

Exhibit V

Racism Within Highway Department Must End

Dec 7, 2016



Newburgh School District CSEA activists (from left) Buddy Kuhn, unit president Joe Ammons and Michael Degli-Angeli show their support for their CSEA union brothers from the Town of Newburgh.

NEWBURGH – Leaders of CSEA, the union representing workers in many Town of Newburgh departments, Monday called on Town Supervisor Gil Piaquadio and Town Council members to hold Highway Superintendent Todd DePew accountable for his continued pattern of racism and employee abuse.

They also called for Piaquadio to retain the three Highway Department workers, all of whom they say were improperly demoted this year, and are slated for layoff on December 31. Union officials alerted Piaquadio to the situation and filed a grievance on September 6, which stated DePew was engaging in, "bullying, humiliating, badgering and unwanted physical contact" toward a number of Highway Department workers. That behavior, according to the grievance, included the use of racial slurs, unwanted touching and physical intimidation. Union officials say Piaquadio has yet to announce the outcome of an investigation into the matter and whether DePew will be disciplined.

"It is irresponsible and reprehensible of Mr. Piaquadio to fail to hold Mr. DePew accountable to the standards to which the rest of the town workforce is held," said CSEA Southern Region President Billy Riccaldo. "If any of our members had demonstrated even a small portion of what Mr. DePew has inflicted on them, I have no doubt that they would be

subjected to immediate discipline or at least put out on leave. Instead, Mr. DePew has remained on the job and retaliated against workers for the grievance.”



Union officials say seven CSEA members targeted by DePew signed onto the September 6 class action grievance. Town officials denied the grievance, which will now proceed to arbitration, but directed Police Chief Bruce Campbell to conduct an investigation and interview workers. Two workers who had signed onto the grievance were later demoted from their titles as Motor Equipment Operator (MEO) to Laborer titles. CSEA is weighing an Improper Practice charge through the state Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) on the basis of anti-union animus, as workers were engaging in a protected union activity by filing the grievance.

“Now that the police chief has completed his investigation, it is inexcusable that Mr. Piaquadio and the Town Council have taken no action,” said Riccaldo. “Considering that the town paid out \$70,000 from previous litigation involving Mr. DePew, one would expect town leaders would treat this matter more seriously. The 2017 town budget includes funded MEO titles in which these workers could be placed since they all have the qualifications. We’re asking Mr. Piaquadio and the Town Council to do the right thing by retaining these workers until arbitration is complete, rather than wreaking havoc on three families during the holiday season.”

Supervisor Gil Piaquadio read a statement at Monday’s town board meeting stating that the elimination of the laborer positions was part of an agreement to have one person manning snow plows instead of two. Piaquadio said, “I would not hesitate to place any employee on administrative leave if it was demonstrated to the town board and myself that an employee has engaged in unacceptable behavior.

Riccaldo noted that the claims against DePew violate the New York State Workplace Violence Law, which was designed to protect and better equip public sector workers dealing with physical violence, harassment and bullying, among other things. Every municipality or other public employer is required to be in compliance with that law, with requirements including a workplace violence prevention plan and training. The law forbids retaliation against workers blowing the whistle on workplace violence.