

City Attorney 2026 Proposed Executive Budget

Mission: To protect the legal interests of the City of Milwaukee and provide quality, timely, and impartial legal services consistent with the highest professional and ethical standards while successfully meeting clients' needs in accordance with the City Charter and statutory requirements



Budget Summary

Description	2025 Adopted Budget	2026 Proposed Budget	Change	% Change
FTEs – O&M	61.50	62.80	1.30	2%
FTEs – Other	2.50	0.20	-2.30	-92%
FTEs – Total	64.00	63.00	-1.00	-2%
Total Positions Authorized	64	63	-1.00	-2%
Salaries & Wages	\$6,028,111	\$6,130,247	\$102,136	2%
Fringe Benefits	\$2,712,650	\$2,758,611	\$45,961	2%

Overall O&M Change: Over 9.3M, an increase of \$183k is the department's cost-to-continue.

Position Changes

- Eliminating one-(1) Legal Office Assistant 2

Salary Changes: Primary cost driver!

- Decreasing ACA's salaries to unfund two-(2) reserved positions
- Salaries adjusted to reflect actual salaries

Budget Summary Continued

Description	2025 Adopted Budget	2026 Proposed Budget	Change	% Change
Operating Expenditures	\$407,200	\$446,105	\$38,905	10%
Equipment	\$26,000	\$22,000	-\$4,000	-15%
Special Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%

Changes:

- **Operating expenditures**
 - **Reduction:** IT Services
 - **Increases:** General Office Expense; Non-Vehicle Equipment Rental; Professional Services & Other operating services, Reimburse other Departments
- **Equipment expenditures** slightly by reducing the replacement equipment for electronic equipment and computer peripherals
- **Special Funds:** None

Special Purpose Accounts

Account	2025 Adopted Budget	2026 Proposed Budget	Change Amount	% Change
Damages & Claims	\$1,900,000	\$2,500,000	\$600,000	32%
Insurance	\$2,727,967	\$3,471,976	\$744,009	27%
Outside Council-Expert Witness	\$119,661	\$119,661	\$0	0%
Total	\$4,747,628	\$6,091,637	\$1,344,009	28%

Changes

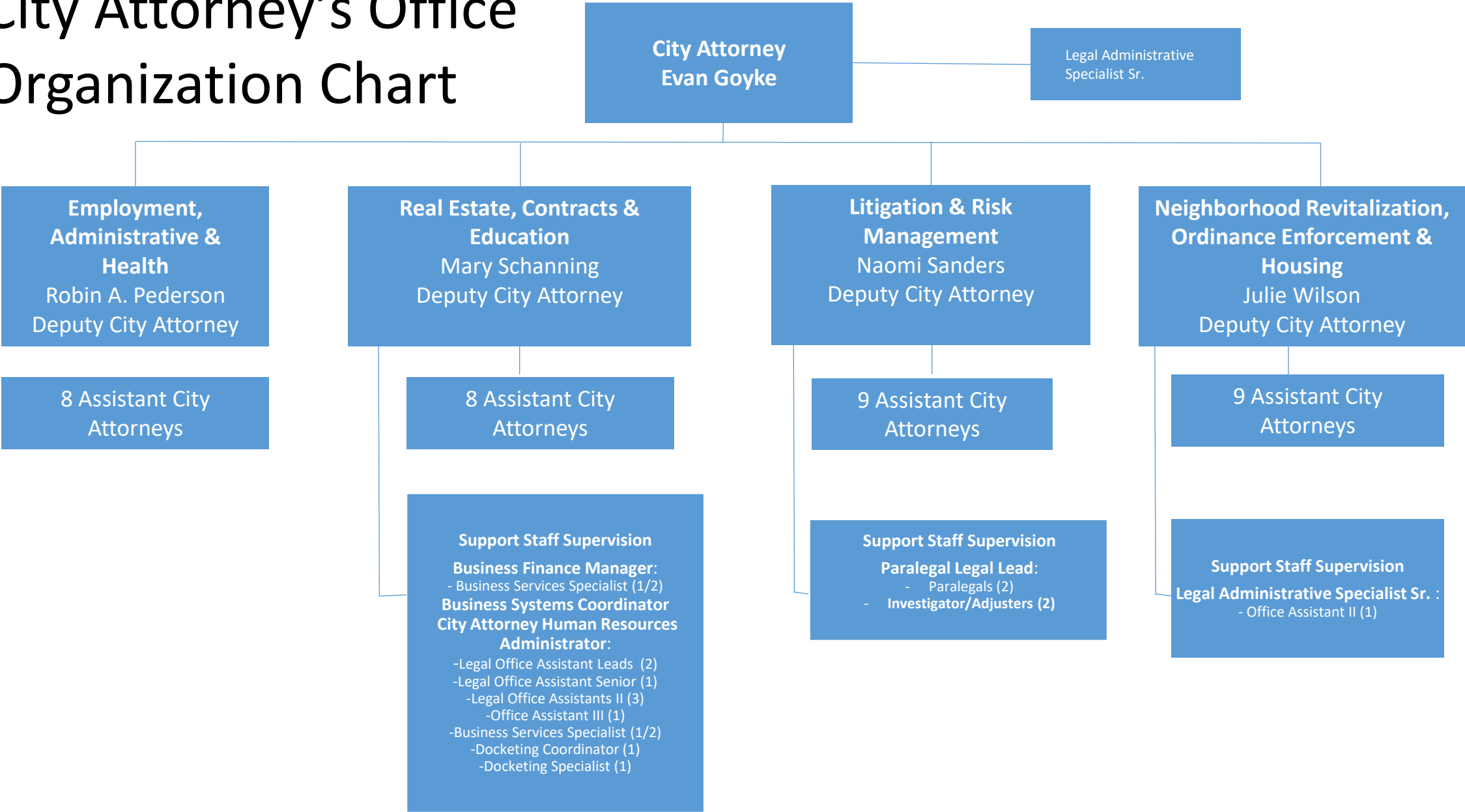
- Damages & Claims increased due to settlements
- Insurance policy premiums increased

