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MEDIA ADVISORY

Smoking Ban On Hold, Payment Sought from Municipal Court Scofflaws

Smoking debate filled the Common Council chamber at Milwaukee City Hall today as aldermen debated whether to put the city on record in support of a statewide ban on smoking in public buildings and public spaces. Aldermen decided to hold the issue in council until the April 17th meeting. The proposal would support a statewide ban on smoking that would be fair and eliminate the potential for competition and economic disadvantage among businesses in adjoining cities.

The Common Council approved a new contract that is expected to bring in more than \$1.6 million over five years, money owed to the city in unpaid Municipal Court fines and judgments. The contract, awarded to Harris & Harris after a nation-wide search, not only will increase collections but save the city money as the firm reduced the fee charged for the collection process.

In other actions today:

- + Approved a land disposition report for the long vacant property at N. 4th St. and Wisconsin Ave. Ghazi Company of Charlotte, North Carolina is proposing a condominium tower, hotel and retail space on the site.
- + Aldermen sent back to committee a resolution which would ask the state to change the law so that a simple majority of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority could approve an action rather than six of seven members as is now required.
- + Approved an agreement with the Milwaukee Brewers to continue providing police officers at ballgames at Miller Park. The officers work on overtime and the team reimburses the cost.
- + Supported the right of janitorial workers to organize themselves into a labor union.
- + Opposed any plan to close the Interstate 94 Layton Ave. on-off ramp.

All of the items approved by the Common Council go to Mayor Tom Barrett for his review.