

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
Tel. 498-9011

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
JAMES L. SULLIVAN
City Manager

June 30, 1980

Dear Cambridge Employee:

As you are no doubt aware, the City of Cambridge is presently in the midst of collective bargaining with a number of employee unions. The time is fast approaching when existing labor contracts will expire, and there has been talk around about the possibility of some kind of job action on the part of City employees if a new contract is not settled within the near future.

This set of circumstances presents a difficult problem with respect to all City employees. On the one hand, there is a clear need to bargain hard for an appropriate wage and fringe benefit package. We all know what has happened to the cost of living over the past few years, and we all feel an obligation to ourselves and to our families to maintain a basic standard of living.

On the other hand, we as City employees serving the needs of the public have serious and continuing responsibilities. The people of this City have entrusted to us many aspects of their daily lives. This responsibility is ours and ours alone; it cannot be denied, postponed or delegated. As City employees we must insure that the day-to-day needs of the public are met, irrespective of circumstances, be they our own or anyone else's.

We are possibly approaching, therefore, a time of difficult personal decision; time of conflict between two legitimate responsibilities: responsibilities to ourselves in difficult economic times and responsibilities to the people of Cambridge.

Several employees have asked about their rights and obligations should a strike occur. You should know that public employee work stoppages, without exception, are illegal in Massachusetts. This includes everything from refusing to report to duty, to failing to perform some of your duties.

Participation in a work stoppage may result in discipline or discharge. In addition, employees engaging in a work stoppage are not paid, are ineligible for unemployment compensation, and may be personally subject to paying court fines out of their own pockets.

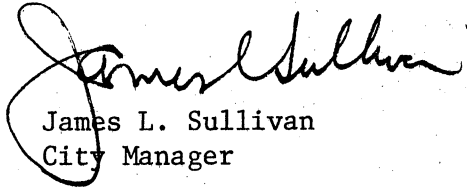
It is also unlawful for your union or any union to try to force you to participate in a work stoppage. Thus, your union cannot lawfully discipline you or take any other action against you because you refuse to participate in a work stoppage. It is your legal right to continue working if a strike occurs and I urge you to do so.

You will each have to search your own conscience in deciding how to deal with whatever decisions lie ahead. As City Manager I am asking that irrespective of the course of the collective bargaining process you do your

part to insure that the citizens of Cambridge continue to be well served and not affected by circumstances over which they have no control.

Hopefully, the negotiation process will be a successful one and there will be no need to consider any form of bargaining unit action. If, however, things should get bogged down, please consider very carefully the appropriateness of available alternatives. The credibility of our role as public servants will depend in large measure on how professionally we can handle difficult situations. I am confident that if such decisions have to be made, you will see your way clear to make the right one. As much as I respect the collective bargaining process and the need to hang tough during the late stages of negotiations, I am also convinced that public service is one of those unique responsibilities which must take precedence over all else.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James L. Sullivan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "S".

James L. Sullivan
City Manager

JLS/mbf

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