



Nova Scotia
Federation of Labour, CLC

January 27, 2011

Mayor Peter Kelly
Halifax Regional Municipality
1841 Argyle Street
P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia , B3J 3A5

Dear Mayor Kelly:

We have been following with grave concern the current round of ‘negotiations’ taking place between HRM/Metro Transit and the union that represents the workers at this valued operation - the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 508.

Not being a player at the table but being very familiar with the process; by all we see and hear, it would seem either by design, intent or oversight; this round of ‘negotiation’ was destined to falter or break-down from the very onset.

For whatever reason; unlike previous rounds of bargaining between the parties; where ample time had been given to allow for open and productive bargaining, with the goal of achieving a collective agreement while maintaining this valued service to the traveling public; it clearly appears in the current round, with many controversial issues on the table; that the employer is fast tracking the process, forcing bargaining to a unfortunate conclusion that could and should be avoided.

Your transit workers will find themselves in a legal strike position on Thursday, February 2nd because they have no choice. You initially presented them with a list of demands of over 250 concessions at the bargaining table and 12 days later you filed for conciliation with very little time spent trying to negotiate or resolve the numerous issues before the parties.

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It is our understanding that the HRM later put forward a revised final offer position to the union, to which the union offered a counter after reviewing the latest position of the employer. Unfortunately, not only had the Union's counter proposal been rebuffed by the employer, but they had been advised the employer will not accept the counter-offer.

We would suggest Mr. Mayor; this is not collective bargaining in any sense of the word but rather the archaic position of 'ultimatum bargaining' – clearly destined to fail and severely erode any semblance of reasonable relations between the employer and employees – negotiate not dictate.

We would sincerely urge you to use the remaining time and opportunity before us left to return to the bargaining table and try a fair, equitable approach and talk about the issues. Historically this bargaining has taken a year to complete and this expedited process has us questioning the HRM process and intent.

We are urging our affiliates in HRM and the public to contact you and their Councillors and ask that this bargaining be given the urgency and respect it deserves as time is very short. Over 95,000 transit users are depending on you to deal with this and we are depending on you to do what is right for members of ATU Local 508 and their families.

On behalf of the Executive Council members and the 70,000 affiliates of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, we would urge you to use your good office to ensure that fair and open bargaining are the tools brought to the table to achieve a negotiated resolve to this matter which is clearly in the best interest of all.

Yours truly,



Rick Clarke

PRESIDENT

RC/jw/CAW Local 4005

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HRM Council

Minister of Labour and Advanced Education Marilyn More