

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



---

FOR INFORMATION CALL

June 8, 2020

Ald. Cavalier Johnson  
(414) 286-3777

## MEDIA ALERT

### President Johnson urges action to rebuild public trust, push reform

In separate letters (**attached**) to the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission and Mayor Tom Barrett, **Common Council President Cavalier Johnson** is encouraging action be taken to reform the Milwaukee Police Department and fill vacant positions within the Fire and Police Commission to start rebuilding public trust.

In a letter dated June 5, sent to the Fire and Police Commission President Johnson states, “In order to help move the needle on systemic racism that is all too apparent in the City of Milwaukee, it is crucial that we act swiftly in a coordinated city-wide approach to implement data-driven best practices to reduce violence at the hands of our police department.” The letter goes on to list recommendations that could be enacted including a ban on maneuvers that restrict the head or neck, a requirement that pointing a weapon at a civilian be reported as part of a comprehensive use of force reporting requirement, and others.

In addressing Mayor Barrett in a letter dated June 8, President Johnson calls for the vacant Fire and Police Commission seats to be filled. He states “The community is ready to see the Commission at its full capacity, and I believe there are many who are eager and ready to serve. Completing the membership of the FPC will help to ensure a wider breadth of representation, diversity, and governance, with the ability to bring citizens with additional experience and knowledge to this critical oversight body.”

-30-

## **COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **CHAIR**

- Steering and Rules Committee

### **MEMBER**

- Redevelopment Authority - City of Milwaukee



**CAVALIER JOHNSON**  
COMMON COUNCIL PRESIDENT  
ALDERMAN, 2ND DISTRICT

June 5, 2020

Fire and Police Commission  
200 E Wells Street, # 706A  
Milwaukee, WI  
53202

Dear Fire and Police Commission Executive Director and Commissioners:

We face a critical policy junction in police-community relations. Centuries of institutional racism have created systems of oppression in this country which not only prevent people of color from reaching their full potential, but reduce their life expectancy and subject them to greater violence at the hands of police departments nationally. Across the U.S., black residents are three times as likely to be killed by the police when compared to white residents. While the failings of our law enforcement institutions to correct a history of institutional oppression is not the fault of individual officers or elected leaders, it is all of our responsibility now to come together to address these systemic injustices.

In order to help move the needle on systemic racism that is all too apparent in the City of Milwaukee, it is crucial that we act swiftly in a coordinated city-wide approach to implement data-driven best practices to reduce violence at the hands of our police department. Campaign Zero's "Eight that Can't Wait" data project tracked deaths at the hands of law enforcement across the country's largest police departments and compared them to the corresponding police department's use of force policies, finding a significant correlation between the two. The campaign identifies eight law enforcement policies with when used in conjunction, can decrease deaths at the hands of law enforcement by seventy-two percent. Not only does the implementation of stricter use of force policies save citizen's lives, this study also showed that these policies reduce the likelihood of both assaults on police officers and police officer death in the line of duty.

City Hall Room 205 • 200 East Wells Street • Milwaukee, WI 53202

**PHONE** (414) 286-3777 **FAX** (414) 286-3456 **EMAIL** [cavalier.johnson2@milwaukee.gov](mailto:cavalier.johnson2@milwaukee.gov) **WEB** [milwaukee.gov/district2](http://milwaukee.gov/district2)



In follow-up to my press release issued earlier this week, and in conjunction with Campaign Zero's "Eight Can't Wait" campaign, I urge the Fire and Police Commission to review the Milwaukee Police Department's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), training, and code of conduct to ensure adherence to best practices to reduce deaths at the hands of our police department and begin to rebuild community trust in law enforcement.

Milwaukee Police Department Standard Operating Procedures currently comply with only three out of the eight policy recommendations identified in the "Eight Can't Wait Campaign":

- Requirement of verbal warning prior to an officer using force likely to cause great bodily harm or death.
- Requirement of officers to intervene when they observe another officer using force in excess of what a situation requires.
- Utilization of an use of force continuum which provides progressive use of force tactics dependent on the perceived threat and how and when certain weapons can be deployed for the safety of the officer and the public.

