



Haverhill

Office of the Mayor, Room 100
Phone: 978-374-2300 Fax: 978-373-7544
Mayor@cityofhaverhill.com

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City and Firefighters Negotiate First Contract in 12 Years without Arbitration

Mayor: Agreement Fair to the city, fair to firefighters

Today, Mayor James J. Fiorentini announced that he has negotiated a cost of living (COLA) adjustment with the fire fighter union. The contract calls for a 1.5% per year increase for two years. The contract covers July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015 and July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016. The negotiations started late in 2014 and were finalized last week. It has been ratified by the firefighter's union. It must still be approved by the city council and is on for a vote in two weeks.

This is the first contract that the city and the firefighter's union has reached in twelve (12) years without going to binding arbitration. In two prior instances, the city and the union were unable to reach agreement and went to binding arbitration which awarded the firefighters a retroactive award. This cost of living adjustment, 1.5% per year, is the same as received by other city unions.

Mayor Fiorentini stated:

“I would like to thank the union members and their negotiating team for working with me to come up with a fair and reasonable compromise and an agreement that is fair to the taxpayers and fair to the union members.

Under this agreement, neither the city nor the union everything it wanted in negotiations. What we did achieve, instead, is a fair compromise that is consistent with the cost of living increases given to other city side unions, and is within our ability to pay.

In the past, we have had years of contentious negotiations, followed by what has been, in the past, a contentious arbitration proceeding. Those arbitration proceeding cost each side a good deal of money in legal fees and expert witness costs, and leave each side, at the end, unhappy.

By working together, we have come to a reasonable compromise that avoids the uncertainty of arbitration and provides a settlement that is fair to each side. The union negotiating team worked with us to achieve this agreement and I give them a lot of credit. It is my hope that this is the start of a new era in relations with the fire fighter's union.”