

August 26, 2005

Mayor Barrett
City Hall, Room 200
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Mayor Barrett:

I am writing you about the all too serious situation that has taken control of the streets of our city. As you are no doubt aware, a wave of crime and violence has plagued our community this spring and summer, with the unfortunate reality being that our city has become less safe.

I have raised the issue of rising crime and inadequate police response with Chief Hegerty on countless occasions over the past few months and have gotten the same response back from her each time-- that our police department is stretched too thin, and that she needs three police recruit classes in next year's budget to make any significant difference to the shortfall of officers in the department.

In a recent email you sent to one of our mutual constituents, you wrote that the "lack of police response is a complaint I am hearing from all over the city." You added that you would "continue working with Chief Hegerty to ensure the department is able to meet the demands and needs of the citizens it serves."

There is no doubt in my mind of your commitment to this city's public safety, yet I truly fear that the staffing shortage in the police department has reached a catastrophic level. Unfortunately, I believe the two police classes that you have publicly called for in your 2006 budget will, at best, maintain the status quo, and will not allow the department to make up any ground in the already excessive police officer shortfall. Simply put, we need to stop the bleeding by putting more officers on our streets to respond to calls and proactively patrol our neighborhoods.

Mayor Barrett
August 26, 2005
Page Two

The city is in a fortunate position with the recent announcement of a windfall in excess of \$1 million dollars in our annual payment from the Forest County Potawatomi Nation. By utilizing the anticipated increase in the Potawatomi tribe's payment to the city, we can begin the process of significantly reducing the police vacancy in 2006 without resorting to burdening taxpayers or reducing services in other crucial areas of next year's budget. These additional dollars can be used to start three police classes in four-month intervals beginning with the anticipated graduation of the November 2005 class in early April of 2006.

Given the current dire situations in our police department and on the streets of our city, I believe this is a necessary budget priority. To do otherwise, will jeopardize the safety and quality of life of the citizens of our city. I strongly encourage you to direct these dollars to this vital purpose.

I look forward to working with you and my colleagues on the Common Council to make this a reality.

Sincerely,

Jim Bohl, Alderman
5th District

CC: Chief Nannette Hegerty
Members of the Common Council