

Milwaukee Alderman Announces He Will Not Seek Reelection; Federal Inquiry Into City Hall Corruption Has Been Ongoing

By Mark Belling, WISN-AM

While a federal inquiry into possible corruption in Milwaukee city government is ongoing, a high profile Milwaukee alderman announced today he is not seeking reelection.

When I first disclosed the existence of the federal inquiry several weeks ago, I mentioned that it was occurring only weeks before the filing period for city council elections. The entire council is up for reelection this spring. While two other aldermen have announced they are not running those decisions don't seem to be involved with the ongoing inquiry.

Today, Alderman Khalif Rainey announced he will not run for reelection. Rainey has not responded to my inquiries about a potential federal investigation. Multiple sources have indicated that one of the areas of inquiry has been the approval process of a concert facility proposed for property near Fiserv Forum. The developer of the facility, Madison's Frank Productions, denied through an attorney's email that the company is being investigated. That attorney, however, backed off on assurances that he would answer my follow up questions. However, I can report a separate federal probe is going on in Madison dealing with Covid funds received by subsidiaries of Live Nation, America's largest concert promoter. The federal program aiding concert promoters during Covid specifically barred Live Nation from receiving funds. On its website, Frank lists itself as a fully owned subsidiary of Live Nation. Frank Productions received Covid funds. (The Washington Post first reported in 2022 on the Covid funds received by Frank Productions.)

In Milwaukee, the battle over approval of the concert facility near Fiserv Forum featured high powered lobbying by supporters and opponents. Two aldermen who initially expressed opposition to the facility later went on to support it. Rainey was one of them.

Rainey is one of the highest profile figures in city government and is visible at many community events including sports and concerts. He represents a central city district and is considered powerful. Rainey's announcement that he will not seek reelection was vague about what his reasons are. Milwaukee aldermanic positions are considered political jewels as the salary is set to go to \$84,000 per year under a proposal from Mayor Cavalier Johnson. Aldermen are also well known for raising campaign funds which can be used for some seemingly personal expenses.

No one has publicly confirmed that federal investigators have been looking into Milwaukee city government. The fed only rarely confirm such investigations nor do they generally announce when such investigations are over. The existence of an investigation does not mean that anyone will be charged. I have reported that at least two Milwaukee aldermen have been linked to the federal questioning. There may be more.

This story remains fluid.

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December 21, 2023