



**FRANK WHITE, JR.**  
Jackson County Executive

December 8, 2023

Dear Members of the Jackson County Legislature,

I hope this message finds you in good health and spirits. As we approach a pivotal juncture in our county's budgetary process for 2024, I am compelled to address an issue of significant concern regarding a proposed amendment to our budget.

I have recently been made aware of a draft amendment that suggests substantial cuts across various county departments. These proposed reductions are not only unnecessary but also pose a risk to the operational efficiency of our county, the morale of our employees and potentially infringe upon state law mandates. State legislation explicitly requires us to adopt a comprehensive financial plan each year and categorically prohibits the allocation of funds to an undesignated fund balance for later appropriation. The adoption of such an amendment would not only be ill-advised but could also be deemed illegal.

Moreover, this amendment introduces allocations of funding that were not part of the initial budget proposed by my office. The introduction of these unforeseen funds contravenes the county's code of ordinance, established by the inaugural county legislature in 1973, and constitutes a deviation from the legal and procedural standards we have upheld for decades.

In light of these developments, I was encouraged to hear from the Chairman that he was unaware of any such budgetary amendment and shares my concerns regarding its potential implications. I am hopeful that the Chairman, along with other members of the legislature, will join me in opposing these amendments. Our collective commitment to maintaining a lawful, transparent and effective budgetary process is paramount.

Our county's history reminds us of the consequences faced by those who treated state and federal laws with careless indifference. We cannot afford to repeat these errors, as doing so risks the same detrimental outcomes faced by many of our predecessors.



In preparing the initial budget, my team and I diligently incorporated the legislature's requests, including, but not limited to:

- Salary increases above the county-wide merit increase for legislative staff
- Funding for new positions
- Converting two part-time staff to full-time in clerk's office
- New constituent relationship management software for clerk's office
- Doubling rent amount for new location in EJC for office space
- Funding for 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor DTCH renovations, financial advisory services and sponsorships

All of these were included in the spirit of collaboration and mutual respect.

Given the gravity of these issues, I urge a collective re-evaluation of the proposed amendments and invite each of you to discuss these matters in depth with myself or the County Administrator. Through collaborative efforts, we can arrive at a budget that is not only legally compliant but also reflective of our shared objectives for Jackson County.

I look forward to engaging in productive conversations with you and finding a resolution that upholds the highest standards of governance, legal compliance and well-being of our county.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'FW Jr.', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Frank White, Jr.  
Jackson County Executive