



MERSEYSIDE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

THE PEOPLES CENTRE, 50-54 MOUNT PLEASANT, LIVERPOOL, L3 5UN. PHONE 0151 702 6915/6, FAX 0151 708 5901

All Members
Merseyside FBU

Dear Brother/Sister

You will now be aware of the latest offer from the fire authority and the complete shambolic manner in which it was presented by some service managers with apparent permission of the fire authority group leaders.

The latest proposal was made known to the FBU through the Radio Merseyside Roger Phillips show requesting the FBU to do a lunch time interview, the content of which was exclusively to discuss the latest proposal from the fire authority. The FBU had to point out to Roger Phillips that it was difficult to respond fully as the FBU had not received the proposal from the chief fire officer or chair of the fire authority but was only aware of the details through a local radio broadcaster. Your Union did make it clear within that interview however, that we found it disgraceful that this management team and authority leaders are so terrified of the negotiating table that they now find it preferable to negotiate through the press.

What is clear however is that due to the magnificent show of solidarity and strength of our members determined to protect our safety, and our fire service, is that at the very least there appears to be some movement from the fire authority on some of the key issues.

The FBU have made, and continue to make, continuous calls for more talks and more recently for the intervention of the national fire service negotiators, the NJC Joint Secretaries. It is shameful that this authority continues to stall on that vital NJC assistance, vital due to the absolute disarray that management evidently are in at present, with real progress now proving impossible due to that disarray.

Your officials were present at a fire authority meeting on Friday 8th September 2006, in which the FBU again addressed the committee. At the start of the committee meeting a number of fire service employees who worked through the strike were invited into the meeting, and formally thanked by the chief fire officer and all three political group leaders for providing fire cover throughout the strike. On addressing the fire authority committee later through the meeting, your officials placed on the fire authority committee record our thanks to the 1100 firefighters and firefighter (control) members who have to date undertaken 8 days strike action in defending our fire service.

Your FBU officials also travelled to Manchester on the evening of the 7th September 2006, and met John McDonnell MP, who was that evening to launch his campaign for leadership of the Labour Party. John McDonnell pledged 100% support for our campaign and wished all of us luck and fraternal greetings.

You may be aware that there is to be a national FBU march and demonstration in Liverpool City Centre this Friday 15th September 2006. The list of speakers for our demonstration is impressive with key note speakers including along with local and national FBU Officials, Tony Woodley, General Secretary of T&GWU, Billy Hayes, General Secretary of CWU and Bob Crow, General Secretary of RMT, such is the national support from other trade unions and political groups, we have had to turn down national speakers through lack of time for them. The march is due to commence at 12 30 hrs at Myrtle Street Parade and we call on all members to attend along with family and friends.

The FBU have an emergency resolution tabled for this weeks Trade Union Congress in Brighton, at the time of writing it is anticipated that the resolution will be taken on Tuesday morning, approximately the time of the commencement of the third period of strike action, and can be viewed on line as well as on the parliament channel on cable television. The resolution covers not just the defence of our jobs, safety, conditions and our fire service but includes also what the Union believe to be a Union busting strategy undertaken by this authority and management team which includes the stoppage of our union subscriptions from source, the removal of Union notice boards and the removal and reported destruction of FBU campaign material.

You will also have received the disgraceful letter sent by the clerk to the authority regarding behaviour issues, the FBU formal response is enclosed within this communication and has been drawn up with the assistance of our legal team. We ask that you give it your fullest attention.

For those who attended the recent mass meeting you may recall one of our members who addressed the meeting, explaining his financial predicament due to the service stopping his sick pay whilst on certificated sick leave. That member informed the meeting that they will never force him to leave the strike and back to work. That member emailed the chief fire officer explaining his financial position and asked for the return of money lost. The chief fire officer responded to that email in the most disrespectful manner imaginable and I reproduce a section of the email with the permission of the member, the email was sent by the chief fire officer in the middle of a period of strike action and is as follows:

'I am sorry that you feel this way, however whilst I note your reasons for being off sick, your pay has been stopped as a result of your own behaviour. We will post you back to the Wirral as soon as possible but it is concerning that you seem able to return to good health if a posting to the Wirral is available? Nevertheless it is likely that a posting will be available in approx 5 weeks, but hopefully you will be fit before then to show your willingness to work with us to deal with your tensions.

If you return to fitness and duty at one of our working fire stations in the next 24 hours, and complete a full tour of duty, we will re-instate the pay lost, but I accept that this may cause you other problems if you are a member of the FBU. There would however be an added financial benefit from this approach given the pay level for personnel at work.'

That attitude just about says it all about the manner in which this service conducts itself.

Your officials will keep you fully updated on all developments inevitable now due to the tremendous strength and unity our members have displayed throughout this dispute.

Unity is strength

Yours in unity

L Skarratts
Brigade Secretary



UNITY IS STRENGTH – AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