Revenues

Category	2025 Adopted Budget	2026 Proposed Budget	Change Amount	% Change
Charges for Services	\$720,000	\$804,000	\$84,000	12%
Total	\$720,000	\$804,000	\$84,000	12%

- Services to other departments:
 - Water
 - HACM
 - RACM

City Attorney's Office Organization Chart



Budget by Service

Description of Services Provided	Budget + SPAs	Operating	FTEs	% FTEs
Administration provides oversight of legal section and delivery of administrative services. (35%)	\$5,390,391	35%	13.00	21%
Employment, Administrative & Health Section handles all aspects of employment law & benefits, collective bargaining, labor disputes and grievances. (11%)	\$1,647,379	11%	10.50	17%
Real Estate, Contracts & Education Section does transactional legal work for various department including DCD, RACM, DPW & DOA and represents MPS. (9%)	\$1,395,167	9%	9.00	14%
Litigation Section defends the city in civil matters brought both under federal and state law. (34%)	\$5,185,722	34%	17.50	28%
Neighborhood Revitalization, Ordinance Enforcement & Housing Section prosecutes ordinance violation and pursues litigation and other enforcement related to chronic neighborhood problems, e.g., nuisance abatement, raze orders. (12%)	\$1,829,941	12%	13.00	21%
Total	\$15,448,600	100%	63.00	100%

Demographics

Category	Female	Male	Total	%
Black	14	2	16	28%
White	11	23	34	60%
Hispanic	5		5	9%
Asian	2		2	4%
American Indian				0%
Total	32	25	57	
%	56%	44%		100%

Major Highlights Employment, Administrative & Health



- Advised the Common Council, Mayor's office, and departments regarding response to federal immigration-related grant conditions. Ongoing evaluation of legality of federal efforts to compel cooperation with immigration enforcement efforts and to condition grants on cooperation.
- Successfully defended two federal employment summary judgment decisions appealed to the 7th Cir. Court of Appeals.
- Represented the City and Election Commission in numerous election related challenges, including a voter registration appeal currently pending in the Wisconsin Court of Appeals.

Major Highlights Employment, Administrative & Health



- Assisted in research and rewrite of MCO ch. 98 governing underground conduit occupancy licensing.
- Successfully defended non-renewal of five licensed premises against circuit court challenge – one further successfully defended in appeal to the court of appeals – one pending in the court of appeals.
- Successfully defended in circuit court against novel theory of assessment and taxation calculation – pending in court of appeals.
- Assisted Assessor's Office and BOR in clarification and streamlining of the appeal process.

Major Highlights – Real Estate, Contracts & Education Section



Transactional & Advising:

- Counsel to Milwaukee Public Schools, Board of Zoning Appeals, Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee, Port Milwaukee, Fire & Police Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Zoning Code Technical Committee (voting member), Milwaukee Elections Commission.
- Assists all City departments with contract drafting, negotiation and interpretation.
- Half of the ACAs in this section handle purchasing and other, non-real estate contracts for the City – they have been asked to draft, review, and negotiate approximately 105 new contracts in the past 12 months.

Special Projects:

- Continue to assist MPD and Comptroller in approving paperwork for payments under the federal grant for the Republican National Convention in 2024 and prepare for the audit of that grant.
- Advise departments on various executive orders from President Trump affecting federal grants and attempting to preserve the City's DEI and environmental initiatives in light of these executive orders and new grant certification language.
- Re-writing of MCO 304-49 in response to changes in state law and a US Supreme Court case that dramatically changes the way the City markets and sells tax-foreclosed properties.

