

Milwaukee Ald. Donovan: Mayor Barrett again neglects basic responsibilities

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His failure to appoint a new Emergency Government Coordinator leaves him out of compliance with State law

Given the disastrous failure of the Mayor Tom Barrett's administration to properly administer the Milwaukee Health Department, one might have thought he would be keeping a watchful eye on the other agencies in his charge and ensuring that, at a minimum, critical vacancies were being filled by able people.

Unfortunately, since the departure of Steven Fronk in June of this year, the City has been without an emergency management coordinator and all evidence suggests the Mayor has no clear idea how to get one.

This position is at the cabinet level and s. 62.51(2), Wis.Stats., obligates the mayor to appoint all the members of his or her cabinet with 90 days of a vacancy. By my calendar, and using a bit of simple math, this vital position should have been filled in September.

Under ch. 323, Wis. Stats., and ch. 6 of the Milwaukee Charter, this position is vested with a broad range of responsibilities in the event of an emergency - responsibilities particularly relating to coordination and communication among our various levels of government and our own first responders.

It bears mention that in September of this year there was a suspicious substance incident in the Mayor's own office that prompted an evacuation of a portion of City Hall. Thankfully, the substance found was not dangerous, but the communication

surrounding the incident was so poor that my colleagues, Ald. José Pérez and Ald. Milele Coggs, put in a file that was scheduled for hearing before the Public Safety and Health Committee. At that hearing the importance of having someone in the position of emergency management coordinator was one of a small number of things on which the many participants in the meeting could agree.

And, finally, turning to the 2019 budget, I see no funding for the position of Homeland Security Director, the position held by Mr. Fronk until his departure, or for anything even sounding like Emergency Government Coordinator.

In the case of Milwaukee's Health Department, Mayor Barrett allowed gross mismanagement to persist until his luck ran out. Let's hope he does something, and soon, with the position of Emergency Government Coordinator, rather than gambling that no incident requiring the position's services will come up.