



UNION NEWS!

Newsletter of the Durham City Workers Union, chapter of UE Local 150

<http://UE150.org>

Workers Sick & Tired of Unfair Management -- Union's Grievance Procedure Changes Advance

City Commission Adopts Union Proposal for Grievance Policy Changes!

In January 2021, the Workers Rights Commission, an official commission of the City of Durham, approved a resolution supporting changes proposed by the Union to the City's grievance procedure. The next step is to bring the proposed changes before the City Manager, Wanda Page.

City workers have complained that the current procedure is too narrow and unfair. The current policy does not allow city workers to file grievances on all the issues they face, like safety issues, contesting inaccurate performance evaluations and it gives the city manager too much power, among other problems.

Changes to the new policy would include:

- 1) Holding **management accountable** to deadlines.
- 2) Requires departments to **publish a list of all types of infractions** and the corresponding disciplinary progression.
- 3) Grants "**just cause**" protections so that workers are no longer "at will" employees.
- 4) Applies to **part-time workers**, as well as full time.
- 5) All **disciplines automatically removed from file** after 1 year.
- 6) Investigations cannot extend beyond 45 days (currently its 60 days).
- 7) Workers will be allowed **representation** of their choice at all levels.
- 8) **More issues are "grievable"** including false and/or misleading information in personnel file,



UE150 Rally at City Council meeting demanding a new grievance procedure.

- abuse by management, health and safety issues.
- 9) Gives workers **15 working days** (rather than 10 calendar days) to file a grievance.
- 10) Creates more opportunities at Step 1, 2 and 3 of the appeal process for workers to be heard.
- 11) Creates a better Step 3 Hearing Panel.

And more!!

UE150 City workers are encouraged to attend the upcoming union meetings to find out how you can be involved to help make sure we win this policy!

In this Newsletter:

- ★ Union fights for hazard pay, raise and more!
- ★ Workers Bill of Rights passes City Council
- ★ Union Meets w/ New NC Department of Labor Commissioner Josh Dobson demanding better enforcement of safety on the job!

Union Delivers Annual Budget Proposals to City Council



Sign to Support online here:
bit.ly/DurhamBudgetFY22

10% Hazard Pay

“We are out here, we are essential workers. Whether they want to admit it or not. Some of our co-workers have caught COVID and dealing with this situation. We need it because we are working in a hazardous environment. We already didn’t get a raise last year. They need to pay us for the risk we are taking. Look at all the other workers that got paid hazard pay but we only got it a few months.”

- **Donald Quick**, Maintenance Assistant, Public Works, City of Durham



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\$3,500 Across-the-Board Raise

“Since we didn’t get any raise last year, all employees deserve a \$3,500 across the board raise, not just Police and Fire. The Federal government is dragging their feet and opposing emergency funding for our families to survive this pandemic, compared to other countries that have monthly stipends, so the city needs to step up.”

- **Daryl Brunson**, Machine Specialist, Solid Waste Services, City of Durham

Sign on Support to Support the Union’s Demands online here:
bit.ly/DurhamBudgetFY22



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No Increase in Healthcare Costs

“Stable healthcare costs are important to preserve the quality of life for our families. Increasing our costs for healthcare is one more thing that families have to worry about because they do not know how COVID will impact us and or our family. We don’t need any more stress.”

- Keshia Barnette, Coordinator, Community Development

In early March, UE150 Durham City Worker Union leaders delivered our budget proposals to the City Council and Mayor. So far, we have met with Mayor Schewel, Mayor Pro Tem Jillian Johnson, City Council members DeDreana Freeman, Pierce Freelon and Charlie Reece. In our conversations with the **Mayor**, he ensured us that **“City workers raises were the City’s top #1 Priority for this budget cycle”** Let’s keep the pressure up to make sure we win all our demands, especially after getting no raise last year.

