

John O. Norquist

October 3, 2001

Mayor
City of Milwaukee

The Honorable
Common Council of the
City of Milwaukee
City Hall, Room 205
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Honorable Members of the Common Council:

I am vetoing Common Council file 010661 which directs the Department of Public Works (DPW) to hire six driver worker positions. Funding for these positions was eliminated by Common Council resolution 001659 as part of the street sweeping changes included in the 2001 Budget Adjustment file.

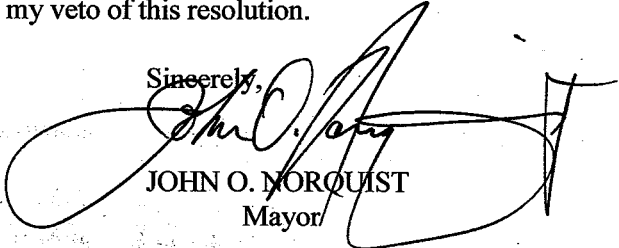
By working together to pass the 2001 budget adjustment file, we demonstrated our commitment to making the tough choices necessary to maintain our fiscal strength. The 2000 budget shortfall, which was the result of double digit healthcare increases and unusually large snowfalls, put pressure on a Budget that was already under strain from frozen state shared revenue payments. The Council, the Budget Office and Department Heads worked together to come up with a savings plan that enabled the City to avoid even more difficult and drastic choices.

Our commitment to fiscal restraint must be maintained. Simply put, we do not have the financial flexibility to absorb the additional expense of hiring six new workers. Increased 2001 energy costs, coupled with early year snow operations, will again make it difficult enough for DPW to avoid a deficit. Adding the cost of six new positions will only increase the pressure on DPW's budget.

Further, adding positions back at this time creates several practical and management problems. The department is fully staffed for its autumn leaf collection season, and it simply is not practical to continue a street sweeping operation into the fall and winter. Alternative assignments are difficult due to the specific job duties of the position, and no significant backlog exists to support six full time positions. While the department and union are working together to address some of these issues, filling these positions now creates a situation where DPW will have six more driver positions than needed.

The commitment and fiscal restraint shown by the Council to safeguard Milwaukee's finances has met with positive response. Even Moody's rating service noted in its August report that the budget repair package was an "important factor in the stable outlook assigned to the city's rating". Backsliding now on fiscal commitments made just this past June could alarm the municipal rating agencies. I ask that you restore this commitment by sustaining my veto of this resolution.

Sincerely,


JOHN O. NORQUIST
Mayor

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