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ROBERT G. DONOVAN
ALDERMAN, 8TH DISTRICT

Mr. Mayor: Who in Heaven's Name is Watching the Store?

**Statement from Alderman Bob Donovan
September 6, 2019**

My Common Council colleagues and I have been commenting for some time about the remarkable number of vacancies in high-level positions within the administration of Mayor Tom Barrett.

We waited for months for the Mayor to figure out whether or not the City would have a new Director of Homeland Security -- a cabinet-level office -- only to find out that he wanted to re-title and re-configure the position.

We have seen the Fire and Police Commission make its way through three Executive Directors in as many years.

We continue to wait for a permanent successor to Preston Cole as Commissioner of Neighborhood Services, even though Mr. Cole announced his planned departure before Christmas 2018.

We are told that Dr. Jennifer Freiheit -- hand-picked by the Commissioner of the Health Department to be her Health Operations Administrator and Deputy less than a year ago -- has left the Department with little public explanation, leaving the Commissioner to propose a further re-organization of an agency that we thought was being successfully re-organized in early April.

And, perhaps most troubling, the Operations Manager of the Fire and Police Commission, Clifton Crump, resigned suddenly on Labor Day, sending the members of the Common Council a letter of resignation that is difficult to read. In it, this long-serving and well-thought-of administrator, who once worked as a special assistant to the Mayor, wrote that he feared the new management of the Commission was beginning to blame him and his work for a dysfunction that he characterized as decades old. Quoting his letter: "(a)s leaders of the City I implore you to help the frontline (Fire and Police Commission) staff who have long been understaffed and overwhelmed to meet looming deadlines and create eligible lists for the Milwaukee Police Department to fill vacant positions associated with the upcoming Democratic National Convention."

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Mr. Crump's remarks bring me to my point: Only people do things. Use all the technology you like, seek all the efficiencies you can, sooner or later, having too many empty chairs catches up with any organization. Raising his questions again, who will get the promotion lists for Police Chief Alfonso Morales that he so desperately needs? We say we need new leadership within the department, but that is mighty hard to come by when the Chief has a lieutenant's list that is three years old. Other senior positions are little better. Who is there to ensure there are enough supervisors available for the protection of the Democratic National Convention?

Asking my own questions, with Mr. Crump now gone, how long will it take for the brand-new Executive Director of the Fire and Police Commission to get up-to-speed and make progress in turning around what seems to be years of problems? What is the long-term strategy for the re-organization of the Health Department? What is the vision for the Department of Neighborhood Services? And what is it about this administration that has turned so many high-level positions into revolving doors?

It is no secret that appointed employees begin to look elsewhere when it is known the person who appointed them is not running for re-election. All this, however, involves people serving a Mayor who, most believe, is seeking another term. An absence of leadership of this size is a cause for concern for all those who depend on these agencies. It ought to be an even greater concern for the Mayor whose job it surely is to set things right.

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