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ROBERT G. DONOVAN
Alderman, 8th District

A good cop, and a bad Fire and Police Commission decision

Statement from Alderman Bob Donovan
March 24, 2015

I'll begin by saying this – I realize full well how volatile this situation is. I further realize that there may indeed be a significant number of people who may disagree with what I'm about to say, but what's right is right.

The shooting at Red Arrow Park was undoubtedly a tragedy every which way you look at it. But one does not address or attempt to alleviate the pains of one tragedy by creating another. Yet that is precisely what occurred here.

As I've said previously, the firing of Officer Christopher Manney was, in my opinion, ill-conceived, unwarranted and politically motivated.

I have spent time with Chris Manney and gotten to know him, and I find him not only to be a good officer, but a good human being. You ought to read some of the letters he's received from people on his beat. I can assure you he didn't wake up that April morning thinking about who he was going to shoot that day.

Sadly, he has become the scapegoat for the racially-charged political environment we live in. I personally am urging Officer Manney to pursue this case in Circuit Court.

In addition, I am very concerned about how this decision will impact the already incredibly low morale of our officers. I fear that an increasing number of officers will put their blinders on and do the absolute minimum, fearful that any difficult decision made on the streets will come back to haunt them and be second-guessed by armchair command staffers and Monday morning quarterbacks.

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Also, in Chief Flynn's very first speech, moments after he was sworn in, he promised this community and this Department that he would treat differently honest mistakes from willful misconduct. If indeed Officer Manney made a mistake, and I'm not saying he did, but if he did, it never ever rose to the level of willful misconduct.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't say this: Chief Ed Flynn is undoubtedly a man of many talents, chief among them being his eloquence, his command of the language, his choice of words, yet his deliberate choice of the words "bumbling" and "incompetence" in reference to Officer Manney's actions on the day in question sickens me. I should not have to point out that for 13 years – long before Chief Flynn arrived in Milwaukee – Officer Manney was putting his uniform on and placing his life on the line in the service of this community and before that, doing the same as a military veteran of this great nation.

Shame on Chief Flynn for that deliberate insult to a fine man and a good police officer.