

The (4) City of Akron Labor Unions, Akron FOP #7, CSPA, IAFF Local #330, AFSCME #1360, representing close to 1800 hard working City employees believe it is necessary to respond to Mayor Horrigan's latest press release regarding the Retiree Benefits Arbitration Decision (4/4/18).

Union leadership in the City of Akron, has always been willing to do whatever we could to help our city grow and move forward while still maintaining and protecting the negotiated rights of our members. As stated by FOP President Frank Williams in a local radio interview, "This arbitration has never been about the money. It has always been about the city making changes to our Collective Bargaining Agreements without negotiating those changes."

In June 2015, the (4) unions agreed that the archaic healthcare plan needed to be changed. We took the lead and invested almost \$60,000 hiring a consulting firm to look at the City's plan and to suggest the necessary changes needed to modernize that plan and make it more competitive for the city to bid out. The City of Akron profited from that very plan, paid for by the Unions.

Retiree health care changes were part of those proposals the entire time. The unions presented to the city options that would address both retiree benefit coverage and medical inflation costs. Presented were static numbers that would both control legacy costs, which the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Panel recommended, and still allow retirees some relief from high cost premiums. The City refused to entertain any changes with their retired employees.

During negotiations the City made it very clear that they would not discuss any changes to the Retiree Health Care coverage. Collective Bargaining Agreements were legally agreed upon by all involved parties, signed by the Mayor, and approved by City Council. In October, 2016, the City of Akron Administration along with approval of City Council passed ordinances which violated those Collective Bargaining Agreements. An independent Arbitrator agreed in a 56 page finding listing the multiple occasions the City negotiated in bad faith. "The City, I have inferred was less than honest in stating that the 'status quo' with respect to retiree health care benefits would be maintained. The deliberate avoidance of instituting unilateral changes in retiree health care benefits during negotiations, only to do so after negotiations and a final agreement with the FOP has been reached, is a bargaining tactic that cannot be rewarded."(p. 48).

Our grievances were centered around the fact that the Unions just agreed to their Collective Bargaining Agreements, then the City made changes that we believed should have been discussed and negotiated.

All (4) Unions will continue to work with Mayor Horrigan and his administration to move forward from this ruling. We hope that in the future, the Mayor opens his doors for any discussions that could alter or potentially impact our Collective Bargaining Agreements.