While progress in use of force tactics have been made through these three policies, it is critical that the Fire and Police Commission take up and revise Standard Operating Procedures related to the five Milwaukee Police Department policies which do not align with the campaign's recommendations. I will be introducing a resolution urging the Fire and Police Commission to legislate the following:

- A stated ban on chokeholds, strangleholds, carotid restraints, or any maneuver which restricts movement of the head or neck. While it was stated during the Public Safety and Health Committee on Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup> 2020, that the Milwaukee Police Department does not train on or use these forms of restraint, I urge the Fire and Police Commission to revise current Standard Operating Procedures to explicitly state that these forms of restraint are prohibited.
- A stated de-escalation requirement prior to graduated use of force. During the Public Safety and Health Committee on Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup> 2020, Fire and Police Commission Executive Director Griselda Aldrete stated that the Fire and Police Commission will be taking up the Milwaukee Police Department's Use of Force SOP 460. I urge the Fire and Police Commission revise SOP 460 to include language which explicitly requires officers to attempt to de-escalate situations through verbal communication, maintaining physical distance from the subject and trying to eliminate any use of force, whenever possible.
- A stated requirement for officers to exhaust other uses of force before discharging a firearm. While SOP 460 states that, "force that is intended or likely to cause great bodily harm or death, may only be used as a last resort," it does not explicitly state how use of force must be



graduated and which lesser uses of force should be attempted prior to discharging a firearm, if possible.

- A ban on shooting at a moving vehicle unless occupants of the vehicle pose a deadly threat by means other than the vehicle, for example, if occupants are shooting at officers from inside of a moving vehicle. SOP 460 states that an officer may also shoot at a moving vehicle when “the moving vehicle poses an imminent and ongoing threat of substantial physical harm ... and there is no reasonable means to escape.” However, shooting at a moving vehicle has been shown to be an ineffective and dangerous means of stopping a vehicle and subduing a subject.
- A requirement that pointing a weapon at a civilian be reported as part of a comprehensive use of force reporting requirement, which at this time is not mandated by SOP 460.

I urge all members of the Fire and Police Commission, Milwaukee Police Department, and the public to review the comprehensive and comparative data and [report released by Campaign Zero](#). I urge the Fire and Police Commission specifically, to carefully revise MPD Standard Operating Procedures to align with data-driven best practices to reduce civilian deaths and injuries from law enforcement interactions.

In compliment to the policy recommendations laid out by Campaign Zero, I will also introduce resolutions urging the Fire and Police Commission to take the following actions:

- Mandate that all officers are trained or retrained on positional asphyxiation to prevent a death in custody akin to what happened in Minneapolis from happening in Milwaukee.
- Work with the Milwaukee Police Department Use of Force Committee to ensure that there are proactive, early intervention processes and procedures in place to address complaints, investigations, and patterns of behavior in officers.
- Work with the Milwaukee Police Department Use of Force Committee to complete a full review of all complaints and investigations on file to look for unaddressed patterns in behavior and gaps in supervisory monitoring and oversight.
- Redouble recruitment efforts within Milwaukee neighborhoods so that our fire and police agencies are more diverse and reflective of the communities that they serve.
- Work with the Milwaukee Police Department to rebuild trust and engage with local leaders to discuss community-oriented strategies to address periods of unrest and the Civil Unrest SOP.



It is crucial that we all work together to ensure that Milwaukee continues to move forward on police reform. Our citizens depend on local leaders who mandate adherence to best practices in order to make our city safer for everyone. I direct these policy requests to the Fire and Police Commission, as the Common Council itself cannot legislate these changes. I hope that this policy discussion leads to many more avenues for reform in our region as we work towards the elimination of deaths at the hands of law enforcement and the disparate negative impact on the black community.

Sincerely,



President Cavalier Johnson  
Common Council President  
Alderman, District 2

CC:

Mayor Tom Barrett  
Milwaukee Common Council  
Police Chief Alfonso Morales

## **COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **CHAIR**

- Steering and Rules Committee

### **MEMBER**

- Redevelopment Authority - City of Milwaukee



**CAVALIER JOHNSON**  
COMMON COUNCIL PRESIDENT  
ALDERMAN, 2ND DISTRICT

June 8, 2020

The Honorable,  
Mayor Tom Barrett  
200 E Wells Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Mayor Barrett:

Given our current moment in history, and with calls for policing reform and review coming not only from within our community but across the nation, I ask for your help in filling the Fire and Police Commission (FPC) to its full legislative capacity of nine members.

The community is ready to see the Commission at its full capacity, and I believe there are many who are eager and ready to serve. Completing the membership of the FPC will help to ensure a wider breadth of representation, diversity, and governance, with the ability to bring citizens with additional experience and knowledge to this critical oversight body.

In order to rebuild public trust by increasing the transparency and efficiency of our police review and discipline system, it is crucial that we bring the Fire and Police Commission to its full capacity. Last week I released multiple requests to the Commission asking them to take up and revise multiple Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), policies, and trainings, as did many of my colleagues. In order to take swift action on these requests, it is necessary that this Commission be bolstered to its full capacity.

Again, please begin the process of engaging and recruiting community members to bring the Fire and Police Commission to its full capacity of nine members. I look forward to helping in any way that I can to bring this process forward to a successful conclusion.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cavalier Johnson'.

Cavalier Johnson  
Common Council President  
Alderman, District 2

CC:

Common Council  
Griselda Aldrete, Fire and Police Commission Executive Director  
Fire and Police Commissioners

