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From: Victor Rella <vjr750@optonline.net>
Sent: Monday, August 08, 2016 11:47 AM
To: Board of Representatives
Subject: Stamford Firefighters Op-ed
Attachments: 8-7-16 SPFFA op-ed.pdf

Attached you will find an Op-ed that was published in the Stamford Advocate this past Sunday. At the request of Stamford Fire Fighters President Brendan Keatley I am forwarding this message to all members of the Board of Representatives.

Thank you in advance for your time. I know how valuable it is, especially during the Summer.

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Brendan Keatley op-ed: Firefighter contract enhances public safety

Published 12:00 am, Sunday, August 7, 2016

This week the [Stamford Professional Fire Fighters Association](#) (SPFFA), IAFF Local 786, working in tandem with the administration of Mayor [David Martin](#), have at long last ratified a new labor contract designed to improve public safety, increase wages, change employee health care delivery, all while adding crucial job protections and training and certification requirements for firefighters.

The labor contract was passed by professional firefighters with an overwhelming 78 percent of the vote and drew a record 95-percent turnout amongst the union members. The approval of this agreement comes after a six-year stalemate that saw firefighters in our city working without a contract. It is simply not good practice to have city workers, especially front-line emergency responders, unprotected by a labor contract for such a long period of time.

The SPFFA and the city reached an agreement that provides a reasonable 16.25-percent pay increase spread over the eight-year life of the contract retroactive to July 1, 2011.

The population of our city, now the third largest in Connecticut, has grown by 5 percent since the last contract expired in 2011. New staffing provisions provided in the agreement helps provide stability that is absolutely essential for a city that is thriving, more densely populated and with many taller and larger buildings in construction and development. It secures the safety and welfare of our citizens and first responders alike.

The safety and wage agreement increases the number of professional firefighters on duty at any given time from 52 to 54. Those two additional firefighters per shift will be deployed to protect citizens in the Turn of River area of our city. It addresses important safety issues to bring Stamford in compliance with [National Fire Protection Association](#) standards, as well as resolving several contested outstanding state labor board cases between the city and the union.

While no agreement is ever perfect, both sides worked diligently to produce an agreement that is fair and will benefit the entire city through the end of its term, in 2018. We commend the mayor and his team for their diligent efforts.

The labor agreement next goes to the [Stamford Board of Representatives](#) for its vote on Monday, Aug. 8. It is critical that the board vote to ratify this agreement, just as the professional firefighters of Stamford did overwhelmingly on Thursday.

The labor deal reached was achieved by both sides, negotiating in good faith and with the best of intentions for our city. Unfortunately, behind the scenes, there are now outside forces unrelated to the city's collective bargaining process, acting in their own personal interests to derail the

finalization of the labor agreement. Disingenuous bomb throwers, petty back room dealers, poison pen letters and dishonest whisper campaigns must not destroy this public safety labor agreement.

It is essential that we move forward and not allow our city's labor unity and progress to be halted by a handful of individuals trying to derail the process for their own benefit.

The people of this great city deserve a force of professional, well-trained and certified firefighters to protect their lives and property. In turn, those firefighters need the support of the city they serve and the tools necessary to keep everyone safe. With this recently approved labor contract that is exactly what Stamford has. For the sake of every resident, business owner, visitor and worker who spends time in Stamford, I urge the Board of Representatives to expeditiously approve the contract that the professional firefighters and the [Martin Administration](#) have agreed upon.

[Brendan Keatley](#) is the president of the Stamford Professional Fire Fighters Association, IAFF Local 786

<http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/news/article/Brendan-Keatley-op-ed-Firefighter-contract-9125142.php?cmpid=email-desktop>