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**NIK KOVAC**

ALDERMAN, 3RD DISTRICT

Alderman Nik Kovac urges residents to attend two important meetings next week

Last week, the Mayor announced his proposed budget for 2018. There are three ongoing fiscal constraints on the City of Milwaukee which have greatly limited the Mayor's ability to include full funding for vital public services in this budget.

- 1) The Global Financial Crisis of 2008 decreased the ability of our \$5 billion in pension assets to independently cover the normalized cost of future pension obligations. This budget includes a proposed \$83 million transfer from the general fund to the pension fund, which is up from \$61 million for 2017 and up from \$0 in 2009.
- 2) The citizens of Milwaukee are not getting their fair share back from the sales and income taxes we pay to the State of Wisconsin. Adjusting for inflation, the City receives about \$99 million less than in 2003, even though the state is receiving even more from Milwaukee taxpayers. As of this year, the City is generating \$460 million more in tax revenue to the State than it receives back.
- 3) The State of Wisconsin forbids the City from raising significant revenue in any other way. We are the only major city in the United States with no such options, as reported by the Public Policy Forum in this report: <https://publicpolicyforum.org/research/money-city-milwaukeees-uncommon-revenue-structure-and-how-it-compares-peer-cities>

Given these constraints, it was impossible for the Mayor to deliver a budget that any of us would have wanted. However, this budget does include a proposed change that could significantly impact the health and safety of the East Side of Milwaukee. As part of reducing our sworn fire personnel by 75 positions (and thus reducing the fire budget by \$10 million) the Fire Chief is proposing the decommissioning of Engine Company #6 and the closure of the Brady Street firehouse.

-More-

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I urge residents of the Brady Street neighborhood - and beyond - to make our voices heard at two important meetings next week.

On Monday, October 9th, at 6:30 p.m. in the Common Council chambers on the third floor of City Hall the public is invited to testify in front of the full Common Council, the Mayor and his cabinet, and all city-wide elected officials about the proposed budget.

Then, on **Wednesday, October 11th, at 6:00 p.m. in room N140 of Lubar Hall on the UWM campus, 3202 M. Maryland Ave.**, I will be hosting a town hall meeting to discuss the proposed budget in detail. Representatives from the budget office, the fire department, and the police department will be present. It will be a chance for citizens to ask questions and to make statements. This town hall will occur the night before the fire and police departments make their annual budget presentations to the Council's Finance & Personnel Committee.

There is still time to change the Mayor's proposed budget. The Finance & Personnel Committee will be voting on amendments on November 3rd and the full Common Council will vote on amendments on November 10th. **Please help me – and my colleagues – make the best decisions we can by showing up and letting us know what you think.**

