**Vos says Evers can’t ‘bludgeon the legislature’ to accept budget proposals**

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Assembly Speaker Robin Vos is warning the Evers administration against believing they can “bludgeon the Legislature” to accept some of their budget priorities.

But the Rochester Republican says he’s hopeful Gov. Tony Evers will “adapt” after realizing GOP lawmakers aren’t going to accept “a dramatic expansion of welfare, a massive tax increase (and) more spending than we can afford” in his funding plan due Thursday.

Vos at a WisPolitics.com luncheon Feb. 21 in Madison pointedly compared the new administration with the two houses of the GOP-controlled Legislature, as he offered advice to the new occupants of the East Wing.

He said while Senate and Assembly Republicans “had some disagreements” over the last eight years, members and their interests “are much more closely aligned” as circumstances in the state have changed, leading to the houses’ first ever joint caucus meeting last month.

“I would say on the liberal side of the ledger, they have to also sit down and say to themselves, ‘What will work, and what will not?'” he said.

Though he noted both parties have “certain bedrock principles” neither would budge on, Vos said legislative Republicans and Evers have a choice about how they’re going to function this session: by honing in on “the things that we know are never going to change anybody’s mind” or finding issues with the potential for middle ground.

“I promise that as much as we are able, we are going to try to find the give-and-take topics to talk about as much as we talk about the ones that maybe show our principles,” Vos said. “Neither one is bad, but you just can’t do all of one or the other.”

Vos, who described legislative Republicans’ relationship with the Evers administration as “nonexistent, underwhelming, disappointing,” said the new governor is moving at a “slower pace” during his first few weeks in office than former Govs. Jim Doyle or Scott Walker did.

Calling Evers “a good, kind, sincere person,” Vos said Evers “has a lot of on-the-job learning” to do during the first part of his time in the East Wing.

And Vos added many of Evers’ appointees don’t have state government experience, so they’re also seeing “a lot of on-the-job training” as well.

Vos said his goal is to work toward “the maximum amount of communication” possible — both between the two houses and between the Legislature and Evers.

He said while he’s asked for a weekly meeting with Evers, “it hasn’t happened yet.”

But he said he’s not holding that fact against the governor, noting the new administration is “getting used to where they are, and the process that we have to go through.”

“My door is as open as it possibly can be to try to increase communication with Gov. Evers,” Vos said.

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