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[00:00:24] **Speaker 1** Getting to the point of voting on a state budget turns out to be a difficult affair. The Legislature's Joint Finance Committee was to go into session this morning, but has now pushed that off to 8 p.m. Wisconsin Public Radio Capital reporter Anya Van Woutendon joins us now from the Capitol with what's happening. Hi Anya, thanks for being here. Hey, thanks having me. So what is happening?

[00:00:50] **Speaker 2** Not very much. As you say, they were meant to go into session earlier this morning, and we have kind of waited around and heard as they have moved that start date quite a bit, that start time, I should say. And so what that tells me is that they are meeting in closed caucus, so things are certainly happening. They are just not happening in a way that we can see it. So we're waiting to see kind of what agreements they bring to the table.

[00:01:13] **Speaker 1** Could they actually cancel tonight's session?

[00:01:17] **Speaker 2** I suppose that's possible. I think everyone's kind of running around a little bit, trying to figure out exactly what's going on. A lot of texting of sources and other journalists and people that we know inside of lawmakers' offices. And I think the answer is no one really knows what's on, but I spoke with one reporter who's been covering the budget for a lot longer than I have, and he said essentially, if you can dream up a scenario, it is possible. And so really, it's possible anything could happen tonight, it could go very late, or things could get kind of shifted around.

[00:01:46] **Speaker 1** Does this have to do with holdouts, Republican members of the Senate as holdouts?

[00:01:52] **Speaker 2** Yeah, you know, again, we don't know exactly what sort of the push and pull is, but we have seen a lot of different scenarios kind of unfolding over the last couple of weeks. So first we saw legislative Republicans and Governor Tony Evers' talks between them kind of break down. Then they returned to the table, then discussions between Senate Republicans and Assembly Republicans kind of came to a standstill. There were some barbs being traded on social media among Republicans over the weekend. And so all of that is kind of within this loop. We know that Governor Tony Evers has certain things that he will not sign a budget without. Republicans have said, you know, they will not give up their access to meaningful tax cuts. And so all of this is kind of swirling around. And I think as we get close to that fiscal year deadline, we're really starting to see things play out.

[00:02:40] **Speaker 1** But meanwhile, they have some very big ticket items to decide on tonight and potentially through the weekend.

[00:02:48] **Speaker 2** Yeah, that's right. They have both a long list of things in general. There's, I think, 50 items on the agenda for this meeting that has been noticed. And then as you mentioned, some of them are really significant. Notable among those is child care and the University of Wisconsin system. Those are notable in part because they are Governor Evers. Big priorities. He has said he will not sign a budget that doesn't have meaningful investment in either of those. And so what that ends up being is a little bit of leverage for Republicans to kind of get him to the table on those on those tax cuts. But that also means that, you know, that there is, as we mentioned in the breakdown between Senate Republicans and assembly Republicans, a lot of push pull around the amount of spending that the credit governor would want.

[00:03:34] **Speaker 1** How does the slimmer Republican majority inform how this budget session has gone?

[00:03:40] **Speaker 2** Yeah, so that also really speaks to, again, some of those chamber disputes that are going on. So, essentially, there are enough Republican votes in the assembly. And ordinarily, how this could work is that Republicans just vote for their Republican budget, and then the governor could go through and kind of use his partial veto pen, the Democratic governor. But in this case, in the Senate especially, it's an 18 to 15 majority, so a much slimmer majority. So if Republicans lose Two votes. They don't have a majority there. And it's actually looking like they have lost two votes. There are two outspoken Republican senators who have said they just can't support the amount of spending that their Republican colleagues are proposing in the Joint Finance Committee. And so because of those slimmer majorities, that means either Republicans sort of need to get their folks in line or give them concessions, or they need to bring Democrats to the plate. And the way to bring the Democrats to plate is to kind of offer more palatable options to Democrats. And so again, we don't exactly know all that's going on between closed doors, but that's a huge part of the dynamic that's at play.

[00:04:40] **Speaker 1** With really about less than a minute left, how does a ruling out of the State Supreme Court around Evers' vetoes play into this budget process?

[00:04:51] **Speaker 2** Yeah, I think that's been a big part of the conversation because there'd been a real breakdown of trust again between Democrats and Republicans in terms of how the governor has used his veto pen in the past, and so what that did was kind of give a little bit more clarity to the use of his partial veto pen, and so at the end of all of this process, we will at some point get a budget to the governor's desk and now there's just some clarity on how he can and can't use that. And do we expect that...

[00:05:18] **Speaker 1** Budget to get to his desk next week.

[00:05:23] **Speaker 2** You know, it takes a while to write a budget. So even just that labor of that will take a little bit of time. So I am not terribly optimistic in that sense, but I'm not in the prediction making business.

[00:05:33] **Speaker 1** All right. Well, we really appreciate you joining us. Anya Van Wante Wagon Donk from Wisconsin Public Radio.

[00:05:41] **Speaker 2** Thank you.

[00:05:53] **Speaker 1** Sorry I butchered your name there at the end.

[00:05:56] **Speaker 2** Everyone does. I should have offered a pronuncer at the top. I don't know if you want to...

[00:05:59] **Speaker 1** I have one. I wrote one. I'm sorry.

[00:06:04] **Speaker 2** Yeah, it's a mouthful

[00:06:05] **Speaker 1** You're great.

[00:06:07] **Speaker 2** Thank you.

[00:06:08] **Speaker 1** Really great and thank you so much for hanging with us through this whole day and thank you for your service into the night.

[00:06:17] **Speaker 2** That's very kind.

[00:06:18] **Speaker 1** Thank you. Although they could cancel, right? I mean. Am I allowed to say I wouldn't mind?