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Ald. Michael J. Murphy
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Report: MPD Spends Millions On Underutilized Technology

Despite spending millions on computer technology designed to track information and provide real-time crime-fighting data, the Milwaukee Police Department is using its systems only at a basic, functional level, according to a city audit report released today.

Ald. Michael Murphy, chair of the Common Council's Finance and Personnel Committee, said the audit shows that MPD is not utilizing its computers and data systems as widely or as effectively as it could, despite millions in spending on equipment and software over the past several years.

"It makes me question just how much better of a job the department could be doing to protect the citizens of Milwaukee, because similar systems in other large U.S. cities have been successfully utilized to make a huge difference in the overall day-to-day battle against crime," Ald. Murphy said. "I'm upset that the Milwaukee Police Department hasn't been using its technology resources to their full potential."

The Audit of the Milwaukee Police Department Crime Data System— conducted by City Comptroller W. Martin "Wally" Morics at Ald. Murphy's request — examined the MPD's Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, Corrections Management System (CMS), Automated Reporting System (ARS) and Records Management System (RMS). The audit shows MPD has fallen short by not requiring its personnel to undergo computer and IT training so equipment and data systems can be fully utilized, and it also found that MPD has had major problems converting data from old systems to new ones, resulting — in many instances — in corrupt data, inadequate formatting, duplication of records, and many other glitches.

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MPD Data Systems Audit/ADD ONE

Significantly, the audit points out that instead of using professionally trained IT people to install and manage the data and IT systems, MPD personnel – including patrol officers – have been handling those tasks. “This is a key problem that must be addressed, but I give the department credit and I applaud those individuals who have been working to get the systems implemented because it has entailed a huge amount of time and energy,” Ald. Murphy said.

The problems cited in the audit report have been so extensive, Ald. Murphy said, that many MPD personnel have lost confidence in the data systems or avoid using the systems altogether. “There are detectives and investigators who still are using paper records and notebooks, and there are personnel who want to use technology to help them have the most accurate, up-to-date information they can get yet they’ve lost confidence in the systems that are supposed to help them get that information,” he said.

Ald. Murphy said problems with Tiburon, the main contractor hired by MPD to install the systems, are also pointed to in the audit report. In fact, Police Chief Nannette Hegerty is withholding \$1.1 million in contract payments to Tiburon because of incomplete performance of contract duties. “I’ve begun discussions with the City Attorney’s Office about possibly filing a claim against Tiburon,” the alderman said.

The audit was requested two years ago, but it was significantly delayed because MPD couldn’t pull information together to respond, Ald. Murphy said. “That (delay) is symptomatic of the problems we’re seeing because of the lack of functionality with the data systems,” he said.

The audit report includes the following recommendations:

1. Budget all large capital projects clearly -- including staff salaries, equipment costs, future completion costs, total costs, etc.
2. Utilize a standard method for each IT project’s development that regularly shows the distance from completion at all levels of the venture.
3. A professional IT engineer should be hired by MPD to ensure maximum output and maintenance on remaining and finished IT projects.
4. Address IT staffing issues in MPD.
5. Consult City Attorney on possible contract claims with vendor before accepting the Crime Data System and the payout of contract holdbacks.
6. Make crime reports readily available to Common Council members and other city officials.
7. Get maximum use and return for money already spent. No crime data systems should be underutilized.
8. Train officers to use their computers as well as they do their patrol vehicles or pistols. Computers are work tools/equipment of equal if not greater importance.