

Mayor Leclerc Draws Comparison-Letter to Community

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Late last week, Governor Malloy announced that he had reached agreement with a coalition of State unions to save \$800M in labor costs for the 2011-2012 budget, and over \$21B over the next 20 years in various wage, medical, and pension savings.

This agreement still needs to be ratified by a coalition of State unions, but it was a necessary part of the Governor's budget message of shared sacrifice and was certainly required to finally balance the 2011-2012 State budget without cutting vital aid to towns like East Hartford.

In as much as this news is enormously positive for the State and East Hartford, I write today to compare this historic agreement with the already achieved labor and program savings imbedded in the town budget.

Over the last four years, as a community, we have gone through much upheaval including in the 2010 budget, the elimination of a Deputy Police Chief, an Assistant to the Police Chief, five Police Officers, an Emergency Services Dispatcher, a Waste Services Supervisor, a Tax Clerk, an Information Technology Specialist, and an Administrative Clerk.

In the 2009 budget, eliminations included four police officers, an Assistant Fire Chief, a firefighter, a dispatcher, seven administrative positions in Town Hall, two nurses, two laborers, the Assistant Director of Public Works, a librarian, and the Recycling Coordinator.

Other recent budget decisions implemented to reduce costs included one round of leaf collection, the closure of an outdoor swimming pool, and one less Families in Crisis counselor.

Statistically, the State secured \$800M or 4.2% of labor savings on a budget of about \$19B. Comparatively, the town secured \$600,000 or 8% of labor savings on a town budget of \$73M. These savings included wages freezes, wage increase reductions, furlough days, higher insurance premiums, and other contractual givebacks.

On the State side, had they not secured these concessions, the Governor was prepared to order 4,700 layoffs, or about 9% of the 52,000 State employees. This layoff has seemingly been avoided. Comparatively on the town side, since 1991, we have reduced the workforce, excluding Public Safety personnel, by 70 positions, or about 14% of the workforce.

As demonstrated above, know that the town takes a thoughtful review of all employee compensation and benefits and seeks an equitable balance between the benefit provided and the cost to the taxpayer to provide that benefit.

What also should not be missed is that town employees continue to get the important work done with 70 fewer employees than 20 years ago, and for that, I thank them.

Marcia A. Leclerc