Currently the City is proposing the following raises:

- 2% General employee**
- 4% Police**
- 3.5% Fire**

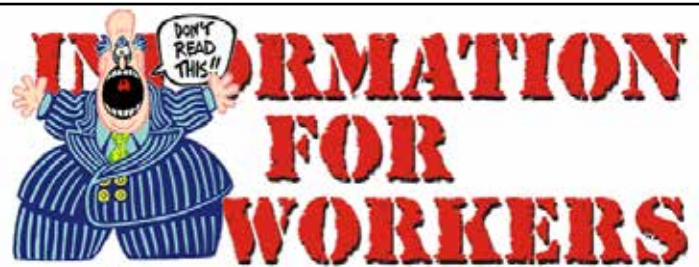
while also adding a **\$1,500 bonus** for everyone making less than \$50, 000. \$1250 (salary of \$50,000 to \$90,000) and \$500 (salary over \$90, 000)

The Union has counter proposed to the City’s budget proposals that they: 1) Fully fund the General Step Wage Plan adopted two years ago (giving everyone a 4% raise), plus also give us a \$3, 750 one time bonus to account for the hazard premium pay that we are owed.

But we need your help to keep pressure up on the City to adopt our proposals, please sign the petition today!

The American Rescue Act passed by US Congress will provide Durham \$50 million over two years. \$25 million right now and \$25 million within the next 12 months. This money can be allocated towards hazard premium pay and other payroll expenses that the union has been demanding.

After our meeting, Mayor Schewel also agreed to look into COVID-19 Emergency Paid Leave being extended, since it expired at the end of 2020.



UE Leadership Steward Training Certification Program!

UE union is now offering **FREE** trainings every month! All trainings are **VIA ZOOM**

1 - Tuesday, April 13 at 6pm -
Fighting on the Inside, building a campaign

2 - Saturday May 22 at 10am or Sunday May 23 at 4pm - Internal Organizing

**Register today online here:
<https://bit.ly/UE150Trainings>**

After Union campaign, Durham City Council Passes “Workers Bill of Rights”.

In November 2020, after a campaign lead by the Durham City Workers Union (UE150) and the Durham Workers Assembly, the City Council adopted a “Workers Bill of Rights” to establish basic standards for ALL workers in Durham to expect from their employers. However, the City has not yet outlined how these will be interpreted city workers in the various departments.

The Durham Workers’ Rights Commission was established in 2019, tasked with crafting an aspirational workers’ bill of rights that might help raise working conditions by serving as a guidepost for all workers and employers in the city. This document contains the ideas and principles that the commission believes would benefit all workers -- and all those who want to work -- in the City of Durham and beyond.

We are asking all City Workers to review the Workers Bill of Rights and notify us if there are issues in your department that may be a violation of these rights.

This Workers Bill of Rights includes:

- 1) The Right to a Job
- 2) Right to Organize Without Retaliation
- 3) Democratic Workplace
- 4) Fair and Democratic Wages
- 5) Fair Workweek
- 6) Paid Safe and Sick Leave
- 7) Paid Family Leave
- 8) Fair Notice of Termination
- 9) Adequate Training, Contracts, & Record-Keeping
- 10) Workplace Free from Discrimination
- 11) Workplace Free from Sexual Violence and Harassment
- 12) Safe and Healthy Workplace including the right to refuse Unsafe Work
- 13) Fair Access to Information About Rights & Remedy
- 14) Meaningful Enforcement of Laws in the Workplace

To read the FULL description of the Workers Bill of Rights visit the union’s website at ue150.org

Union Leaders meet with New NC Department of Labor Commissioner, Dobson and push for more enforcement of Safety violations

On January 29th, UE150 President Sekia Royall, along with leaders from dozens of other unions and worker organizations across the state, met with the newly-elected NC Department of Labor Commissioner Josh Dobson. We discussed a report drafted by many labor groups which included many recommendations for the NC Department of Labor to consider:

1. Rebuild the Department’s capacity with adequate staffing and funding; training and new complaint systems; increased bilingual capacity; and enhanced transparency.
2. Protect worker health and safety during the pandemic and beyond by acting quickly to adopt a COVID-19 emergency temporary standard (ETS)
3. Crack down on wage theft and misclassification.
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4. Protect workers’ right to organize by updating NC-DOL’s workplace rights notice, and supporting legislation to authorize public sector collective bargaining and the repeal of right-to-work. *and more!*

