



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Steve F. Taylor
17TH DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 18, 2025
Contact: Eddie Cullen, 414-793-0347

Supervisor Steve F. Taylor Demands Answers as Milwaukee Art Museum Slashes Staff While Director’s Pay Skyrockets

MILWAUKEE – In response to revelations that the Milwaukee Art Museum Director’s compensation has more than tripled since 2016, (reaching \$549,000 in the fiscal year 2022-23) Milwaukee County Supervisor Steve F. Taylor is calling for the Museum’s current Director, Marcelle Polednik, to appear before the County Board and provide transparency on its expenditures. Supervisor Taylor also issued the following statement:

“The taxpayers of Milwaukee County deserve full transparency,” said Supervisor Taylor. *“It is unacceptable for a publicly subsidized institution to slash staff and suffer declining attendance while its director’s salary skyrockets. This is a slap in the face to hardworking taxpayers, and I am expecting answers. Director Marcelle Polednik needs to appear before the County Board to explain this reckless spending. Until this matter is resolved, Milwaukee County should look into withholding further funding from the Milwaukee Art Museum.”*

Since 2015, Milwaukee County has invested nearly \$19 million in the Museum, while local arts groups like Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Danceworks, and First Stage have faced financial struggles, cuts, and layoffs. Before the last budget, arts leaders urged the County Board to allocate 2% of ARPA funds to establish a Milwaukee Office of Cultural Affairs and strengthen Cultural, Artistic & Musical Programming Advisory Council (CAMPAC) funding to address sector-wide needs.

“We have organizations struggling to survive while the Art Museum showers its executives with bloated salaries,” said Supervisor Taylor. *“Had we known they had this kind of money to burn, we could have directed taxpayer funds to institutions that actually need it. Public dollars should support struggling arts organizations, not bankroll six-figure pay hikes for executives.”*

“In 2024, the County cut public subsidies for the Charles Allis and Villa Terrace museums by negotiating an agreement to privatize them. Meanwhile, we slashed funding for the CAMPAC Milwaukee County Arts Fund by \$100,000. And yet, the Milwaukee Art Museum somehow finds the cash for massive executive raises? This is exactly the kind of fiscal abuse taxpayers are sick of.”

Supervisor Taylor is working with his colleagues, including Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson, to schedule an item related to the Milwaukee Art Museum and ensure that leadership is held accountable.

###