



Office of the City Clerk

Ronald D. Leonhardt
City Clerk

Carolyn Hill Robertson
Deputy City Clerk

November 7, 2006

Honorable Members
Common Council
Room 205, City Hall

Dear Council Members:

A budget amendment to eliminate a vacant Production Technician position in City Channel 25 has been submitted under the "24-hour" rule for consideration at Friday's budget adoption meeting. This amendment was submitted to the Finance and Personnel Committee last Thursday, but no member of the committee offered a motion to approve it. This position was most recently held by Theresa Williamson who resigned and relocated to California.

I am requesting that you support City Channel 25 and defeat the proposed amendment. A reduction in staff would have a serious impact on channel programming and on the workload of the remaining staff. Coverage of government meetings and other events would become more difficult when vacations, sick leave and similar circumstances result in other staff absences. We have already experienced the need with the position vacant to hire freelance staff to provide sufficient staffing for meetings. Use of such personnel who are unfamiliar with our equipment and procedures is costly and can diminish the quality of our production.

Remaining staff would also experience an increase in overtime hours to cover meetings that go beyond regular work hours. With a full staff we are able to make better use of flextime to minimize overtime, an expense that is not budgeted.

There is also concern about our ability to cover meetings of the Milwaukee County Board without this position. We are in year 7 of a 10-year contract entered into by the Common Council to provide this coverage. Again, we would need to use freelance staff, particularly on days when we also have city meetings to broadcast.

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We would also have diminished capacity to cover news conferences, provide audiovisual assistance at meetings, provide CD or tape copies of meetings and produce programs for city departments. Plans to link video segments of meetings to Council file records in Legistar would also be affected.

City Channel 25 provides a vital information service to the general public. Its programming is of great assistance to the Common Council and city departments. The channel is also being looked at as an important tool as we develop communication plans for city emergencies. Please support the staffing that is needed to allow it to carry out its vital mission. Thank you.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald D. Leonhardt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ronald D. Leonhardt
City Clerk

Cc: Carolyn Hill Robertson
Barry Zalben
William Arnold
Angelyn Ward
Dennis Geraghty

Rdl/budget/2007/prodtech.doc