



February 13, 2023

Sent via email:

To the Mayor of Somerville & the Somerville City Council:

When it comes to union organizing and fair labor standards, we always hear strong words of support from our elected officials.

Yet, when our city's 311 operators and constituent service workers asked to join the Somerville Municipal Employees Association (SMEA) in August 2022 to gain a voice at work, the city decides to challenge the petition by unreasonably demanding that the employees be in a separate bargaining unit.

This is a divide and conquer strategy to weaken their bargaining power. It's also a bad idea to create a new administrative bargaining unit of just 10 workers.

SMEA members previously performed many of the duties for residents long before the 311 program was established. The 311 employees will best be served united with other city employees in "Unit B" in the existing city contract with SMEA. As members of SMEA in Unit B, the 311 staff will gain a meaningful say in their wages and working conditions.

It is simply unacceptable that the city is wasting tax dollars and stalling for time by challenging their inclusion with the similar city employees in Unit B.

Instead of forcing SMEA to state its case at a pre-hearing on February 16, 2023, the city should affirm its support for the workers and their union, and allow them to become members in Unit B.

As Mayor and a City Councilors, you have the authority to drop the city's opposition to including these ten employees in Unit B, and allow the 311 staff to gain the benefits of SMEA's existing collective bargaining agreement.

Now is the time to show which side you are on. On behalf of Somerville Stands Together, we urge you to do so!

Sincerely,
Rand Wilson

This letter is submitted after a unanimous vote by Somerville Stands Together coalition members to support the 311 staff.