
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Bob Donovan
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Alderman Donovan Issues Subpoena to Police Chief Edward Flynn

Public Safety Chair says MPD chief left him “no choice” after denying earlier open records request for OpenSky correspondence

Today Alderman Bob Donovan, chair of the Common Council’s Public Safety Committee, issued a subpoena (**attached**) to Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn, demanding that he provide correspondence – including emails – from current and former MPD officials pertaining to the troubled OpenSky digital police radio system.

Alderman Donovan said he respects Chief Flynn, but he “simply cannot ignore the blatant disregard” for the sweeping open records request issued in October. “I consider Chief Flynn a friend, but at the same time I cannot let him or anyone disrespect this office and an official and lawful open records request made by the chair of the Public Safety Committee,” he said.

“No one is above the law,” Alderman Donovan said.

In an OpenSky related move, Alderman Donovan said he will be asking Mayor Tom Barrett to join him in requesting that Chief Flynn put together a proposal (and report back to the Public Safety Committee) for providing real-time MPD radio dispatch audio to Milwaukee news media outlets. He says the issue is timely in the wake of last week’s unreported goings-on at Bradley Tech High School, where a gang fight led to nearly 20 arrests, the confiscation of a rifle and a fake handgun, and a need to have more than 80 MPD squads patrol near the school over a three-day period.

-More-

Chief Subpoenaed/ADD ONE

“A free and democratic society requires transparency and public access to government information, and we need an informed citizenry,” he said. “I don’t care if it takes MPD providing our news media with actual OpenSky radios or receivers to open up this access, and by God I would hope the mayor sees how important this issue is and supports it.”

The alderman issued his open records request for OpenSky correspondence on October 11, shortly after the October 7 citywide failure that shut down the system for 30 minutes, leaving officers with only cell phones and squad computers as a means of communicating with each other and with dispatchers.

The October 11 request was issued for records from Mayor Tom Barrett, Chief Flynn (and several others at MPD, including Chiefs Nannette Hegerty and Arthur Jones), Mayor’s Office Chief of Staff Patrick Curley, Department of City Development spokesman Jeff Fleming, as well as other high-ranking current and former MPD commanders and civilian personnel, including current MPD chief of staff Joel Plant and former COS Judy Pal.

The purpose of the original records request, according to Alderman Donovan, is threefold:

- To determine if the safety of officers and citizens is and has always been the top concern in implementing the OpenSky system.
- To determine if the system will ever work the way it is supposed to.
- With regard to the system – what mistakes were made in the past, who made them, and what steps are being taken to ensure they don’t happen again?