



Practice fiscal responsibility

By Matt Bostrom

Values

- Provide safety through community policing
- Practice fiscal responsibility
- Collaborate with local law enforcement
- Encourage diversity
- Connect with youth
- Improve service through technology

Fiscal responsibility emerges from the quality of an organization's leaders and managers. Fiscally responsible leaders possess humility, transparency, impeccable character, and a can-do spirit. I would expect the leaders in my administrative team to be results-oriented and to be characterized as people who set a positive example for staff. Also, my administrative team would recognize that leadership is not rank, privileges, titles, or money. Rather, leadership requires a deep sense of responsibility. Therefore, it is important that our public leaders understand our current economic difficulties. If elected

Ramsey County Sheriff, I will commit to freezing the budget at the 2010 level for at least two fiscal years.

In my position as Assistant Chief, I provide daily input into personnel and staffing matters and I use best practices as my guide for resource allocation. I also draw upon my experience as a police officer, detective, supervisor, lieutenant, commander, and senior commander. I have participated in traditional, community-based, and tactical approaches to resource allocations, and I led the police and fire departments in reallocating resources to become better prepared to respond to large scale events.

Approaches to personnel and budget allocation should include the assessment of calls for service, crime rate, court and detention services, and the number of authorized staff. Typically, there is not enough staff to concentrate on these issues. One solution is to hold strategic meetings that assess activities and criminal justice data. In Saint Paul, we use a system called StatMap (Statistical Mapping) as a means of measuring our success in reducing crime.

StatMap can reveal city-wide trends and pinpoint problems in specific neighborhoods. Police

commanders and investigators are brought together on a regular basis to assess progress in crime reduction and recommend strategies for improving results. Each StatMap meeting is designed to improve personal and departmental accountability and to assist each commander in applying problem-oriented policing techniques to community issues.

Staffing allocations need to be frequently appraised based on special events, which can include everything from presidential visits to community festivals and parades. Successfully attending to issues associated with these events requires maintaining necessary policing services in neighborhoods and tactically providing additional resources to the special event.

It is also important to continuously assess the quality of life issues in the community and the level of the services provided to the many law enforcement and criminal justice partners. Often these issues can be identified by the community through regularly scheduled meetings with

neighborhood and citizen groups.

Quality of life issues tend to be more fluid and require repeated assessment of results. For example, safety needs in the community fluctuate between juvenile crime, crack houses, prostitution, methamphetamine production, to

vehicular street racing, loud exhaust and car stereos, domestic violence, gangs, and violent offenders.

While all of these issues are important, resource allocation should correspond to quality of life issues. If juvenile and gang crime is down, for example, the sheriff's staff could move some—not all—personnel to address emerging issues related to quality of life and root causes of crime.

Because of my experience in public and nonprofit fiscal leadership and management I am comfortable with the county and city budgeting, requisitioning, bidding, and purchasing processes. If a public agency is to remain fiscally sound, I believe in a balanced



approach to the acquisition and management of funds.

A vision for *cooperation* versus *competition* with other public safety agencies will allow for efficiencies of scale, streamlining of operations, and budget savings through innovation. Future funding for law enforcement will likely include general and special fund dollars, state and federal grants, and the development of public and private partnerships. I have successfully managed multi-million dollar budgets and I consistently achieved the mission and goals under budget. I am confident that I can effectively manage the future budgetary needs of the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office. ■