

From: [Tim Mel](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Live on Patrol Review
Date: Wednesday, May 5, 2021 2:51:45 PM

Hello, I sent an email to the council last week but I do not see it on the agenda for today's meeting. Please see the below email and attach it to the meeting as it is quite relevant.
Thank you.

Dear Council,

Before you choose to criticize the community building that Sheriff Fletcher has been doing since October I would like to make a few suggestions. I think you are acting reactively and hastily to a situation you likely know very little about. Indeed I further speculate that some of what is being exposed is due to the lack of transparency in your own council actions and the inability of the council to take the mayor to task when it comes to community safety and engagement issues.

Let me throw a couple of statistics at you that may help you figure out where you can better spend your resources:

From 2012 to 2016 the city of St. Paul experienced an overall DECREASE in violent crime of 15.9%. At this time, the portion of the St. Paul budget that was spent on the Police Department was 36%

Since 2017, post Melvin Carter's Election, there has been a 27.1% INCREASE in violent crime. In 2021, the Adopted Spend Budget by department for Policing is 33.4%. So you have a 2.6% decrease in funding and a 11.2% increase in violent crime in the same period. But surely you added headcount in the same time period. Why yes you did. From 2017 to 2021, according to the adopted budgets, the SPPD was allowed to add 8 people to staff. Well they were able to add more but then they had to make cuts in 2019.

One other item in regards to the budget, In 2017, the total spend on Debt Service was listed as \$66,737. In the adopted 2021 Spend Budget, the debt service is \$57,909,605. I had to copy and paste that just to make sure I got it right. St. Paul is now in Debt nearly \$58 Million.

So here is what is baffling in all of this, the city has gotten in debt up to its eyeballs. It has cut every single service that is the job of the city to do. You can't spend a dime to fix your own infrastructure or get your own house in order, but yet have plenty enough time to complain about someone doing their dangdest to engage the community while at the same time trying to make us safe AND running a jail AND answering the call to other municipalities who need their assistance?

Here is my challenge to you, and I challenge you this way because I have done it and I know what it feels like. Call the Sheriff or call the Chief. Schedule a ride along. Ride along with an

officer on a Friday night. Not any other night. A Friday night because that is when everything is nuts. That's when you can be on the streets chasing your tail trying to find out where the shots fired suspects are because you don't have *shot spotter* to help you locate the type, distance and direction of the shot. That's when you can experience the third or fourth time returning to the same residence for a domestic call. That's when you can experience the countless times your heart rate skyrocketing as you pull someone over and you walk up seeing them moving all over and you have no idea if you are going home that morning. And maybe, just maybe, you get a thank you or take care from someone during the course of your shift. I've been on those ride alongs. I've seen that insanity. I've experienced that rush, that fear and that relief. It comes back to me when I watch Sheriff Fletcher and Pat Scott and Joe out on Patrol because I know what it felt like when I did it for that one evening. And I didn't have to get out of the car if I didn't want to.

There is another side of this that you are all missing though. That side is the community awareness and engagement portion. With all of the discussion about defunding the police, demilitarizing, reimagining and replacing policing, Bob and Pat are already doing it! But you don't see it. They aren't doing it through extreme measures or special programs, not that any of that is bad, but they are doing it through tried and true methods of community policing. They are doing exactly what the people are asking for. Putting cops that are in their neighborhoods that they know and trust. Talking to people, being seen, interacting. Chief Axtell is doing the same, he is putting cops where they are needed and engaging the community every day. But the resources he needs are being stripped away continually.

When I grew up in St. Paul we had that. We knew who was in our precinct. We knew Kojak was there. We knew Malone was there. We knew Fletch was there. We maybe didn't like Kojak, but we knew he was there and we knew if we got in a bind, he would be there. We knew who was going to respond. And we knew who we had to report on if necessary. Now, it's all random because everything is centralized and anonymous. It's sterile and because of that, dehumanizing. No one knows who or what belongs where. Because of that officers rely on tells, attributes or commonalities in criminal behaviors and guess what, they get it wrong sometimes. They get it wrong because the bad guys figure out what the good guys are looking for and change what they do, wear or drive. At the same time good kids like to look like bad guys to be cool and get caught up for doing nothing. Community policing catches on to those kids and fixes it before it gets out of hand. But when you take away the tools and the resources and the people, like Bob Fletcher, Live on Patrol and his candor, you kill the very thing that you are trying to build. You end up with double digit violent crime, people who mistrust and hate the police and a downtown devoid of business.

So if you want to continue your fight against what is right go ahead, but I say again, I challenge you to take a ride along first. Find out what it is really like before you say that what they are doing is wrong. As of right now, I say you have no idea and you are listening to the wrong people. I used to live in St. Paul, I love St. Paul,

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