



April 26, 2024

The Honorable Robert M. "Bobby" Dyer
The Honorable City Council
City of Virginia Beach

Dear Mayor Dyer and Members of City Council:

On behalf of the Virginia Beach Vision Board of Directors and its 130-member business and community leaders we wish to express our opposition to allowing collective bargaining for city employees. Our position has been derived after meeting with representatives of both the business community and representatives of the firefighters' union and in consideration of the future impacts collective bargaining would have on our municipal workforce, budget, and citizens.

While we embrace the employees' desire for greater workplace safety measures such as cancer screening for our firefighters, the city leadership can provide those considerations outside of the collective bargaining process. The city council can make such provisions an administrative priority.

Collective bargaining presents several challenges that will impact the workforce culture, cost of government services, and the future tax burden on citizens. Its implementation will create differing benefit packages for city employees, creating silos of employee groups. While it would continue to be illegal for workers to strike and would not require union membership, those protections could be eliminated by future action of the General Assembly.

From a practical standpoint, we understand that the city's payroll system is not capable of accommodating multiple benefit packages that would be necessitated by differing bargaining units. In addition to the expense of adapting the system, it is estimated that it will require 12 to 18 months to implement, making it impractical in the near-term. There will also be recurring costs associated with the administration of collective bargaining including the addition of full-time staff to administer the process, and legal fees for arbitration, when required.

Given these and other potential impacts to the employees and to taxpayers, we believe the greatest concerns as expressed by the firefighter's representative for enhanced safety measures, can be handled administratively through enhanced communications and an administrative culture of collaboration. Collective bargaining is not necessary to effectuate change.

We thank you for your consideration and your continued service to the citizens of Virginia Beach.

Respectfully,

Scott D. Miller, Ph.D.
President

Brad Martin
Vice President

Cc: Patrick Duhaney, City Manager
Kevin Chatellier, Director, City Budget