



MANAGER'S MESSAGE FOR 2023 ADOPTED BUDGET

Thank you for reviewing the 2023 Adopted Budget.

Our emphasis for the 2023 Adopted Budget was direct: to continue core service by emphasizing Sedgwick County's most important asset – our employees. **Our goal for 2023 was to bring county pay levels to more closely resemble wages in the nearby governments within our region and State in an effort to retain and grow staff.**

Our county staff began discussing the 2023 budget in the late fall of 2021. In those discussions, it was clear that employee compensation had to be addressed. Over the last several years Sedgwick County had fallen behind the pay curve and this needed to be reconciled if we expect to maintain service levels. In addition, we had seen extreme inflation rates not seen since the 1970's which put further stress on all employees. Additionally, we had to modify a strategy that was responsible to the taxpayers of Sedgwick County without causing undue tax increases or cost.

Throughout the year, we have worked with the Board of County Commission to increase the compensation forecast and recommend meaningful raises for all employees. In this plan, we have strategically increased compensation in several areas of the county with high-vacancy positions and no pipeline of applicants. In addition, we have committed to routinely move the pay scale, which has not been done in county government over the last decade – a strategy that will help us in years ahead to make sure our wage rates do not continue to fall behind other employers.

We feel our efforts for the Adopted 2023 budget take us further down the track to improve county compensation to make us more competitive with other employers in the region and State. In addition, as we said throughout this process, one budget year will not fix a history of insufficient employee compensation. **We will continue to address issues of compression within the compensation scales in 2023 and into 2024. Our ultimate goal is to end up with a fair and competitive wage environment while being fiscally responsible to our citizens of Sedgwick County. It is a work in progress.**

Our emphasis for the 2023 Adopted Budget is quite simple:

to continue core service by emphasizing Sedgwick County's most important asset – **our people.**





In addition to compensation, this adopted budget also continues to address environmental working conditions for employees by funding modern and advanced equipment to do the important service work of the county while keeping our employees as safe as possible. We will work to maintain our public facilities to taxpayer standards and will continue to enhance supervisory training to insure a fair and equitable working environment for our employees who are doing their best to serve the citizens of this community and the Sedgwick County organization.

This 2023 Adopted Budget also continues the commitment to behavioral health services to the community. Our future commitment to these important services included funding for the continuation of the Mental Health & Substance Abuse Coalition and a \$1,000,000 contingency to be utilized for enhanced and additional services pertaining to behavioral health.

Additionally, this Adopted Budget maintained funding for continued core services surrounding public safety, services, and road and bridge infrastructure.

Finally, we know the continuing saga of COVID is not completely gone from our midst and this budget ensured that continued personal protective equipment, testing, and vaccine availability remain intact for our public as we work toward what is hopefully the true end of the pandemic.

In conclusion, the 2023 Adopted Budget has been challenging to develop with emphasis on employee care and core services, all while maintaining “flat” budgets and keeping costs as low as possible for the consumers of these government services. **We will continue to emphasize efficiency and core services as we move into the future and begin planning the county’s 2024 budget.**

-Tom Stolz, County Manager

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