# The Uniformed EMTs, Paramedics and Inspectors – F.D.N.Y.

**Local 2507, District Council 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO**
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President report February 3, 2021

Good evening all, thank you for joining us.

A moment of silence for EMT Tommy Akerberg and Fire Inspector Lawrence McCassling.

**Hazardous pay** - on January 27, 2021 the local testified at city council hearing on EMS wages and HAZ pay during COVID-19. Our pay parity campaign is still ongoing, we all know we have full support of the council and many state labor leaders, the only thing left for them to do is implement it. We will keep the fight going until we achieve our goal.

**Pay Parity Campaign** - On January 29, 2021 ABC 7 news aired a special on FDNY EMS, 25 years into this merger and not much has changed. As stated earlier in my report, we are not letting down, we will push this issue of livable and parity wages until it's resolved.

**Contract** - On January 7th both locals met with OLR to discuss and press our demands.
This is a grueling process, where both sides make arguments, our side is for wage parity, the city side is to push back. We are at the early phases; we are hopeful that the process will progress as we move forward. Next negotiation date is February 8, 2021.

**Layoffs** - The Mayor released a statement on Jan 26, 2021 that no layoffs will take place until June 2022 when the budget will be reevaluated.

**FPI** - The past few months the union has been addressing the FDNY with multiple health & safety issues for our fire inspectors, while we still have more to achieve, below is an updated list.

1. **Full Body Harness**

Suppression Unit resumed all inspections upon implementation of interim procedure.
A new harness has been identified and the Unit is coordinating selection prior to procurement with the FDNY OSHA Unit.

**2. Roof Top Transmitting Devices**

Received a notification on January 4th from FDNY OSHA Unit that the final draft of presentation was being completed – targeting the end of January for completion. When completed, the course will become a mandated LMS based program for all field inspectors.

**3. Life Vests for Barges**

The Explosives Unit procured 24 Mustang, Coast Guard Approved personal flotation devices for use by members operating on barges during fireworks displays.

4. (CO Meters) Grievance accepted and Filed for Arb, attorney assigned.

**NYCERS Seminar** - NYCERS' Pension Outreach Programs Team (POP) is pleased to host the pension seminar for Tier 4 and T6 EMS/Fire Inspectors members of this retirement system.
The seminar will be conducted via zoom on February 12, 2021 at 1pm.
The Zoom link will be posted on the union's website.

**1st Amendment litigation** - Barzilay vs City of NY - The union has been working hard to increase public awareness of just how hard our jobs are and how little we are paid. Particularly in the pandemic, the stresses and dangers of the job and the extremely low pay cause severe hardship for our members and their families.

We've been successful in gaining media attention, particularly during the pandemic. A number of our members have been interviewed and filmed by the press, and the Union has supported these efforts.

In April, the Department decided to retaliate. Four of our members were restricted and one was suspended because they were involved in news stories. Even though the press lauded these folks as heroes and praised their work, the FDNY decided to punish them.

We filed a lawsuit against the City in June – these members have a First Amendment right to tell their stories to the press, and the FDNY's practice of suspending and restricting members without even providing reasons or giving members a chance to correct the actions in a reasonable period of time violate their due process rights. Our members were restricted for more than seven weeks without anyone from the FDNY even asking them what happened. The

day after we filed the lawsuit, the FDNY finally reached out to one of the members, Ex Bd Member John Rugen, and brought him in for an interview about the press stories. Just a couple of hours after the interview, the FDNY lifted restrictions on the other three – even though they had never even interviewed them. John's restriction was also lifted. Obviously, it didn't take a lot of effort for the Dept to realize there wasn't a basis for the restrictions. The Department just didn't get around to it for more than even weeks. And these members suffered during that time – they lost substantial sums of money. The FDNY's practice is NOT to reimburse members for money lost during a period of restriction, even when the FDNY concludes that there wasn't a basis of the restriction.

The Executive Board voted to authorize this lawsuit for two important reasons:
(1) our members need to be able to talk to the press about their personal experiences – it is important to our campaign for equity and parity; and it is the right principle. The FDNY has a history of trying to keep us from talking. We can't stand for that; and

(2) the FDNY's system of suspending members without telling them the reasons, and of restricting them for months and months without even discussing the reasons, has to end. We need a system where issues can be resolved quickly and fairly.

The lawsuit is now in the discovery stage. We will be moving this to trial, we hope sometime this year. We will keep you up to date on developments.

**FLSA** - I wish I had **ANY** news to give you, but the truth of the matter is that we have heard nothing -- not a peep from the Court. At this point we remain waiting for the Court to issue a decision on the City's motion for a new trial.

**Fire inspectors** - On January 22, 2021 our fire inspectors found a warehouse with over 900 propane tanks. This discovery saved our BK community from a catastrophe happening.
Congratulations to the men and women in fire prevention.

--
*Oren Barzilay*
*President*
*FDNY EMS Local 2507*