

**CHAIR**

- PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
- HISTORIC THIRD WARD ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

**VICE CHAIR**

- FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

**MEMBER**

- ZONING, NEIGHBORHOODS & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
- STEERING & RULES COMMITTEE
- BOARD OF HARBOR COMMISSIONERS
- HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
- HOUSING TRUST FUND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**ROBERT J. BAUMAN**

ALDERMAN, 4TH DISTRICT

## Sheriff resorts to bus scare tactics in budget battle

### Statement of Alderman Robert J. Bauman January 31, 2012

Sheriff Clarke's most recent temper tantrum over 2012 budget cuts to his office has reached a new level that compels me to speak out as the representative of thousands of residents of the 4<sup>th</sup> Aldermanic District who regularly use the Milwaukee County Transit System (and as a bus rider myself for 35 years).

First, it is increasingly apparent that no tactic is beyond Sheriff Clarke's reach, as he is now attempting to scare tens of thousands of daily transit users by asserting that the transit system is "horrible," "intimidating" and "frightening." Apparently he is now willing to vilify the transit system to advance his agenda and, as a result, further jeopardize the financial viability of this taxpayer-funded public service by driving away passengers and prospective passengers.

As Chief Flynn pointed out in his recent testimony before the Common Council's Public Safety Committee, the incidents of disorder and criminal behavior that occur on the transit system tend to be concentrated on certain routes at certain times of day which, as Chief Flynn pointed out, calls for surgical policing, not saturation policing with a huge deployment of sheriff's deputies at a huge price tag which taxpayers cannot afford.

If this is Sheriff Clarke's approach to transit security, I suggest he just get off the bus and stick to policing the freeways and staffing the courts and jails and leave the task of public safety in Milwaukee to the Milwaukee Police Department, which is perfectly capable of quietly and professionally performing the task of providing public safety on the transit system.

I might add that as a frequent bus rider, I feel perfectly safe riding the transit system and in 35 years of bus riding I have never witnessed a violent incident on a bus. As the statistics show, incidents do happen, just as incidents happen in every neighborhood of Milwaukee County including frequent traffic fatalities on the Milwaukee County freeways. But it is sheer demagoguery for the Sheriff to characterize the entire transit system as "horrible," "intimidating," and "frightening" based on 150 incidents (2011) on a system that provides tens of millions of trips every year. This is not how responsible elected officials behave, much less one of our top law enforcement professionals.