Major Highlights-Real Estate, Contracts & Education Section



Real Estate and Economic Development:

Provide legal assistance regarding economic and real estate developments, including the creation and amendment of tax incremental financing districts (TIDs) – 3 times as much TID work in the past 12 months than in the previous 12 months:

New TIDs

- Creating TID 122 (Cudahy Farms)
- Creating TID 123 (Northwoods)
- Creating TID 124 (Harambee Homeownership Initiative)
- Creating TID 125 (Historic Patterson Place)
- Creating TID 126 (Field House Flats)
- Creating TID 127 (100 East Wisconsin)
- Creating TID 128 (Compass Lofts)
- Creating TID 129 (Mitchell Building)

Amended TIDs

- Amending TID 53 (Menomonee Valley Business Park)
- Amending TID 56 (Erie / Jefferson)
- Amending TID 59 (Bronzeville Cultural & Entertainment District)
- Amending TID 78 (Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company)
- Amending TID 84 (West McKinley & Juneau)
- Amending TID 94 (1st & Becher)
- Extending TID 37 (Grand Avenue) – Affordable Housing & Housing Stock Improvement Extension

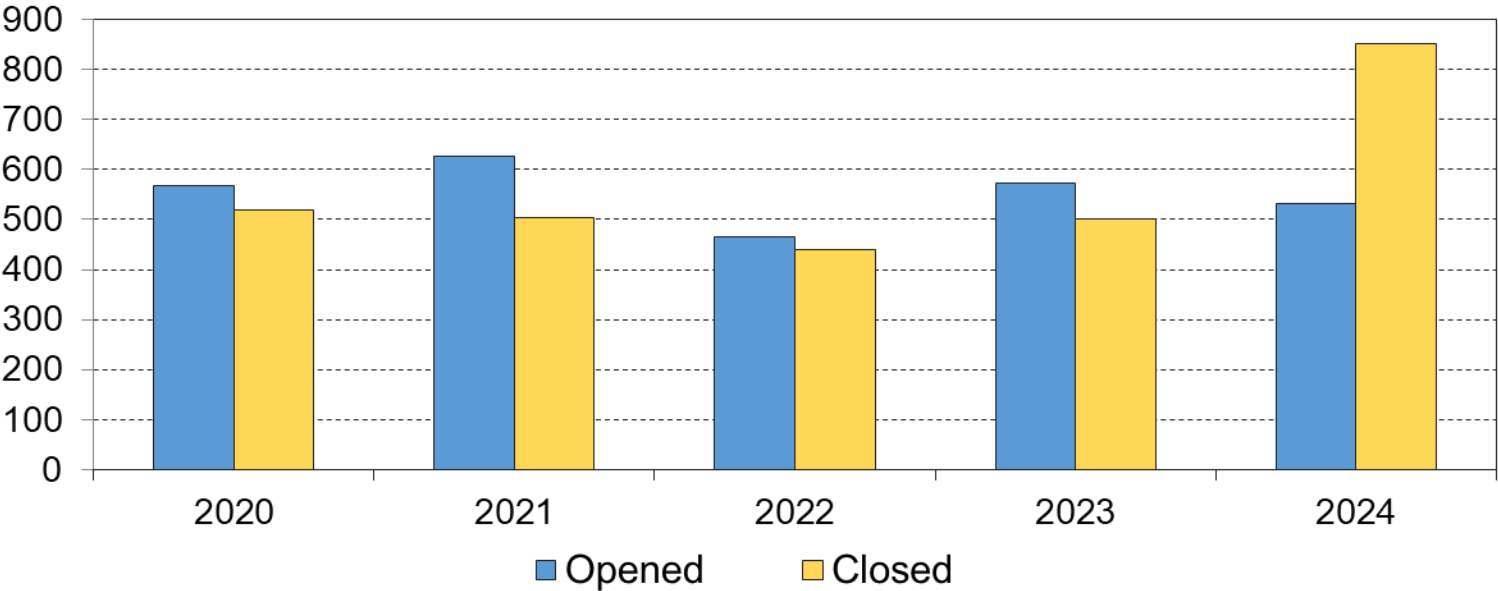
Major Highlights – Litigation Section



Litigation:

- The City had one notable state court trial in 2025 by successfully convincing a jury to award 50% contributory negligence to a co-defendant where the jury awarded less than half of the plaintiff's demand.
- The CAO had 5 state court trials to the bench on challenges of the City's assessments.
- The CAO successfully defended the City in an motion hearing on attorney's fees in the lawsuit regarding the City's RNC permitting scheme.
- More than a dozen cases against various City entities were dismissed on the City's motion (either motions to dismiss or motions for summary judgment), which is the most efficient way to dispose of cases.
- The CAO is currently defending the City in eight appeals before either the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals or the Wisconsin Court of Appeals.
- Finally, the CAO successfully settled several litigation matters for millions **less** than was demanded.

