

Subject: Press release: Somerville Public Service Workers Call on Mayor for Fair Contract and Affordable Housing

Somerville Public Service Workers Call on Mayor for Fair Contract and Affordable Housing

Somerville Municipal Employees Association (SMEA) members and other city public service workers held a rally for **Dignity, Justice and Respect** on October 17 in Somerville's Davis Sq.

SMEA members work as School Nurses, Librarians, Custodians, Clerks, Laborers and many other job titles for the Dept. of Public Works, Traffic and Parking, City Hall, Recreation, Inspectional Services, and Health Dept. and many other city departments.

"We are proud of the work we do to keep the city running efficiently," said SMEA President **Ed Halloran**. "Yet over the past decade our members have seen the steady erosion of their wages. Most of our members earn only low to moderate salaries, and now many can no longer afford to remain in the city where they were raised."

"The Mayor's administration continues to oppose any major wage increase for our membership and has not addressed the ongoing housing crisis that affects all of us," Halloran continued.

"Less than half of the members of the SMEA now live in the City of Somerville. It's simply tragic that our members are leaving the city for other communities that they can afford."



Other speakers included **Tommy Ross**, President of Somerville Firefighters, IAFF Local 76; **Karen Narefsky**, Somerville Community Corp. and Union United; **Ben Echevarria**, The Welcome Project; **Peter Blaikie**, Firemen & Oilers Local 3; and **Jack Lister**, Insulators Local 6 and representing the Greater Boston Building Trades Council. The event was MC'd by **Rand Wilson**, SEIU Local 888 and Good Jobs Somerville.

Members of Somerville's Board of Aldermen who attended included **Bill White**, **Dennis Sullivan**, **Jack Connolly**, **Mary Jo Rosetti**, **Matt McLaughlin**, and **Mark Neidergang**. Candidates for local office also showing support included **Payton Corbett**, **Ben Ewen-Campen**, **JT Scott**, **Jesse Clingan**, and **Will Mbah**.

Speakers at the rally urged the city to invest in its employees through higher and more competitive wages and better health insurance coverage. Members called on the city to provide more affordable housing for its workers.

There is a 10 to 20% wage gap for Somerville workers with employees doing similar work in surrounding communities. *Residents who wish to support the city's workers are urged to call or email Mayor Joe Curtatone.* Request that the city fund a substantial pay increase to make up for the four years of "zero" wage increases between 2007 and 2011 when city workers made sacrifices to help the city through several budget crises.

E-mail mayor@somervillema.gov or call (617) 625-6600 ext 2100).

Photos from the rally are [posted here](#). For more information, please read SMEA's "Letter to the Somerville Residents" at smea.us.

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/somerville/somerville-public-service-employees-rally-dignity-justice-respect>