
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

June 29, 2006

Ald. Willie L. Hines, Jr.
Ald. Terry Witkowski
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Community Service Officer Proposal Goes To Key Committee Today

The Milwaukee Common Council's Steering and Rules Committee will meet this afternoon to discuss a proposal that calls on the Council to create a Community Service Officer (CSO) position in the Milwaukee Police Department.

The Steering and Rules Committee meeting, slated for 1:30 p.m. today (Thursday, June 29, 2006) in room 301-B at City Hall, will include the final report of the Community Services Staffing Task Force, which recommends Council approval of the CSO proposal.

Common Council President Willie L. Hines, Jr., who has championed the CSO position along with colleague Ald. Terry L. Witkowski, said the proposal "attempts to bridge growing gaps" between the police department and the communities it serves. "The Common Council has investigated numerous avenues for supplemental policing efforts and budgetary relief, but we haven't been able to find a proposal that is in balance in terms of long-term costs versus long-term benefits and overall service to our residents," said Ald. Hines.

"At a time when we are asking residents to pay more in taxes, we cannot offer them less in return," Ald. Hines said. "We must provide effective yet efficient services to our residents. This is our opportunity to offer better service for our taxpayer dollars – we owe it to the public to put this before the Council."

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Community Service Officers/ADD ONE

Presently, the MPD's yearly operating costs are equal to 40% of the **total** operating budget of the City of Milwaukee, and at the current spending rate, the city levy cap will be broken before the year is out, said Ald. Hines. "It is incumbent upon us to search for and find new and creative ways to deliver services to the residents of the city," he said.

Ald. Witkowski said the concept and principles of a CSO are about 40 years old, and the position has worked well in several cities across the nation. "There are specific features and benefits of the CSO position that cannot be achieved by a police officer alone, and the additional and consistent presence of law enforcement within our communities will only help to curb the spike in violence we have witnessed most recently," Ald. Witkowski said.

CSO Features:

- Each CSO must be a resident, must fit certain position criteria, and many will likely serve their own neighborhoods and/or areas they are familiar with.
- Twenty (20) CSOs total cost would be significantly less than 20 MPD officers.
- CSOs would be trained to respond to "low-hanging fruit" issues that are of a non-violent, non-critical, and non-enforcement nature.
- Public has been supportive of Task Force inquiries about CSOs.
- CSOs would lift the burden of increased tax dollars for supporting overtime of MPD officers.

Benefits:

- Neighborhoods will more readily accept and interact with law enforcement personnel they recognize as "one of their own."
- City of Milwaukee residents will save more than \$1.7 million in salaries and benefits for CSOs when compared to staffing costs for police officers of the same areas.

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Community Service Officers/ADD TWO

- CSOs will allow MPD to spend on-clock hours focused on emergency calls, violent crimes and more pressing community-enforcement issues, while the CSOs will focus on traffic issues, neighborhood service issues, nuisance property investigations, missing person returns, parking issues, and station duty for walk-in complaints.
- Public has been invited to raise questions and concerns in public forums, and all responses were favorable.
- CSOs would invariably reduce overtime for officers as the officers would spend less time on non-enforcement issues and paperwork versus patrol and enforcement hours.

Other intrinsic values of CSOs would be:

- MPD would have a better and more culturally competent approach to servicing **all** City of Milwaukee residents in an equitable fashion.
- CSOs would offer quicker response times to residents, and thereby assist in quicker resolutions to neighborhood issues.
- CSOs would be community-based and able to report to either civilian and/or police supervisors.
- CSOs would provide excellent “pools” from which to train new MPD officers and would essentially receive **on-the-job-training**, which would lessen the costs associated with recruitment and training of new MPD officer potentials.

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