

AFSCME COUNCIL 65

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About AFSCME 65

AFSCME Council 65 represents over 14,000 public and private sector workers in Minnesota & the Dakotas. From nurses to highway crews, school workers to peace officers, our members provide the vital services that make our communities work.

AFSCME's 1.6 million members nationwide advocates for fairness in the workplace, excellence in public services and prosperity and opportunity for all working families.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

City Workers United Despite Job Cuts and Threats to Reduce Benefits.

Virginia - City workers remain united in opposing City Council threats to cut benefits to cover budget mismanagement. The Council created a budget shortfall last fall by refusing to pass a levy that would fund city operations. As a result, six positions represented by AFSCME Local 454 have been cut, despite existing staffing shortages. Now, the City Council is threatening to cut overtime pay and other benefits.

The Council has notified AFSCME leaders that it will stop paying overtime to workers when they've had a sick day, vacation day, or a statutory holiday during the work week. If the city moves forward with this change, workers will not receive any recognition for extra time away from their families when asked to put in extra hours.

"They are asking us to bear responsibility for their own mismanagement." said Jesse McIntyre, Vice-President of AFSCME Local 454. "We will always need to put in extra hours to plow our roads, respond to emergencies, and staff big events. This is what residents rightfully expect of our city. Yet, they're demanding we work the same hours for less pay instead of making sure we have enough staff to reduce overtime costs. All this just to fix a budget problem they created."

AFSCME members have already borne the brunt of the budget shortfall. Job cuts to departments represented by AFSCME saved the city an estimated \$400,000. In 2020 and 2021, members saved the city \$127,474.69/year* by agreeing to a new health insurance plan. Still, the Council is now proposing more reductions in healthcare contributions. This would cost employees with family coverage \$3,652.29/year*.

The negotiating team hopes to resolve these issues when they meet with their employer on Wednesday, February 21. However, without meaningful progress leaders may notify the city of the union's intent to strike. A strike could start ten days after such notice. The City's release incorrectly stated the union had already filed an intent to strike.

AFSCME Local 454 represents City of Virginia workers in the following departments: Library, City Hall (Police Admin. Staff, Finance, and Engineering), Public Works, and Parks and Recreation (including Iron Trail Motors Event Center).

*As of 2024 the average annual cost of insurance to the City of Virginia per employee is just \$1,234.38 higher than it was in 2019, significantly below recent inflation. The city budgets \$151,000 for its 6 part-time councilors & Mayor.

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