

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Alexis Lyman
(401) 642-2436– work

LOCAL 1651 WARWICK CITY EMPLOYEES RESPOND TO 50 LAYOFFS

Warwick, RI- Today, Warwick City Employees, Local 1651, AFSCME, AFL-CIO responded to Mayor Solomon’s announcement of 50 layoffs.

Walter Hartley, president of Local 1651, stated, “The 50 layoffs announced by Mayor Solomon is a more complicated situation than the administration portrayed. The administration presented a take it or leave it offer to the members and pushed for an immediate answer. Local 1651 asked for financial information; whether other bargaining units were asked for concessions; and presented some alternatives. As part of the dialogue the union and management agreed to leave 13 positions unfilled. Unfortunately, the administration refused to provide additional information or engage in good faith bargaining. Nine days after the Administration made their demand our members voted to reject the administration’s request.”

President Hartley continued, “Local 1651 has made sacrifices to help the City during previous fiscal crises. The administration’s failure to communicate requested information made the members suspicious. Politics and bullying have no place during a pandemic.”

President Hartley concluded, “I urge the Mayor to return to the table and continue negotiations. Our members are now engaged in an ongoing internal dialogue. Local 1651 maintains that laying off 50 dedicated and hard-working city employees, and adding to the number of unemployed Rhode Islanders, can be avoided with a mutually agreeable solution.

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