

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 7, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE COMMON COUNCIL

FR: SUSAN M. EDMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ELECTION COMMISSION

RE: BUDGET AMENDMENT

The Election Commission has been storing voting equipment and Election Day materials at the municipal warehouse (1028 N. Hawley Road) for years. Approximately six (6) weeks prior to each election, temporary staff report to the warehouse where they begin making preparations for Election Day by cleaning, testing and repairing voting machines. Additionally, all Election Day supplies and materials are prepared for delivery to the polling sites. Coakley Moving Company is responsible for the pick-up and delivery of all voting machines and Election Day materials to the city's 197 voting sites.

In January of 2008, the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) purchased the municipal warehouse from the City of Milwaukee. MMSD agreed to allow the Election Commission to remain in the facility until after the 2008 presidential election. The building will be razed as soon as the Election Commission vacates the premises.

Department of Public Works personnel determined that the Election Commission needs approximately 10,000 square feet of secured, heated open warehouse space with a loading dock. Restroom facilities and good lighting are also necessary.

The Election Task Force Report issued in June of 2005 recommended that the Election Commission acquire additional space. The confines of the Election Commission office and the limited space at the municipal warehouse has severely limited the Commission's ability to operate efficiently and effectively.

Since the official closing of the municipal warehouse, the Election Commission uses the facility to prepare all absentee ballot requests, for the central processing of all absentee ballots - a process that is open to the

public, to conduct training sessions and to conduct the reconciliation of Election Day records. A suitable work environment is essential if the Commission is to maintain the quality of work that is expected.

The Election Commission has been working with DPW and DCD personnel throughout this relocation process. Numerous properties have been considered including MPS facilities, Water Department warehouses on W. Cameron and W. Lincoln Avenues, DPW facilities at 7222 W. Fond du lac Ave. and 84th & Florist as well as other privately owned sites.

Regarding MPS facilities, it is estimated that MPS is currently paying \$6-\$12 per square foot to heat and maintain their facilities. This would be extremely costly and the facilities are huge. Smaller MPS facilities were simply too disjointed for use by the Election Commission.

The Water Department facilities are too large and would call for considerable rehabilitation. The Water Department would require compensation since it is a regulated utility.

The DPW facility at 84th & Florist is too large for the Commission. It does not have a loading dock and would require considerable rehabilitation.

I personally contacted the Port of Milwaukee Director regarding the availability of space to which he stated the Port did not have heated warehouse space with a loading dock - a requirement for our needs.

DCD recently issued an RFP for the sanitation yard at 7222 W. Fond du lac Avenue. The warehouse is separate and not heated.

DCD will be issuing a new RFP for the Hawley Road Firehouse.

The facility that the Commission is currently considering (4200 N. Holton Street) is being offered at \$2.25 per sq. ft. (\$3.00 with electricity). MMSD has agreed to pay for necessary upgrades to the facility. The Holton Street location would be a one-year lease with an option to extend.

If the Election Commission were permitted to relocate to the Holton Street facility, we could revisit all city facility options in 2009.

I respectfully request your reconsideration of the amendment to eliminate funding for the relocation of the Election Commission's field operations.