Law Enforcement**—The Sheriff's Department equipped every sworn officer with a body-worn camera and every marked patrol vehicle with a new state-of-the-art camera system which will record all interactions with the public. The project included secure cloud storage along with efficient means to share the video files with prosecutors, other law enforcement agencies, and the public. This equipment increases transparency with the public, offers additional evidence to aid with criminal prosecution, and helps to alleviate an over-burdened criminal justice system. The total cost of the project was \$432,104, which was funded by a Department of Justice grant and American Rescue Plan Act funds.

**Expansion and Start-up of Highest-Need Human Services**—In response to increased referrals, the Health and Human Services Department bolstered some of the most intense treatment services, such as

the Birth to 3 program, Comprehensive Community Services, and Children's Long-Term Support Services. Additionally, the Public Health Division's community outreach workers continued to expand their activities to engage with the Hmong and Spanish-speaking communities. In addition, two new positions were added, a jail transition planner and a youth therapist, which are funded by settlement payments from opioid epidemic litigation. Further, two American Rescue Plan Act-funded initiatives launched this year: The Mobile Crisis Co-Response program, which includes mental health staff in law enforcement squad cars, and the Families + Neighbors Together program, which focuses on neighborhood-based prevention efforts to support families and reduce the likelihood of the need for intense services.

**New Asphalt Plant Constructed**—The Transportation Department maintains 450 miles of roads and 152 bridges, which are vital to our quality of life and economic development. Operating an asphalt plant provides essential, cost-effective material for county and municipal road work. The former plant, in service since 1985, produced millions of tons of asphalt material. Due to its age and the inability to purchase repair parts, it needed to be replaced. In 2023, construction of a new 300 tons per hour asphalt plant was completed. It will run more efficiently, use up to 40% more recycled material, have a higher capacity, and allow the County to continue to provide economical road maintenance for years to come.

**Expanding Services at Rocky Knoll Health Care Center**—Following numerous facility renovations and the declared end of the National Public Health Emergency for COVID-19, Rocky Knoll slowly increased its census in the past year, allowing more residents to receive short- and long-term care services. Rocky Knoll opened a new classroom for the nurse aide training program, which will continue to add caregivers to the workforce and brought dining services in-house to improve overall food quality and service. As a testament to staff performance, Rocky Knoll once again received a five-star rating from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

**Enhancements to Sheboygan County Facilities**—The Building Services Department completed a \$102,000 exterior renovation to the Taylor House at the Sheboygan County Museum, replacing porch boards, steps, column bases, and the cupola roof, as well as painting the porches, wood-siding, garage, and house trim. Additionally, Building Services replaced the Detention Center's inmate flooring, a \$470,000 project. The Law Enforcement Center received a new roof, replacing the original from 1981. Rocky Knoll Health Care Center had a shingled roof replaced to prevent ice dams. Finally, the Highway Division, in partnership with Building Services, commenced a 5,000 square foot addition to the Northside Shed. This project includes more equipment storage, updates to the fueling system, upgraded site power, a repaved parking lot, as well as new furniture, technology, and security fencing.

**Strong Fiscal Track Record Continues**—In November the County Board adopted the 2024 budget which included a 1.69% property tax levy increase. Over the last ten years, the average annual levy increase has been 1.44%. The adopted property tax rate is \$3.89, which decreased 11.05% from the previous year. This is the 8th consecutive year the property tax rate has gone down. Additionally, the County received a clean audit report for 2022, is projecting a surplus from 2023, successfully bonded for \$10.99 million to fund 2023-2024 capital projects, had Moody's credit rating affirmed at Aa2 (High Investment Grade), and continues to have healthy reserves. The Finance Department has earned the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association for the last nine years, providing further evidence of the County's fiscal stewardship.