

Mayor Jacob Frey
350 S. 5th St., Room 331
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Council President Elliott Payne
350 S. 5th St., Room 370
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Council Member Aisha Chughtai
350 S. 5th St., Room 370
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Mayor Frey, City Council President Payne, and Council Member Chughtai:

As members of the Board of Estimate and Taxation, we are tasked with deciding the appropriate increase for the Minneapolis general fund, park board, and other associated property tax levies. In this decision, **our core responsibility is to balance the funding needs of public services with the long-term sustainability of city finances.**

With this responsibility in mind, **we are writing to express our concern about a pattern of unsustainable and unaccountable spending within the Minneapolis Police Department.** Although department-level spending is beyond the purview of this board, we cannot ignore the broad fiscal impacts of recent MPD cost overruns and its relevance to the levy decision at hand.

MPD overspent its 2025 budget by \$20 million and is projected to exceed that overrun in 2026. Next year's proposed budget attempts to account for this pattern by increasing allocations for overtime and recruitment. However, recent overruns are not isolated to personnel, having occurred in a wide range of cost centers including equipment, advertising, printing, and other areas, which altogether suggests a failure of sound budget management and oversight.

Continued failure will have long-lasting effects: **MPD overages have consumed savings from other departments and caused a depletion of our general fund balance, which now threatens the city's AAA bond rating.** We understand the necessity of properly accounting for previously unbudgeted overtime and recruitment, but we are concerned that without concerted effort to reign in spending, MPD will continue to exceed its budget and imperil city finances.

As leading city legislators and our elected executive, we ask that you jointly commit to formalizing a program of increased MPD oversight and transparency. With deference to your authority and expertise over budgetary decisions, we suggest the following commitments:

1. The Mayor and Council should recommit to strong collaboration in overseeing MPD.
2. MPD, the Mayor, and the Council should agree on a set of regularly reported and published metrics to provide an accessible accounting of MPD operations and spending.
3. The city should perform and allocate necessary funds to support a thorough audit and review of police spending and operating procedures in order to identify potential savings.

We ask that you consider a public commitment to MPD budgetary accountability a component of this year's levy agreement and look forward to your response.

In Partnership,

Steve Brandt
President
Minneapolis Board of
Estimate and Taxation

Tom Olsen
President
Minneapolis Park and
Recreation Board

Eric Harris Bernstein
Vice President
Minneapolis Board of
Estimate and Taxation