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Staff union rejects latest counter proposal from Daniel Boone Regional Library

After five months of negotiations, workers say management presented the most egregious and insulting counteroffer to date

Columbia – At the conclusion of the Feb. 22 bargaining session, members of Daniel Boone Regional Library Workers United (DBRLWU) – AFSCME Local 3311 walked away shocked and disappointed by library management’s latest response to their proposal on discipline and discharge for employees.

According to Rowan Walsh, who works as a library assistant and serves on DBRLWU’s bargaining team, the counteroffer would essentially allow management to discriminate against workers on the grounds of pregnancy, ancestry, immigrations status, citizenship status, disability, marital sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and more.

“We believe these are essential protections for our employees and are appalled that Executive Director Margaret Conroy struck them from our proposal,” said Wendy Rigby, president of DBRLWU – AFSCME Local 3311.

Additionally, DBRLWU confirmed that the library’s counter proposal also removed the current policy for progressive discipline, a process that would give employees several opportunities to correct a problem before being formally disciplined or terminated, and in a huge step backward opted to reinstate a list of fireable offenses instead.

During the bargaining session, tensions grew as Conroy repeatedly stated that she would “rather there not be a union” and declared during negotiations, “We don’t want to be put in a position of being questioned.” The anti-union remarks come just weeks after DBRLWU addressed inappropriate behavior exhibited by the library’s labor attorney, who laughed and interrupted bargaining team members as they shared their personal testimonies.

“I think library workers deserve the same respect we give patrons,” said Carolyn Cain, an outreach lead at the Columbia branch. “Our library is supposed to be a place of understanding and we have received none from management.”

According to Rigby, the union’s negotiating committee still has 18 unaddressed articles since delivering their contract proposal to management last September. The next bargaining session is scheduled to take place March 7 from noon-5 p.m. and is open to the public. For more information follow @dbrlworkers on social media.

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