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ROBERT G. DONOVAN

Alderman, 8th District

October 12, 2011

Edward A. Flynn, Chief of Police
Milwaukee Police Department
951 N. James Lovell Street, Room 705A

Dear Chief Flynn:

As you are aware, County Executive Abele has proposed a 2012 Milwaukee County Budget that would cut the Sheriff's Department budget by \$14 million. Under Abele's proposal, 244 Sheriff's Department employees could be laid off, including 119 deputies.

I believe these lay-offs, which would put dozens of trained but unemployed law enforcement personnel in the local job market, represent a valuable opportunity for the Milwaukee Police Department and the City of Milwaukee as a whole. MPD currently has approximately 180 vacancies among its sworn positions. When the 100 authorized police officer positions that were eliminated by the 2010 City Budget are included, the current number of filled sworn positions is more than 280 positions under the authorized strength of just a few years ago.

If you are not doing so already, I strongly urge you to explore the possibility of hiring laid-off Milwaukee County Sheriff's deputies to fill many of MPD's vacancies. There are many benefits to be achieved by hiring deputies to fill vacant police officer positions, including:

1. Sheriff's deputies already have extensive law-enforcement training. Rather than going through the full new-recruit training program at the Safety Academy, these new hires could be given an orientation to the MPD, its operating procedures and City of Milwaukee ordinances, perhaps lasting only 2 or 3 weeks instead of 6 months. As a result, the newly-hired officers would be on the street much quicker than new hires without law enforcement backgrounds.
2. The shorter training period means lower training costs for the department and the City. There would also be savings realized, both monetarily and in terms of PSSI time, from not having to conduct the same extensive background

checks on these law enforcement officers that are necessary for new hires without law enforcement backgrounds.

3. Fewer MPD vacancies will mean shorter response times. While I've been a big supporter of MPD's practice of differential policing, due to the shortage of police officers, response times are not as quick as we would like. Milwaukee residents have an expectation of reasonably timely responses to their calls for service; by filling MPD vacancies with laid-off Sheriff's deputies, we can alleviate their concerns about slow police response times.

I realize that implementing a program of hiring Sheriff's deputies will require some effort and adjustment on the part of the Police Department. But with the current number of MPD vacancies, the impending lay-offs of dozens of trained law-enforcement personnel by Milwaukee County and the savings that can be realized by not subjecting them to a full-blown training program, this idea seems an opportunity too good to pass up. Even if MPD hires only 20 to 40 laid-off deputies, the department could benefit from substantial savings in terms of training costs, while a larger police force would make a huge difference in the quality of life in many challenged Milwaukee neighborhoods.

Your thoughtful consideration of this request will be greatly appreciated. I look forward to continuing to work with you to strengthen the Milwaukee Police Department and our city as a whole.

Robert G. Donovan,
Alderman, 8th District

Cc: Mayor Tom Barrett
Fire and Police Commission members
Common Council members
County Executive Chris Abele
Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke
Milwaukee Police Union Pres. Mike Crivello
Milwaukee Deputy Sheriff's Association President Roy Felber