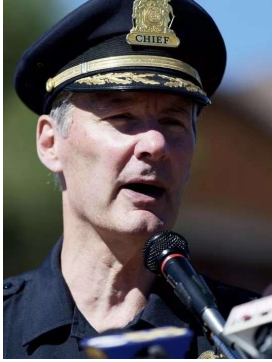


# Milwaukee Police Chief Ed Flynn hires attorney Franklyn Gimbel to represent him over pursuit policy order

Mary Spicuzza, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

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(Photo: Calvin Mattheis)

Embattled Police Chief Edward Flynn has hired one of Milwaukee's most prominent attorneys to represent him in the wake of a Fire and Police Commission order to change the city's pursuit policy.

Franklyn Gimbel confirmed Thursday that he was hired by Flynn.

"I have been in touch with Chief Flynn, and he has engaged me to consult with him about the threats that were included in his Fire and Police Commission directive related to employment," Gimbel told the Journal Sentinel.

Last week, the commission ordered Flynn to submit a revised pursuit policy to the panel by July 27. The directive came after months of study and public testimony about [police chases](/story/news/crime/2017/06/07/when-should-police-chase-fleeing-cars/355857001/) and how the policy may be influencing a culture of reckless driving and playing a role in the local [drug trade](/story/news/investigations/2017/07/12/cops-target-heroin-dealer-phones/453937001/).

The order said that "failure to comply with this directive may result disciplinary action by the board, including discharge, suspension without pay or reduction in rank."

Gimbel raised concerns about the directive, but said he couldn't share details of what advice he has given Flynn, citing attorney-client privilege.

"I've never seen a communication from a Fire and Police Commission in Milwaukee to the chief that essentially says, 'Do this or else.' I view it as an ultimatum threat, and I don't think it's an appropriate," Gimbel said. "But what we're going to do about it, and where we go from here, has not yet been determined."

MaryNell Regan, the commission's executive director, could not be reached for comment Thursday.

Flynn's decision to hire Gimbel comes during a time of heightened tension between him and the Milwaukee Common Council.

Last week, Ald. Tony Zielinski [unveiled a measure](/story/news/local/milwaukee/2017/07/11/thought-drug-money-burned-milwaukee-alderman-raises-moral-concerns-using-seized-money/468110001/) that would give the council the power to fire the city's police chief. The change would require state approval.

Current state law says it's the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission that has the authority to appoint the chiefs of both the police and fire departments.

Mayor Tom Barrett has said he opposes any move to give aldermen the power to fire the city's police chief.

But the mayor expressed dismay over Flynn's decision to hire Gimbel.

"If this is about a policy difference with the commission, it certainly doesn't warrant hiring an attorney. I have not yet talked to the chief about his rationale," Barrett said. "So if it's about the policy disagreement, I'm not happy about it. I'll have to hear from him directly as to why he did this."

When it comes to the pursuit policy change, Barrett said he wants to talk with the chief and commission members.

Gimbel is a high-profile veteran attorney best known for his criminal defense work.

He previously served as a member of the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission, and during that time frequently battled with longtime Milwaukee Police Chief Harold A. Breier — [once even comparing](http://archive.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/spotlight-starting-to-dim-for-deal-maker-frank-gimbelb99522271z1-309060411.html/) Breier to Ayatollah Khomeini.

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