

# Guest Column

**Our very good friend and tough union member, Officer John Ward, recently went before the Village Board at Bolingbrook to discuss layoffs within his chapter. His speech is printed below. Check out our next Rap Sheet, due out next month, for more information.**

**We at MAP applaud Officer Ward for his efforts to fight for his officers.  
-Editor**

I am the President of Bolingbrook Police Association M.A.P Chapter #3.

Mayor Claar recently cited villages that have had to lay off safety personnel while a large majority has not. Is this meant to be merely a statement of fact or is he saying this village is in a worse financial crisis than he would prefer to publicize?

Revenues have decreased 16% over 3 fiscal periods. Now the village gives the impression there is a deficit rather than a decline. If the budget is that dire, where did the money go? It did not go to the unions because we have not received a raise since May 1st 2008.

Though Mayor Claar did not attend any negotiations with us, he publicly makes inaccurate comments on it. For example, at the first budget workshop, Mayor Claar tried to blame the unions for refusing to negotiate a new insurance plan when in fact it was village attorney Jim Boan that refused to negotiate that issue at what was my request to do so. The village has continually refused to negotiate in good faith and that is why our union chapter has filed an unfair labor practice against the village. Mayor Claar continues to publicly blame budget problems on the unions not making concessions but when I asked for a proposal to what would be considered necessary, I get no response. Our pay is comparable to surrounding towns and unlike Mayor Claar we pay into our medical insurance and pensions while the taxpayers pay 100% of his insurance and pension.

The sworn personnel being laid off were hired less than a year and a half ago when we had a larger staff and now they say they can't afford to keep them. What happened to the money over the past year?

The current police department training budget has been cut by 58% compared to the 2008-2009 budget and the projected amount for the upcoming budget has been cut by 63% compared to the same. Now compare this to money budgeted for Boards and Commissions/Special events such as the Information Technology Commission, Pathways Parade Commission, and Bolingbrook Community Choir to name a few. While reducing personnel and public safety budgets, Mayor Claar and the board approved a 2009-2010 budget (\$261,850) for these commissions at approx. 13% over the total that was actually used in the previous budget year (\$229,735). As

of February 18, 2010, 47% of this money was unused, leaving a total of approx. \$124,180 to be used in just under 2.5 months. Where does all of the left over money go? In one line item, \$3,200 was budgeted for the Information Technology Commission that showed no money used in the last 3 budget years and none being used for the current budget year. How is that fiscally responsible? I know as the union president I did not approve that and try to hide and shuffle this money around, yet Mayor Claar and the board want to blame the alleged financial woes on everybody else.

I, for one, find it deplorable that nobody from this governing body has the moral courage to stand up and do the right thing. The residents and employees of Bolingbrook deserve much better and should insist on a more transparent and responsible approach.

Watching this board is like watching a mother duck cross the street with her babies. The ducklings all stay in line and do not veer to one side or the other unless the mother duck does, careful to follow her every lead and not make decisions for themselves.

John Ward