

Brothers & Sisters,

There has been much discussion recently in the media on mandatory COVID vaccinations for City of Boston employees. That said, Boston Firefighters Local 718 has not received a formal request from Mayor Janey, the Office of Labor Relations, or their respective representatives to discuss this matter. The Local 718 Executive Board has been in ongoing conversations internally regarding this topic since the City of New York proposed mandatory vaccines for their city employees. In conjunction with the Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts and leadership from our fellow city unions, our attorney continues to monitor this situation.

The issue of mandatory vaccination is complex, and it may ultimately need to be resolved in a court of law if it cannot be decided at the bargaining table. Either way, we feel that mandating our members to be vaccinated is a change in working conditions and violates the terms and conditions of our employment. Furthermore, we respect and support our members' individual choices whether or not to get vaccinated based on their religious beliefs and personal medical history.

Boston Firefighters have and will continue to take preventative measures to decrease the transmission of all infectious diseases in the performance of our duties. The Boston Fire Department and Local 718 have worked closely in response to the COVID pandemic to maintain a low infection rate among our firefighters and, in addition, coordinated a first responder vaccination program while continuing to protect the citizens of Boston. This was no easy task, and we are proud of our ability to prevent the spread of this disease without jeopardizing the continuity of fire service.

In closing, Local 718 will remain engaged with Commissioner Dempsey, our attorney, and fellow city unions to ensure that any vaccination mandate or policy change that impacts not only our membership but the 18,000 City of Boston employees can and will be addressed. To date, we have not received any formal notification or invitation to discuss this matter from Mayor Janey's Administration. Hopefully, more information becomes available, and we reach a resolution that is acceptable to all parties involved.

Thank you, and stay safe.

In Solidarity,
John Soares, President
Boston Firefighters Local 718