

June 13, 2018

Honorable Erin Stewart
Mayor, City of New Britain
27 West Main Street
New Britain, CT 06051

Re: The Common Council 2018-2019 Budget Cuts

Dear Mayor Stewart:

I am writing to you as a City of New Britain employee and President of AFSCME Local 1186. The purpose of my letters to urge that you veto the recent recommended budget that includes layoffs of City workers in our bargaining unit.

These proposed cuts to jobs and services include the elimination of six positions with our Local 1186 bargaining unit, and will negatively impact our City by reducing services and triggering further eliminations. Our union is convinced the proposed cuts will cost more than they supposedly save City taxpayers.

The potential layoffs will target administrative positions within City Hall as well as crew positions within the Public Works Department. Local 1186. We are currently operating at barely above minimal staffing levels called for in our collective bargaining agreement. Further layoffs would result not only result in a backlog of work, but it would trigger contract language forcing the City to eliminate part-time positions. In addition, the layoffs of full-time employees would compel the City to absorb the payout of unused vacation time and unemployment insurance liability, further offsetting any anticipated savings (which we doubt will materialize anyway).

Finally, any layoffs would likely compel our union to explore legal redress, including the grievances and possible Labor Board charges. We take pride in our ability to work with you and the City Council and City Departments solve problems in a spirit of shared sacrifice and mutual cooperation. We have always stepped up to do our part to help the City. But we cannot continue to absorb cut after cut without damage to our mission.

Our goal is a shared one – providing the best level and quality of services to the residents and businesses of our great City. Our union asks that you veto the suggested budget cuts to preserve and protect the quality of public services in New Britain. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Darren Brown
President
AFSCME Local 1186

June 11, 2018

Honorable Erin Stewart
Mayor, City of New Britain
27 West Main Street
New Britain, CT 06051

Re: The Common Council 2018-2019 Budget Cuts

Dear Mayor Stewart:

I feel obliged, as the Local 1303 Union President and a city employee, to address the recent recommendations regarding the proposed cuts to the budget by the Common Council. Based on the current proposals, the impact to the City will be great.

Under the proposed budget several positions would be impacted within the Local 1303-332. Currently there are three IT analysts who run the day to day computer maintenance, networking and software, which include payroll and time keeping for City Hall and other remote locations. Under the current proposal two IT Analysts would be laid off. The magnitude of work is simply not possible for one position to absorb. The Human Rights and Opportunities Officer is another position that is recommended as a budget cut. This position is required by the City and sets policy and establishes goals and programs designed to assure compliance by the City in the areas of human rights and opportunities, affirmative action and equal employment opportunities. This position provides a necessary service, ensuring compliance with state, local and federal laws.

With any reduction in staffing, there is a trade-off in the ability for the day-to-day business of the City to be conducted. The term "*do more with less*" is fallacy that simply cannot be achieved through by saying it is so. I have had the experience of below-minimum staffing and can share with you that the people of this community will suffer because of short sighted staffing decisions. The business of the City on behalf of its citizens requires that the dedicated men and women who work here believe they have their support. We as employees want the best for this City and as in our motto, we share in its success.

If the City chooses to go through with the suggested layoffs, the required payout for vacation time and unemployment payments will provide minimal savings. The positions currently filled by my union co-workers are vital to the daily functions of City Hall and to the delivery of services to the citizens of New Britain.

City of New Britain employees work hard and with great dedication to provide the expected services. Many positions have not been filled in the past years and cutting more not only has a negative impact on every-day operations, but is also a disservice to our residents.

It is for these reasons I am strongly urging you to veto the suggested budget cuts.

Sincerely,



Brian Falkner

President

Local 1303-332

Memorandum

Date: June 12th, 2018
To: Mayor Erin E. Stewart
From: Ramon Esponda PE, ME
President of 818 Union
Subject: Proposed Budget and layoff

I must inform you that the budget and layoffs proposed by the City Council will present a large numbers of problems for the city and diminish the services provided to the residents of the City.

The proposed budget call of layoffs of five 818 union employees who hold very important positions within the city, the 818 members in these positions are the people who manage the city building and garages, senior center, youth and family programs as well as engineering capital projects and the budgets and financing of these projects.

I find it incredibly troubling that the consequences and ramifications of these layoffs have not been discussed with the union leadership.

Additionally, I have seen that the city website will be diminished and I must also point out that there are number of federal and state mandates, which require that a many documents such as the Annual MS4 storm water report, the Consumer Confidence Report and the Environmental Study for the Proposed reservoir as well as other documents be posted on the city's website for review by the residents and all interested parties.

If these proposed layoffs do go into effect I must point out that section 4.3 of the 818 union states the following:

“ if a position is eliminated under the terms of this section, the significant functions of the position must cease to be performed by the city or its agent.”

As such, the City must eliminate not only the positions but also the functions of these positions and that will require that many of these programs be eliminated, which will cause the residents of the City to lose these services.

If these duties and functions are not eliminated and the programs continue, it will be a violation of the 818 contract and an unfair labor practice. Given the impacts of these cuts and the haphazard way that this budget was presented there may also be a basis to file a complaint with the State Department of Labor for the creation of hostile work environment.

Given what I have stated, I respectfully ask you to use your authority to Veto this budget and avoid the filing of grievances and potential lawsuits. It is plain to see that this budget not only will affect the union employees, it will also affect the residents of the City.