STATEMENT BY MARK FOREMAN, ON BEHALF OF MILWAUKEE VETERANS FOR PEACE

CITY BUDGET HEARING, OCT 6, 2020

The members of the Milwaukee Chapter of Veterans for Peace would like again to show support for Liberate MKE and other groups calling for a greater share of police spending in the City of Milwaukee to be redistributed to social needs.

The mayor's budget proposal, and his descriptions of it, really show the period of austerity that the majority of people in Milwaukee, the State of Wisconsin, and billions around the world are being forced to live in. If we take Mayor Barret's explanation of the budget on its face, as we would like to do, it seems that we are broke and getting broker, and this reality, according to him, is the reason why more cannot be done to redeploy resources from the police budget to social needs. He says clearly that the reduction of force through attrition, caused both because the state government will not allow us avenues to raise more money, and continues to cut our share of state money, already puts the safety of Milwaukee residents in jeopardy.

We think the big idea here is still being missed by city officials and the mayor. Policing does not grow peace in a community. Policing is the reactionary necessity to crimes already being committed, that are often the result of a lack of resources, opportunities, or hope in a prosperous future. As Markasa Tucker of Liberate MKE recently wrote in an op-ed published by UrbanMilwaukee.com, the people of Milwaukee clearly want money to be invested in our neighborhoods, public health and expanded youth job opportunities.

Peace and prosperity in our community will grow when we see each other as worthy of investment. We have faith that the mayor and city government are sincere in their efforts to steward this city forward, but they must propose budgets that reflect this sentiment. So, once again we call with others to redirect funds from policing to social needs, and we expect these social investments to be significant and wide-reaching.

Thank you