



# TOWN OF VERNON

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# Vernon Reaches Agreement with Two Municipal Employee Unions

**(VERNON, Connecticut)** – The Vernon Town Council unanimously approved three-year agreements with AFSCME Locals 818 and 1471, which represent staff in the Social Services, Information Technology, Finance, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Water Pollution Control, and Land Use departments.

Town and Union leaders were able to negotiate both agreements without the use of attorneys, saving Vernon taxpayers and union members a significant amount of money in legal fees.

“These agreements acknowledge the valuable service Town employees provide to our community,” Vernon Mayor Dan Champagne said. “Mutual respect leads to a negotiations process and outcome that benefits everyone.”

The agreements with Locals 818 and 1471 were signed today and follow the Council’s recent approval of a three-year contract with the Directors’ Independent Union. The Directors’ contract was also negotiated in a fair and equitable manner without the use of attorneys, saving a significant amount of time and resources for all parties involved.

Town Administrator Michael Purcaro and Assistant Town Administrator Dawn Maselek described the negotiations as amicable, productive and collaborative.

“Everyone came to the negotiations table with realistic and reasonable expectations as well as a shared commitment to bargain in good faith,” Purcaro said. “As a result, we were able to offer our valued employees a competitive wage and benefit package that also meets our fiduciary responsibility to our taxpayers.”

Highlights of the contracts include:

- A 2.25% general wage increase.
- Market adjustments to pay scales where applicable.
- Enhancement of paid time off.
- A one-time \$500.00 signing bonus.
- Excellent health benefits.
- An additional 2% employer match to the defined contribution retirement plan for employees who contribute at least 7.5% of their pay to the plan.

John Burney, President of Local 1471 (the Town's largest municipal employee union) and a Traffic Controls Maintainer in Vernon's Public Works Department said the negotiations were respectful. "I strongly advocated for our members and by working together we reached a fair agreement," Burney said. "I look forward to a similar negotiation process in the future."

Jeremy Whetzel, President of the Professionals' Union (Local 818) and a Systems Analyst in Vernon's Information Technology Department, described the contract as "a win-win for both the town and our union" and "this agreement will allow us to continue to offer exceptional customer service to the taxpayers of Vernon."

Whetzel said the negotiation process was the best he has experienced in three terms as union president.

"There was an open dialogue and constructive conversation," Whetzel said. "Both sides have responsibilities to the constituents they represent. We were both taking those responsibilities into consideration when coming to an agreement."

Whetzel said he also appreciated the focus on retention of Town employees in the new contract. "That's something both sides really wanted to achieve in this agreement," he said. "We have a lot of great talent that we want to keep here. This contract will help us do that."

### **About the Town of Vernon**

The Town of Vernon is a celebrated place to live, work and visit. From its beautiful parks and lakes, to its vast trails and historic homes and buildings, Vernon is a resilient and thriving community that promotes the health and wellbeing of its residents and values the natural environment. With a resident population of approximately 30,000 and occupying 18.03 square miles, Vernon combines a balanced appreciation of history, and a strong economic base for growth, both residential and commercial. Located 15 minutes east of the Connecticut capital of Hartford, and 25 miles from the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, the Town of Vernon is strategically located in "New England's Knowledge Corridor" with close proximity to some of the top colleges and universities in the country.

Designated a certified Sustainable Community, the Town of Vernon offers a wide range of benefits and services to its residents. The Town of Vernon is a full-service municipality that practices a management philosophy of continuous quality improvement. To learn more about the Town of Vernon, please call (860) 870- 3670 or visit [www.vernon-ct.gov](http://www.vernon-ct.gov).

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