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Alderman, 8th District

New MPD Crime Numbers Are Good News, But City Not in Position to Keep the Trend Going, Alderman Donovan Says

Statement of Ald. Bob Donovan April 29, 2010

Today's new crime statistics released by the Milwaukee Police Department are, at first blush, great news for the city.

However, I've been talking to small business owners and others who have been telling me that things haven't been so rosy for them. They've been telling me about steady patterns of crime and disorder in their neighborhoods, and other incidents that don't seem to be reflected in the statistics. To these business owners, the crime numbers (issued by the MPD) just don't add up, and I'm taking their skepticism and their concerns very seriously.

Today, I'm calling on the Mayor, Chief Flynn and the Common Council to do two things:

- 1) I'm calling for an intensive summer safety initiative that will include \$700,000 for police overtime to pay for additional beat patrol officers throughout the city, in each of our seven police districts. The officers will seek out trouble spots and will communicate personally with business owners and neighborhood residents.
- 2) I'm calling for the city to have a minimum of two police officer recruit classes next year, with one commencing in January and the other in June. The city will be very near **300 police officer vacancies** by the end of this year, and that is NOT including officers on military leave, those on light duty, and those on medical leave.

On the topic of officer vacancies, residents should know that the police recruit class this year is being funded by a COPS (Community Oriented Police Services) grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, but beyond that there are no real plans for another class anytime soon. As a matter of fact, in my opinion the city's Fire and Police Commission is falling down on the job and has not prepared a list of eligible police officer candidates beyond the COPS funded class. This is simply unconscionable, and should worry city residents greatly.

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In other words, if the city needed to put together a recruit class next week, it wouldn't be ready to do so. There's no list of eligible candidates, no background checks have been conducted, and there are certainly no tests ready to be taken by eager young men and women. In my view, this failure to be prepared is simply poor management.

I urge citizens to call the Mayor (414-286-2200) and demand that he take action on the funding for summer beat patrols and the two police officer recruit classes next year.

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