

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

CHAIR

- City Information Management Committee

VICE CHAIR

- Licenses Committee

MEMBER

- Finance and Personnel Committee
- Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation Board
- Library Board
- Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault



MILELE A. COGGS
6th District Alderwoman

Fire & Police Commission erred in reinstating Officer Schoen

Statement of Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs December 4, 2012

I may not agree with Chief Flynn on everything, but I believe he was right when he chose to fire Police Officer Richard Schoen for excessive force. Any citizen watching the dash cam video footage showing Officer Schoen punching a woman in the face while she was handcuffed in the back of a squad car would be horrified. The attack, coupled with the officer's arrogant and clueless lack of regret for his actions, brings about the question as to why he was reinstated.

With every disciplinary decision that is made as it relates to officers, a message is made clear to the community in terms of how much value is placed on their well being and safety. The viciousness that Officer Schoen showed in the attack -- along with his obvious lack of remorse -- makes me very concerned that next time his attack will be much worse than a mere punch. The ability to control one's emotions in high stress situations is a critical skill needed for good policing. Yesterday's decision by the Fire and Police Commission to reinstate Officer Schoen further brings into question the appropriateness of such a body making disciplinary decisions about our police officers. Our commission is the only one structured like it in the nation, and I believe it is out of tune with the community.

Consider this: Out of approximately 300 citizen complaints filed with the Fire and Police Commission against Milwaukee officers last year, only one resulted in disciplinary action against an officer. I believe it may be time to either restructure or eliminate the commission, and the laws that govern its existence.

Officers are sworn to protect and serve, and any officer who loses sight of this should be disciplined accordingly. Mr. Schoen should have lost his ability to serve as an officer in the Milwaukee Police Department when he allowed his anger and rage to outweigh his commitment to his sworn oath.

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