

Statement of Ald. Bob Donovan

November 21, 2008

Alderman Blasts Mayor's MFD Budget Veto

While we all realize we are weathering very difficult economic times, the last service we need to cut in the City of Milwaukee is public safety. That's why the mayor's veto that seeks to reduce firefighter staffing levels on ladder companies makes absolutely no sense.

Considering the fact that we'll have thousands of foreclosed, empty properties in the city – prime targets for arson – especially in the inner city where these firefighters are deployed, the cuts are unacceptable.

This nonsensical personal vendetta against the Milwaukee Fire Department has to end.

Also, if he believes these firefighter positions aren't necessary, then why is he offering a compromise? Once again the mayor is choosing politics over statesmanship. And, all of this coming from a man who has never fought a fire in his life, and who couldn't tell the difference between a pumper and a ladder truck if they were parked right in front of him.

As chairman of the Common Council's Public Safety Committee, it's my job to stand up and fight for public safety in this city. The challenges our firefighters face in Milwaukee's inner city include an aging housing stock, high poverty and dysfunction, and older, dilapidated buildings. And now we have a perfect storm exacerbated by the foreclosure mess and the downturn in the economy. We will need each and every available firefighter position and more to ensure the safety of our citizens, our neighborhoods, our business and industry, and our firefighters.

I urge our citizens to call the mayor (286-2200) and their alderman (286-2221) and tell them we need to keep our firefighters. I also urge my colleagues on the Common Council to vote Tuesday to override this most critical veto.

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I would be remiss in not mentioning just how outrageous the mayor's proposed 2009 budget was. The Council did a fabulous job of fine-tuning it while still keeping the firefighter positions, all in a responsible tax levy freeze budget. Yet after the fact the mayor just couldn't resist interfering, and down came his vetoes.

Mark my words: Next year he will continue his assault on Milwaukee Fire Department positions AND he will expand his cuts to include the Milwaukee Police Department.

All of this from the man who claims his number one priority is public safety.

Wake up Milwaukee – enough is enough!

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