

CSEA UNIT # 8951
CITY OF KINGSTON
KINGSTON, NY 12401

10/28/21

Attention City of Kingston Common Council:

I would like to take a moment to introduce myself to anyone who does not know me. My name is Dan Quesnell, President of CSEA Unit #8951. The reason for this letter is to show my support for the proposed salary increase for Kingston CSEA members in the Mayor's Recommended Budget.

First, I would personally like to take an opportunity to thank Mayor Steve Noble. CSEA represents some of the lowest paid city workers and are among lowest paid municipal workers in the region. The Mayor has proposed a budget that includes increases for these workers with the hope of bringing everyone who works for the city to a livable wage and for the city to be able to compete for qualified workers within the region. These concepts are actually quite simple, if you work for the City of Kingston, you should be able to afford to live in the City of Kingston. Additionally, the city needs to be able to compete with others employers, both public and private, to attract and retain qualified workers. Right now the city is abundantly failing at both.

But let's break this problem down further. What is really going on? Currently the City of Kingston is not only having trouble hiring CSEA employees due to low wages, but we are also losing employees to the private sector, other municipalities, and also other bargaining units within the city.

How did we get here? There are a multitude of factors as to how the City of Kingston finds itself in this position, but primarily it is the failure of past City of Kingston administrations and the current Comptroller (who negotiated CSEA's last contract on behalf of the City of Kingston) to address this issue. Simply applying unilateral raises across the board creates income separation and disparity and also never addresses the fact that lower level CSEA workers do not make a livable wage. Let me give you an example. If a 2% wage increase is applied across the board, which has been the primary practice of the city with CSEA and most department heads, the higher paid non-CSEA workers would receive a much larger actual wage increase than the lower paid CSEA members. Simple concept, 2% of \$100,000 = \$2,000, which is much more than 2% of \$30,000 = \$600. Multiply this by numerous years and the problem and income gap grows.

I applaud the Mayor for stepping up when he noticed the problem and in trying to address it with a recommended budget that properly reflects what should have been done all along in regards the CSEA members and their salaries.

If you have any questions as to how these proposed changes reflect CSEA positions please free to reach out to me, I will gladly discuss them with you. I will also be providing the Comptroller a detailed breakdown of how each individual titles salary is affected.

Daniel Quesnell
CSEA UNIT 8951 President

Francis Fagan
CSEA UNIT 8951 Vice President