Major Highlights – Litigation Section



Claims	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (as of 9/29)
Total claims opened	568	627	465	573	533	405
Total claims closed	520	504	441	502	851	571

2024 Major Highlights – Neighborhood Revitalization, Ordinance Enforcement & Housing Section



Municipal Court Prosecution: OWI Cases (Oct. 2024 through Sept. 2025)

- Total reviewed: 476
 - 6 rejected and 470 filed
- 347 Cases Resolved
 - 4 Dismissed (2 of which to be charged criminally)
 - 3 Trial Losses
 - 333 Convicted
 - 104 Default Judgments
 - 10 Convictions at Trial
 - 219 Convicted Following Plea
 - 7 Warrant Status
- Balance of cases (123) remain pending

Major Highlights – Neighborhood Revitalization, Ordinance Enforcement & Housing Section



Municipal Court Prosecution: Reckless Driving Cases (Jan. – Sept. 2025)

- Total reviewed: 425
 - 26 rejected and 399 filed
- 275 Cases Resolved
 - 8 Dismissed
 - 259 Convicted
 - 188 Default Judgments
 - 3 Convictions at Trial
 - 68 Convicted Following Plea
 - 8 Warrant Status
- Balance of cases (108) remain pending

Major Highlights – Neighborhood Revitalization, Ordinance Enforcement & Housing Section



Municipal Court Prosecution

- Traffic Cases, 28,097
- Non-Traffic Cases (Adults) 6,359
- Non-Traffic Cases (Juveniles) 698
- Parking Cases 674
- 110 Health Department Matters
- 258 Non-Traffic reviews for Marquette University Police Department

Major Highlights – Neighborhood Revitalization, Ordinance Enforcement & Housing Section



Circuit Court Property Returns

Property Return Petitions (Oct. 2024 through Sept. 2025)

- 490 filed
- 359 hearings
 - 344 guns
 - 15 other property

Significant Efficiencies Achieved in Collaboration with Circuit Court

Major Highlights – Neighborhood Revitalization, Ordinance Enforcement & Housing Section



Neighborhood Revitalization Reengagement Efforts

- Representing MPD at license revocation hearings
- Representing DNS on issues relating to dangerous and prohibited animals
- Representing City Departments in appeals to ARBA and Standards & Appeals
- Multiple raze orders pursued and two ongoing receivership actions
- Reengaging clients on training initiatives and standing meetings to prioritize among matters
- Special attention to street takeovers, EBLL, and illegal dumping issues

Major Highlights – Neighborhood Revitalization, Ordinance Enforcement & Housing Section



Eviction Totals 10/1/2024 to 9/30/2025

	Eviction Matters Opened / Pending	Evictions Filed
Dep’t of City Development	30	29
Housing Authority (~5,200 units)	314	216
Total:	344	245

Major Highlights – Neighborhood Revitalization, Ordinance Enforcement & Housing Section



Public Records, Open Meetings & Ethics

- Successfully defended all mandamus cases against the City and MPS.
- Assist all City departments in responding to public records requests and in complying with open meetings requirements.
- Provide extensive training sessions training to City officials and employees regarding public records, open meetings and ethics.
- Assist Ethics Board in issuing confidential advisory opinions.

Service Uniformity



Our work is largely dependent upon client requests. We work with every Alderperson which allows us to provide services to all of the districts.

- At the beginning of the year, the Neighborhood Revitalization (NR) Team conducted meetings in each MPD District and invited the local Alderpersons in order to get a broad understanding of problem properties and behaviors across the entire City.
- The NR Team and CAO management have participated in community meetings and trainings in different neighborhoods, with an eye to increasing capacity to do so.
- Our real estate team works with DCD on economic development and other real estate projects throughout the City.

Environmental Impact



Much of our work is paperless and our recent switch to Legal Files, our case and document management system, has aided that effort.

Also the clients we assist such as ECO, Historic Preservation, some DPW divisions, and Water Works are working on environmental policies and we provided legal advise on those policies.

Pursue environmental litigation in order to facilitate remediation and redevelopment of contaminated properties.

Current AI Utilization:

Piloting use of AI tools built into the legal research service, LexisNexis.

Future AI Plans:

Not anticipating widespread deployment of AI tools in the coming budget year.

Ethical and Practical Considerations:

Monitoring developments in the law and legal ethics guidance regarding use of AI in legal practice.

2025 Amendment Update



#	Description	Sponsor
10	ATTORNEY, SPA-MISC. - Add position authority, FTE, and funding for one Assistant City Attorney in the City Attorney's Office. Offset increase by decreasing the City Attorney's Outside Counsel Special Purpose Account. Status: The position will be filled as of October 27.	Moore