

Thank you all for joining us tonight. Before we move further into the agenda, I want to take a few minutes to address some of the misinformation that is out in the public and make a few things crystal clear.

To start, I have been getting calls urging the Park Board to return to the bargaining table. I will do that, if needed, but only after 363 leadership allows members to vote on our last offer. After hearing what I am about to share, I think you will understand why we won't return to the bargaining table until a vote occurs.

The Park Board has been bargaining in good faith since December. What bargaining in good faith looks like is attending scheduled negotiation and mediation sessions and not canceling. It looks like coming to meetings prepared and with substantive proposals. It looks like responding to proposals in a timely manner. The Park Board has done that. 363 leadership has not.

In fact, 363 leadership did not provide substantive proposals or responses until meditation meetings in June and the first of July, more than six months after we first met.

We have been told by 363 members that they were unaware of the details of the best, last and final offer that was shared in this room on Monday night. Why isn't 363 leadership sharing this information with all of its members? That is unconscionable and wrong.

This strike is about wages and compensation. 363 leadership has asked members to scrutinize me. I welcome that scrutiny. Since I joined the Park Board five years ago, I have successfully fought for higher wages and more positions. Since 2019, MPRB wages have a cumulative wage growth of 14.4%, higher than those of Ramsey County, St. Paul, Hennepin County and Minneapolis 363 members. Some may ask what about the City of Minneapolis 363 member's recent contract? City of Minneapolis 363 members wages lagged behind ours and at the end of 2026, with our current offer, wage scales and increases, all but one of Local 363 comparable positions will have wages at or above those of similar Minneapolis 363 position. In fact, Commissioners before you is a chart that directly compares 2026 wages of multiple City and Park Board 363 positions. There are also some in the back of the room for those who are interested.

363-leadership claim that some “market data” puts our wages below competitive average rates. They are basing this off of job titles only, not job duties or requirements. Look at the study that we have shared publicly that compares our wages with the wages of positions in surrounding communities that are doing the same work – not job titles – and you’ll see that our wages are higher.

A very fair offer has been proposed and 363 leadership refuses to bring it to their members for vote. Why won’t they bring it for a vote instead of unilaterally holding their members to a strike?

We have asked – and continue to ask - that 363 leadership bring our current offer to their membership. Once members have a chance to vote on the offer, the Park Board will return to negotiations if the offer is rejected. Until then, returning to the bargaining table without a vote makes no sense for the organization or the public’s interest.

We have shared our offer publicly through news media and our website and email subscription lists. We have been transparent in our efforts.

Thank you.