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ROBERT G. DONOVAN
Alderman, 8th District

Alderman Donovan calls for increasing police overtime funding, adding 20 new officers

**Statement of Alderman Bob Donovan
May 2, 2013**

I have introduced Common Council legislation proposing that we spend \$620,000 from the 2013 Common Council Contingent Fund for police overtime and the hiring of 20 additional police officer recruits as part of the MPD's 2013 recruit class. I would like to thank Alderman Terry Witkowski, Public Safety Committee chair, for agreeing to schedule my legislation (Council file #130103).

Why have I made this call?

Because it is my obligation to fight for the best interests of my constituents and to offer solutions to problems, not excuses.

We are now on the doorstep of a summer that I fear could be one of our bloodiest, and dispatchers are already so swamped that people are waiting for 10 minutes and more to report serious incidents such as shots being fired near their homes. In fact, it is my understanding that calls to report shots fired are unfortunately an all too common occurrence.

As evidenced in the emails (attached) I have received, good people are fed up and are moving out. For me, this is a signal that we must act now and address our crime issues head on or we will lose more good people, and we will run the very real risk of having this cancer (violent crime/disorder) spread to additional city neighborhoods, which will only serve to hurt our ENTIRE city.

During my tenure I have worked to garner hundreds of thousands of dollars in private donations for dozens and dozens of surveillance cameras, and to install alley lighting – all in an effort to deter criminals and increase public safety. In addition, I have also worked to secure large donations to allow additional beat patrol officers in my district during the summer months. These efforts have had an impact, and have helped to reduce criminal activity and bolster public safety.

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But it is simply not enough, and the status quo just isn't working. The time has come for city elected leaders to step up and address this challenge, and offer up a huge wave of cold water to throw on the fire.

Of course, there will be naysayers who will point out that what the city spends on police and fire services is already equal to our entire tax levy. They will point out that one-sixth of our entire city budget of about \$1.5 billion is spent on public safety services.

Well, but even that doesn't seem to be enough, and that is why we need these additional police resources NOW.

I would say to the mayor and to my colleagues: We need to care enough to get mad at the current state of affairs. We need to be outraged – like the mayor is -- that a 4-year-old child is shot on our streets, and that each weekend seems to bring a new round of multiple shootings and instances of disorder. Well, I just hope the mayor's outrage and rhetoric translates into some action, any action. The action we've all been waiting for.

The mayor needs to know that not every neighborhood in Milwaukee is as nice and safe as Washington Heights, and that the good people of Milwaukee in dozens of other less safe neighborhoods would appreciate more cops, and increased safety. My district on the near south side is not perfect, but I know it is not nearly as unsafe as too many other areas of our city. The bottom line is we need solutions, and we need to get additional resources to help those good people, before more decide to just pick up and leave.

Although I have had my differences with Chief Flynn on some issues over the years, I have no doubt that given the appropriate additional resources, the chief will use those resources wisely and strategically, and we will see a big change in our current situation that will bring safer streets.

It is worth a try, because in my opinion, we simply MUST try something for the sake of the city I love.

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