



# Manager's Message

## 2024 Recommended Budget

*Thank you for reviewing the 2024 Sedgwick County Recommended Budget.*

Our emphasis for next year's budget continues our phased approach **emphasizing and course correcting compensation for county employees.**

Everyone understands that success of Sedgwick County government rests with the service provided by the foundation – our people. As such, we must be competitive in an ever-tightening job market with wages, benefits, and environment that allow us to attract and retain employees.

Recall that last year we focused on areas that were hardest hit by attrition and staffing shortages. To that end, we created an additional seven unique pay plans that included placing EMS and Fire into step plans.

Through that strategy, the county committed an additional \$20.3M to employee salaries. This year, our HR team partnered with Evergreen Consultants to develop a market based strategy for the roughly 1400 employees in the general pay plan. This recommended budget includes an additional \$7.1M directed toward salary for that work group to bring employees more close to market rate.

For all employees of the county we are recommending an additional 3% general pay adjustment with the exception of those groups with step plans, who will receive a 2% adjustment plus their scheduled steps. In total, we are recommending an increase of \$22.7M focused toward employee compensation for 2024. Cumulatively since 2022, Sedgwick County has increased employee compensation by roughly \$46.5M. We also know this does not complete our efforts concerning compensation. We will continue to look at adjustments in the future with an eye on the continuing local and national economic trends.

There is more. In 2024, we are **recommending adding key strategic positions.**

These positions will be added to the Election Commissioner and County Appraiser offices, along with two position additions in Emergency Communications and one position to Regional Forensic Science Center due to changing environments and demands.



We are also recommending support of an EMS request to staff two paramedics on an ambulance unit rather than the paramedic/EMT model that had been in place since 2018. We are also recommending an additional Billing Specialist to EMS. Similarly, we are adding a Fleet Mechanic to Sedgwick County Fire District #1 along with a Fire Training Officer. These additions and modifications will mean better service to end users and assist with increasing public demand in those areas.

Our recommended Capital Improvement Project recommendations will **continue to address the environment that Sedgwick County employees and their clients function in on a daily basis.**

We are recommending \$6.6M for facility upkeep and improvements, plus an additional \$760K in flood control and drainage projects in the county, above our normally budgeted maintenance of the Mitch Mitchell Floodway. We also are recommending continuation of our aggressive CIP efforts toward road and bridge improvements and maintenance around the county.

Additionally, our efforts emphasizing behavioral health will continue. **This budget proposes a \$1M contingency to be utilized regarding projects or efforts deemed important by the BOCC.**

In summary, our Board of County Commissioners and the leadership team are focused on the stability of our employees who provide essential services to this community along with the core mission objectives of Sedgwick County government. This recommended budget attempts to achieve this while being fiscally restrained and responsible to our tax paying public.

-Tom Stolz, *County Manager*

