



CITY OF MILWAUKEE

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Mayor's budget vetoes were disingenuous at best

**Joint statement of Alderman Tony Zielinski, Alderman Bob Donovan,
Alderman Mark A. Borkowski and Alderwoman Nikiya Dodd**

December 2, 2019

Last week we voted to override ALL of the Mayor's vetoes to the (amended) 2020 city budget that was adopted on November 8 by the Common Council. We saw through the obvious lack of transparency in the Mayor's striking of items that would add to our debt and to our overall borrowing.

This aversion-to-borrowing stance by the Mayor is almost laughable and is certainly disingenuous.

Cumulatively, several Council budget amendments added a very modest \$1.1 million to the city's debt (in a proposed \$1.6 billion budget!). However, during the past few years the Mayor has added close to \$58 million plus interest to our debt with the streetcar (design and construction expenditures to date) – a total that explodes to approximately \$110 million when you include future streetcar operating costs that will require \$3.5 million per year (for 15 years).

And the Council prevented the Mayor from getting the city even further debt by holding up his request for approximately \$47 million (plus interest!) for the expansion of the streetcar. Additionally, the Mayor wanted to cut funding for street lighting, but we restored that to ensure our neighborhoods would not be denied this basic but critical public safety infrastructure.

When one takes into account the fact that next year the federal contribution for the streetcar will dry up and the city could be on the hook for paying approximately \$3.5 million per year for the operation of the streetcar, the Mayor's 'frugality' takes on a new level of phoniness.

All of that operating money could be used to address crime and public safety (more police officers), lead hazards that endanger our children, and ESPECIALLY our crumbling roads and infrastructure, as well as our staggering poverty that holds back far too many neighborhoods and families in Milwaukee.

The Mayor needs to be held to account for saying he's doing one thing (being fiscally responsible) when in reality he's doing something totally opposite (driving us further into debt and into fiscal 'no man's land' with the streetcar).