

Brothers and Sisters,

As you know, the city has adjusted the city's vaccine mandate from January 15th to January 24th. The union does not categorize this as a "win" considering the enormous controversy this issue has generated. However, this will allow Local 718 an additional opportunity to meet with the office of labor relations this week in an attempt to resolve this issue.

International Association of Firefighters General President Ed 'Edzo' Kelly has been at the forefront of this issue and has had conversations with our elected officials regarding the implications of this mandate on the collective bargaining process. Although much has been said at the last two Local 718 Informational Meetings regarding the IAFF's involvement in this issue, I know firsthand that the IAFF and PFFM continue to advocate on our behalf at the local, state, and federal levels. As a result, we will be going into this week's meeting with our attorney and the same message; Respect our collective bargaining rights and the work Boston Firefighters and all city employees have done during the last two years of this pandemic.

If negotiations collapse this week, we are prepared to take our fight to the street. Local 718 plans to publicly protest this vaccination mandate and will be more than willing to articulate our position on this labor dispute to any elected official or media outlet willing to listen. However, I want to be clear on how we will demonstrate and convey our message. Local 718 does not endorse any behavior that rises to the level of violence or personal disrespect to Mayor Wu's family or neighbors. Our protests will be exclusively organized by Boston Firefighters Local 718 and attended by Local 718 members and their families. The actions of any outside organizations or associations that may also have an issue with Mayor Wu should not be aligned with our labor dispute. We, as a union, need to be cognizant of this, considering the emotional response this mandate has generated.

In closing, I am urging all of our members, vaccinated and unvaccinated, to attend our monthly union meeting on Thursday, January 20th, at 7 PM. Based on our two previous special meetings, I anticipate many motions that will affect Local 718 moving forward. I also anticipate that we will be able to provide the results of this week's meeting with the city. Lastly, I am asking our members to be respectful to each other at this week's union meeting. I understand the passion that this issue has generated and the severity of the consequences for not being vaccinated, but we must not allow this issue to fracture our solidarity.

To my brothers and sisters working tonight, be safe as the storm approaches, and thank you for your continued support!

In Solidarity,  
John Soares, President  
Boston Firefighters  
Local 718 AFL-CIO