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ROBERT G. DONOVAN
Alderman, 8th District

Alderman Donovan backs MPD, Chief Flynn on Williams case

Statement of Alderman Bob Donovan October 11, 2012

While it appears to now be open season on the Milwaukee Police Department and its leader, **I, for one, am standing squarely behind the dedicated and hard working men and women of the MPD and Chief Flynn with regard to the Derek Williams case.**

Oh, how things have changed since 2008 when Chief Flynn first arrived. Back then it was as if the chief was the second coming of Christ, and he could do no wrong. How many times did the mayor stand next to the chief at news conferences where it was announced loudly and proudly that “Crime is down, crime is down!”?

Well, have you seen the mayor anywhere with the chief lately? As I’ve heard said before, “There is one thing that’s true in politics: One day you’re a hero, and the next day you’re a bum.”

Also, the mayor’s recent comment about the chief (“I do not support removing the chief at this time”) was not exactly a ringing endorsement, and not something that will help the chief sleep better at night.

Let’s face it, the chief has gone out of his way for years to make the mayor look good (not an easy task in itself!), and this is the “thanks” he gets?

Geesh – hang in there, chief!

As to the Derek Williams case, while we all agree that the squad car video is disturbing, one officer said to me recently: “Alderman Donovan, almost everything we see while on duty is disturbing.”

Our officers risk their lives each and every day, and yet everything they do is second-guessed and scrutinized. Let’s not forget that officers performed CPR on Mr. Williams after he lost consciousness and quickly summoned emergency medical personnel. Our officers do not wake up each day, put on their uniform, and ask themselves “How can I violate someone’s rights today?”

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In fact, our officers proudly put on their uniforms each day and attempt to restore order from the chaos that occurs in some of the garbage dumps we call certain neighborhoods in this city.

I say “THANK YOU” to our officers, and suggest that our city thank them as well.

The Williams case has taken on a life of its own, and what concerns me is the possibility that the mayor and the chief may succumb to political pressure and throw a good police officer or two under the bus – just to placate those who are screaming for a pound of flesh.

In my opinion, the true judge of a person’s character is not measured in good times, but rather when they are put under pressure and must handle hard times. I believe the test results are still out for the mayor and other officials in this regard, but they are coming soon. Stay tuned!

Finally, I need to pose a few hard questions for our city.

The first question pertains to the news during the past day regarding the determination of the cause of death to a young man at the County Mental Health Complex. Where is the outrage that five people have died in the custody of the Mental Health Complex during the past year?!

The second and last question pertains to the Derek Williams case. How can the Medical Examiner change the opinion of the cause of death without exhuming the body? Did he change the cause of death based on the queries of the Journal Sentinel?

Is it me, or is that just bizarre?