

6321 Buford Drive  
Madison, WI 53718

July 16, 2009

Dear Mayor Dave,

The Community Services Committee (CSC) voted unanimously at its July 15, 2009 meeting to address the 6% reduction as required in your July 13 budget memo.

However, the CSC also unanimously passed a motion to state our strong belief that Community Resources Programs should be held harmless and not be subject to budget cuts in 2010. Numerous statements in recent weeks have referred to prioritizing basic services in this budget. We believe most Madisonians would agree that it is difficult to define child care, family support, senior services, youth services, domestic violence and sexual assault, community assistance and access, and neighborhood organizing (our seven program areas) as anything but basic services.

We readily acknowledge the tight constraints surrounding the development of the City's 2010 Budget. However, the low-income and other at-risk target populations we serve would be strongly affected by any reduction in services. There is no "give" in the lives of those we serve. Anything removed from whatever safety nets we support could have catastrophic consequences for the fabric of our low-income families and neighborhoods and, as you well know, could cost our city more in the long run. Our services are truly "basic services."

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan M. Sweet". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Alan Sweet, Chair  
(On behalf of the entire Community Services Committee)

-----Original Message-----

From: Susan and Alan Sweet [mailto:2sweets@charter.net]

Sent: Friday, July 17, 2009 2:01 PM

To: Laura Noel; Jennifer Stoiber; Bill Clingan; wancomp; Sweet, Alan; Solomon, Brian; Solomon, Brian; Small, Stephen; Rodriguez, Nancy; Paul VanRooy; Obregon, Ben; Jackson, Celia; Czyszczak-Lyne. Mary; Cnare, Lauren; Brown, Joanne; Berling, Richard

Cc: Charlie Sanders; cabunge@facstaff.wisc.edu; palasky@facstaff.wisc.edu

Subject: Budget Meeting with Mayor Dave

TO: Community Services Committee Members  
OCS Staff

This morning, I represented the CSC at a meeting with Mayor Dave. Also attending were Pat Lasky (ECCEC), Charles Bunge (SCAC), Charlie Sanders (CDBG), Bill Clingan, and Mayoral Aide Joel Plant.

Mayor Dave began the meeting with a brief review of the budget process, highlighting the timeframe within which it takes place. On the first Tuesday in October, the Mayor will submit his budget. At that time, any proposed budget cut figures will become known. In the case of our budget, he plans to follow last year's approach of offering a single dollar amount for our budget, i.e., without any detailed breakdown between areas. From then, the Common Council begins their deliberations and, if past patterns hold true, he expects they will add to that budget.

The Mayor's top priority for this budget is to target at-risk youth. He is very concerned about the continuing proliferation of gangs, gang activities, particularly gang-related violence, in the city. He cited the statistic that there are 900 confirmed gang members in Madison with another possible 500 "hangers-on." He wants agencies, including the police, OCS, and others to target these gang member wannabes and try to break the upward trend in this area.

Consequently, the Mayor directed us to "re-focus priorities" in the direction of at-risk youth. He mentioned that he recently attended a White House conference at which an initiative was introduced to identify best practices in addressing gang-related situations and then to bring those best practices to scale across the country. Fifty million dollars, possibly from the Recovery Act, is available for this effort.

Mayor Dave emphasized that this is a tough budget cycle, even more challenging than last year. He wants agencies and committees, including ours, to be prepared to make hard funding decisions. To that end, he encouraged us to look for and identify non-performers and under-performers among the agencies we fund. Between now and November, he would like us to assess the relative effectiveness of individual programs, particularly by analyzing achievements and outcomes. The key is to focus what will obviously be limited resources on high-value programs. Then, in November, when the budget is finalized, be ready to implement our budget allocation, including any possible reductions, in a very short timeframe.

Pat, Charles, Charlie, and I each briefly discussed our areas' response to the directive to prepare a budget reflecting a 6% reduction. In the case of the CSC, I explained very briefly the approach taken at Wednesday night's meeting (target lower priority programs when possible, otherwise reduce across the board). I then went on to explain our position that the agencies we fund do indeed provide "basic services" and that, therefore, the OCS budget should be held harmless, immune from any reduction. In support of that, I handed him the letter I prepared (with Brian's able assistance), copy attached. To be honest, he did not appear to be particularly persuaded by all this. He said that there are many agencies that provide basic services (he cited Metro, Police, and Fire which would be forced to cut back routes, reduce cops on the beat, or close a station if reduced significantly).

It is clear that the Mayor considers the 6% level to be at the upper end of a scale of possible cuts ranging from zero to six percent. He stated it is his goal to keep us at 0%.

I'm afraid we may be looking at a lean 'n mean Fiscal Year 2010.

Alan