

City of
Malden
MASSACHUSETTS

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Gary Christenson, Mayor

TO: The Malden City Council
FROM: Mayor Gary Christenson
RE: Teamsters Local 25
DATE: June 24, 2022

This memo is to follow up and provide further information on a City Council Docket Agenda item concerning the organizing of the Department Heads under Teamsters Local 25.

Let me start by stating that while I thought this was an initiative well known to all, including the City Council, I understand that some Councillors had not been aware of this matter. I have openly talked about this organizing effort publicly, including at a Legislative Breakfast held by the Greater Boston Labor Council on April 27th, where several City Councillors were in attendance. No effort was made to keep this information from anyone or out of the public realm, but I do appreciate and respect the opinion that it could have been communicated better to the City Council as a whole given the nature of the group being organized.

When we received the notice of the intent for this group to organize, my office engaged the very same law firm, Clifford and Kenny, that we had been using for every labor matter in the City. While we had funded the hiring of an assistant City Solicitor to help us be less reliant on outside counsel for labor matters going forward, that individual had recently started and was just getting up to speed. There was nothing unusual about this and Clifford and Kenny is well versed in labor law and the City of Malden. They were more than familiar with the topic from prior experience and provided clear and helpful advice on how to proceed. *(Attached is a memo from Attorneys Jaime Kenny and David Kouroyen explaining the process and relative law).*

Utilizing the services of Clifford and Kenny made sense for an additional reason, even absent the above. The group proposing to be organized was the Department Heads. Part of the evaluation of this request included which positions could not be included in such a group. Massachusetts conflict of interest laws encourage all of us to avoid even the appearance of a conflict. Asking the City Solicitor to be involved in the evaluation of this request, when the Solicitor was part of the group being considered for organizing, would have created the very appearance of conflict we are encouraged to avoid.

The City of Malden has a long history of supporting unions. I was, therefore, pleased to be in support of this organizing. I believe everyone should have the right to join a union and to participate in collective bargaining, and I don't consider any of these efforts to be a poor reflection on either branch of local government. In fact, I am proud to enjoy a great working relationship with each of our Department Heads, one that is based on mutual trust and respect.

(Attached is correspondence submitted by the Union to the City Council). The reason they chose to organize is truly irrelevant, but the memo submitted by the organizing unit for public comment makes clear this is not about any broken-down relationship between my administration and the Department Heads. Politically motivated social media posts that suggest otherwise are counterproductive and serve no purpose.

I understand some may look at the law and provide options on how we could have argued against supporting this initiative. That wasn't my desired path, and I will continue to support any of our employees that choose to organize. While Clifford and Kenny is well versed in the law and has always provided expert legal advice on labor matters including this one, it's also important to note that there is significant precedent in other cities as well as with the Department of Labor Relations. We should be proud to support the very people who keep this city running day in and day out. I look forward to working with our Department Heads to negotiate a fair contract that reflects our common values.