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Why we can no longer wait to remedy “The Wait”

**Statement of Alderman Bob Donovan
June 26, 2014**

Earlier this week there was a brutal stabbing near N. 24th and W. Melvina that took the life of a 60-year-old woman. I know this occurred outside of my district, but I am compelled to speak out about it because it illustrates a major disturbing, citywide problem involving Milwaukee police.

Police were called for help in this case, but did not respond for some time, and by the time officers arrived it was too late. Sadly, this scenario is not uncommon, and in many cases people are waiting for **HOURS** for a police response to their call – and we’re talking about serious crimes, too – not about loud music or “my neighbor’s dog pooped in my yard.”

When will we realize we are woefully shorthanded in our numbers of officers? When will we realize that we are running our cops ragged? I can tell you that I have heard from current officers that there is a sense of being overwhelmed because of the sheer volume and pace of calls for service, and that morale is low.

It is a fact that at times there are only four or five officers deployed to cover entire shifts in some of our areas that are struggling mightily with crime and violence. This simply is outrageous and unsustainable.

And, it begs the question: Where will we be in five or 10 years? What is the plan – longer wait times and more stress for our officers? The mayor makes a lot of noise about the 120 officers being brought on line, but those numbers won’t even make a dent when one considers the already massive officer vacancy rate and the continuing wave of officer retirements.

Something is terribly wrong here, folks, and the people of Milwaukee deserve better response times. Further, I believe our officers need a few hundred additional colleagues to help them on the streets!

Sadly, with the current administration, I believe we’ll see more of the same, while our officers continue to feel overwhelmed and many of our struggling neighborhoods continue to suffer.

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