



Milwaukee Police Department
Police Administration Building
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Jeffrey B. Norman
Acting Chief of Police

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October 14, 2021

Alderman Michael Murphy
City Hall, Room 205
200 East Wells
Milwaukee WI 53202

Alderman Murphy,

In your letter dated October 8, 2021, you asked me to come to our annual budget presentation prepared to discuss five items. In addition, there were numerous follow-up questions and requests for data posed by you and your colleagues. The Milwaukee Police Department is currently compiling its responses to those questions and data requests and expect to have them to you soon.

In advance of tomorrow's American Rescue Plan Act special meeting, I am writing to respond to your question about the potential impact on the reduction in sworn strength. The funding of 195 officers to replace our anticipated attrition is the subject of two aldermanic proposals. Even with the funding of those 195 officers, the Milwaukee Police Department is still projected to reduce its sworn strength by 25 officers after a 180 officer reduction over the previous two years.

As an initial matter, I firmly believe that the appropriate level of funding for violence prevention, housing, education and mental health are all part of the package for addressing public safety, along with appropriately funding our police department. The significant increase in crime has, no doubt, created a considerable strain on all of our resources. I am elated to hear Governor Evers is allocating \$45 million in ARPA funding for violence prevention and to help victims of crime.

During the past two years, the City of Milwaukee has experienced historic levels of crimes, which has resulted in an increased demand for police services. The City is experiencing a 4% increase in homicides from last year and 111% increase since year-to-date 2019. Last year's homicide rate was a historic 190 fatalities (a 96% increase). By comparison, the FBI reported a 5% increase in homicides nationally. In addition, we are experiencing a 27% increase in non-fatal shootings from last year and 112% increase since year-to-date 2019. In 2019, our homicide clearance rate was 77% (compared to a national average of 55%). Last year it was 55% and we are currently at 46%. Auto thefts have increased 174% since last year. Our response time has slowed by 10%. In addition, calls for a police response continue to increase. After experiencing a 2% increase in calls for service in 2020, we have experienced an additional increase of 1% this year. Half of all calls for service are from one-third of our aldermanic districts.

I will reiterate what I have repeatedly stated, both publicly and privately, that police staffing is not the sole factor in crime rate. I fully accept that COVID-19 has substantially impacted human behavior, police legitimacy has greatly been impacted by national and local calls for reform, and there are myriad social service matters outside the reach of law enforcement that have driven criminal behavior. However, it is

undeniable that a reduction in staffing has and will continue to limit the level of resources the Milwaukee Police Department can provide. We have been fully supportive of and were very active in the RFP process for a department-wide staffing study, as well as the MPD Diversion Task Force. I am fully committed to rightsizing this department through forthcoming expert analysis.

However, with increased demand and reduced staffing I am preparing to make difficult decisions. My Executive Command Staff and I have spent a considerable time running through the various scenarios if we lose an additional 195 officers. I find no pleasure in identifying areas that will need to be discontinued or reduced. However, I strongly believe that our elected officials and the community deserve to know the consequences of possible budget cuts in order to make fully informed decisions. Currently, I am exploring the following options for restructuring, in whole or in part, if the 195 officer reduction in sworn strength occurs:

- **Eliminate Police District #1:** One of our seven police districts, District #1 caters largely to downtown. Unlike every other district, District #1 is not the primary tenant of its building (co-locating with various police units in the Police Administration Building and other agencies), meaning its closure would not result in a vacant building. The surrounding police districts (#2, #3 and #5) would absorb a share of the officers and calls for service. As a result, I would anticipate increased response times and less support for special events in those districts. It currently staffs 101 employees, including 1 Captain, 3 Lieutenants, 14 Sergeants and 78 Officers.
- **Eliminate the Traffic Safety Unit:** In February 2021, I created the Traffic Safety Unit (TSU) as a direct response to the community demands for increased reckless driving enforcement. Since its inception, TSU has cited over 15,000 traffic-related citations. While reckless driving is a community priority, proactive traffic enforcement is secondary to addressing violent crime and responding to calls for service. Those members would be transferred to the districts and future traffic enforcement would be performed through the districts when staffing allows. This unit consists of 20 officers and 2 Sergeants.
- **Eliminate Office of Community Outreach and Education (OCOE):** OCOE focuses primarily on community engagement and schools. This unit would be dissolved to free up officers to address violent crime and respond to calls for service. It currently consists of 4 Officers and 1 Sergeant.
- **Eliminate Horse Patrol:** Despite considerable efforts to raise money and build a world class new downtown stable, the luxury of having a horse patrol is outweighed by the need to address violent crime and address calls for service. This unit consists of 8 Officers and 1 Sergeant.
- **Reduce Presence in Sojourner Family Peace Center, Fusion Center and Specialized Investigations Divisions:** Currently, MPD's Sensitive Crimes Division is co-located with other resources at the Sojourner Family Peace Center to address crimes against children and crimes of a sensitive nature such as domestic violence, prostitution and sexual assault. Our Fusion Center is co-located with the Southeastern WI Threat Analysis Center (STAC) to utilize technology for intelligence led policing efforts, including overseeing our camera systems. The Special Investigations Division (SID) was created in March 2018 to coordinate and focus criminal justice resources on the investigation, arrest and prosecution of prolific offenders of gun violence. Each of these areas would be scaled back to reallocate officers to respond to calls for service.

Even if I implement every option above, the total amount of officers made available from these reductions is still fewer than the proposed reduction of 195 officers. Accordingly, I anticipate we will experience a continued decrease in clearance rates, particularly for homicides, non-fatal shootings and auto thefts. We also anticipate increased response times for responding to calls for service, particularly for non-emergency calls.

I understand you are facing difficult decisions during the ARPA and budget process. I respectfully request that the funding for the 195 officers is approved through either of those means.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. B. Norman', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jeffrey B. Norman
Acting Chief of Police
Milwaukee Police Department

c: Mayor Tom Barrett
Common Council Members