

December 11, 2020

To: Common Council

From: Paul Mozina

Re: Vote NO COPS Grant CC File No. 200676

The Common Council must reject the \$9.7 million Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Grant on December 15; otherwise, the MPD will dedicate 27 veteran officers to Task Forces in the DOJ's Operation Legend Initiative, and 3 to ATF Task Forces for the next 4 years. That would be a surge in the War on Drugs masquerading as Community Oriented Policing. Acceptance of the grant would require that 30 new officers be hired; and, apparently by virtue of simply becoming an MPD member, they would be doing Community Oriented Policing. Is the MPD doing Community Oriented Policing now?

The origin of the COPS Grant is the infamous [1994 Crime Bill](#); the one the County Board resolved to repeal, and Joe Biden *used* to brag about. From 1995-1997 the MPD used COPS Grant money to hire approximately 500 new officers and, with many of them retiring in the next few years, the City is looking at an \$80-90 million increase in its annual pension obligation beginning in 2023. The City is facing a choice now: defund the police, or plant the seeds of a future pension deficit?

The 1994 Crime Bill is notorious for escalating the War on Drugs, which has contributed to the disproportionate, concentrated mass incarceration of black and brown people. Ostensibly, it espoused a vision for Community Oriented Policing that is in stark contrast to the FBI, U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) and High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Forces of Operation Legend. Title I – PUBLIC SAFETY AND POLICING of the bill refers to: more cops on the beat; enhancing problem solving, service, and other skills needed in interacting with members of the community; implementing innovative programs; and developing new technologies to prevent crime.

The MPD didn't post their application for the COPS Grant on the [City's Legistar system](#), but it is required to:

(1) include a long-term strategy and detailed implementation plan that reflects consultation with community groups and appropriate private and public agencies and reflects consideration of the statewide strategy under section [503\(a\)\(1\)](#);

What is the MPD's "long-term strategy and detailed implementation plan"? What community groups did the MPD consult with? Did these community groups say they wanted more federalization of local law enforcement and that integrating 30 MPD veterans more tightly with the FBI, USMS, HIDTA, DEA and the ATF was *their strategy* for Community Oriented Policing? I doubt that is what the people in groups like: [MICAH](#), [WISDOM](#), [ComForce MKE](#), [The People's Revolution](#), [BLOC](#), [LIT](#) and the [AART](#), who aren't advocating defunding the police, have in mind when they think of Community Oriented Policing.

The COPS Grant would fund the MPD's participation in Operation Legend, which is just another surge in the failed War on Drugs – it has nothing to do with Community Oriented Policing. It is doublespeak to use an acronym like COPS to imply that the funds will go to Community Oriented Policing; when, in reality they will go towards perpetuating a cat and mouse drug prohibition game that has devastated millions of lives and thousands of communities over the last 50 years.

The MPD wants the Common Council, and the rest of us, to believe that all they have to do to honor the requirements of the COPS Grant is hire 30 new officers – but *is* their Community Oriented Policing Strategy? They brought a [draft of a Community Oriented Policing Standard Operating Procedure](#) to the FPC's Policies and Standards Committee on July 30 without soliciting any input from the community. In the last few months however, the newly reconstituted Community Collaborative Commission has begun to make its presence felt by working with MPD leadership to make some modest changes to the SOP.

The DOJ Collaborative Reform Initiative Draft Report that spawned the original Community Collaborative Committee, and the Collins et al., v City of Milwaukee et al., lawsuit, commonly referred to as the ACLU “stop and frisk” lawsuit, both emphasized the importance of Community Oriented Policing. In fact, the later requires the MPD to produce a community policing status report every 6 months, but the parties to the agreement have yet to decide what should be in the report and nothing has been delivered to the FPC.

The notion that the MPD has a clearly defined and implemented Community Oriented Policing strategy via which – by default – every new member becomes an active participant, is wishful thinking. The idea that the MPD can satisfy the Community Oriented Policing requirements of the COPS Grant by simply hiring 30 new members and reassigning 30 veterans to work with *its* “community partners” in the FBI, DEA, USMS, HITDA and the ATF for yet another Drug War surge, is deceptive. It's a bait and switch. It's doublespeak.

The Common Council must reject the COPS grant. Alders should send the MPD back to the drawing board to come up with a *real* Community Oriented Policing strategy in collaboration with its *real* community partners. In the meantime, the Common Council should reconvene the Milwaukee City-County Heroin, Opioid and Cocaine Task Force with a mandate to investigate the collateral damage the war on drugs is causing in Milwaukee.