



Town of Concord

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Town of Concord Response to Teamsters Union Statement Regarding DPW Highway & Grounds Division Negotiations

CONCORD, MA— Contrary to the overarching message sent by the Teamsters Local 25 in their April 6, 2019 statement, the Town of Concord respects and values the worth of all employees in the Department of Public Works. The Union's statement is rife with inaccuracies.

To begin, Teamsters Local 25 does not represent all Public Works employees. It only represents the 17 employees in the Highway and Grounds division of the Department of Public works, and not the other 34 employees.

Furthermore, the Town has not stalled negotiations with the Teamsters, which is evidenced by the fact that the Town settled the contract with the Dispatchers, who are also represented by the Teamsters, in just a few sessions earlier this year.

The Town has been negotiating with the Teamsters Union for an initial collective bargaining agreement for employees of the Concord Highway & Grounds Division since 2016. The Town and Union have held twenty-five (25) meetings to date over a 3 year period, and are now in State-led mediation with the next session scheduled for April 12, 2019. The State has also referred the impasse between the Town and Union to State Fact Finding.

The language proposed by the Teamsters Local 25 will have lasting impacts to the community and the taxpayers of Concord and creates a financial and operational burden that results in an unsustainable public works organization.

The Town has not proposed, as alleged, to take away overtime pay or benefits to employees in the Highway and Grounds division. Specifically:

- The Town is proposing to continue the present arrangement and practices regarding work schedules; it is the Union that is seeking to change those practices.
- The Union is also pressing for overtime pay for employees while working their regularly scheduled straight time shift during any winter storm event, when previously on duty. This is an unprecedented request and represents an expensive change for the Town, which would have cost over \$40,000 dollars between this past November and March alone, if agreed to.

- The Town and Union have agreed on pay increases for the employees in the Highway and Grounds division, which is typically a sticking point in contract negotiations.

Moreover, the Town is not taking an anti-Union position regarding picket lines. To the contrary, the Town has objected to the Union's proposed language that would allow employees to refuse to cross a Teamsters picket line in the performance of their duties. This refusal could potentially result in catastrophic public health and safety consequences, and the Town is taking the reasonable position that employees in the Highway and Grounds division may be required to cross picket lines to protect the public if safety or health concerns exist.

With regard to responsibilities of supervisory employees, given that the Highway and Grounds Division supervisors are members of the same bargaining unit as their direct reports, the Town is proposing language addressing supervisory and leadership functions. Specifically, the Town's language states that employees assigned supervisory or leadership responsibilities must enforce provisions of the collective bargaining agreement, laws, regulations and policies and must regularly and completely evaluate and manage the performance of subordinates. This is a far cry from a "loyalty oath" as the Teamsters claim in their April 6th press release.

Additionally, the Union is insisting that Union Business Agents have unfettered access to the premises and public works employees without notice during work time when they are being paid by the Town to perform their work. Furthermore the Union language allows access outside of the normal business hours, while employees are still working and still being paid by the Town, at any location with only notice provided.

Finally, the Union is strenuously opposed to the Town's longstanding right to use contractors or other non-bargaining unit employees to perform certain work responsibilities within the Department. Elimination of the use of contractors and non-bargaining unit employees for the specialized work performed by CPW would have significant fiscal and functional impacts for the Town.

The statement in the April 6, 2019 news article that the Town "has been unwilling to provide even the most basic benefits" is materially false and factually inaccurate. The employees in the Highway and Grounds division are paid competitive salaries and very good benefits, and the Town is proposing to continue that arrangement and looks forward to a favorable resolution to the contract.

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