

Chief Edward Flynn's chief of staff moonlighting in Pittsburgh

Nov. 21, 2014

By [Gina Barton](#) of the Journal Sentinel

Milwaukee police Chief Edward Flynn's chief of staff is moonlighting in Pittsburgh to help implement data-driven policing there, [the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported Friday](#).

Several members of the city council there said they were not aware of [Milwaukee's problems with reporting crime statistics](#) when they signed a \$32,340 contract with Joel Plant, the newspaper reported.

Plant arrived this week in Pittsburgh and is planning several more visits over the next three months, the Post-Gazette reported.

Ald. Bob Donovan said he was "quite surprised" to learn about the contract, considering Milwaukee's crime problems.

"I sure hope Mr. Plant isn't skirting any of his duties for the MPD, or using any MPD/city resources in his consulting endeavor," Donovan said in a statement.

"If Mr. Plant can spend all of that time in Pittsburgh while still doing his job here, I believe it's time we take another look at his job description, because in my mind it smells strongly of double-dipping at the expense of Milwaukee taxpayers."

In an emailed statement, Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn said Plant was using vacation time for his visits to Pittsburgh.

"Outside the walls of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, the Milwaukee Police Department is widely regarded as an innovative, progressive police department engaged in evidence-based best practices," the statement said. "I have given permission to Department members to travel across the country and take part in various teaching and consulting activities on their own time for which they are emunerated. Joel Plant responded to a request for proposal from the City of Pittsburgh and was selected in a public purchasing process."

Plant earns an annual salary of more than \$98,000 serving as Flynn's chief of staff, a position he took on in July 2010. He organized a consulting company called ESM Advisors in October, 12 days after the Pittsburgh police sought proposals. He was the only person to submit one, the Post-Gazette reported.

According to the Pittsburgh paper, the contract calls for Plant to assist the department there in five areas: organizational structure, leadership, analytic capacity, fiscal management, and media and communications.

Plant and the acting chief in Pittsburgh, Cameron McLay, knew each other during their previous positions, Plant in the Madison mayor's office and McLay in the police department there.

Timothy McNulty, spokesman for the Pittsburgh mayor, "dismissed concerns about Mr. Plant based on Milwaukee's data problems," citing the fact that some of them dated to 2006, before Plant joined the Milwaukee police, according to the Post-Gazette.

[A Journal Sentinel investigation in 2012](#) that found Milwaukee police had

misreported thousands of violent assaults, rapes, robberies and burglaries as less serious offenses and failed to correct the problems or publicly disclose them, even though department officials, including a top data analyst, raised red flags for years.

Flynn said the inaccuracies were the result of human errors and a failing computer system, which the department is seeking to replace. He said the investigation and prosecution of the crimes were not affected by the way they were coded.

Violent crime ticked up in Milwaukee in 2013 compared with 2012, due in large part to increases in homicides and robberies, but overall crime has fallen, the Milwaukee Police Department announced last spring.

The department released its annual crime statistics for 2013 in March, touting an overall crime reduction of 8.7% compared with 2012 that was driven by decreases in property crime.

Increases in homicides, robberies and forcible rape pushed violent crime up 1.1% from 2012 to 2013. Officials said

overall violent crime is down 11.4% since 2007, but last year was the second year in a row that violent crime increased.