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ROBERT G. DONOVAN
Alderman, 8th District

How will Milwaukee Police Department handle extra work?

Statement from Alderman Bob Donovan September 24, 2012

Regarding the announcement this morning by Mayor Tom Barrett and County Executive Chris Abele that they would have Milwaukee Police take over park patrols, lakefront patrols and the entire 911 emergency call system:

I'm disappointed the Mayor didn't find it necessary to brief more Council members on his plans. I certainly wasn't made aware of this ahead of time, and what's more disturbing is I understand the Sheriff hasn't even been briefed at all, as well as a number of County Supervisors who contacted me.

But what's more deeply concerning to me is the question of how we can ask more of a Milwaukee Police Department that's already being stretched to its limit as it is. More often and too frequently, the hundreds of vacant police positions in our department have resulted in one-man squads being deployed on patrol. This seriously jeopardizes the safety of our officers and, I believe, emboldens criminals who would do them harm.

I want to know what steps, if any, this administration will be taking to ensure that we have the necessary resources to deal with these additional responsibilities the Mayor seems so keen to take on.

On another note, in light of new information on the tragic death in police custody of Derek Williams, I fear certain colleagues of mine have been overreacting in an effort to be responsive to the constituent calls that have been flooding their offices.

I, for one, have full confidence in District Attorney John Chisholm, his integrity and his office's ability to do a thorough investigation in light of this new information. I do not feel it necessary to bring in the U.S. Attorney's office at this time. We haven't even given the D.A. a chance to do his job yet!