

# LOCAL 616 – WINDSOR

## Letter from the Executive Board

March 27, 2020

In response to the Mayor's statements made, it is very clear that he does not know the facts surrounding the current operation of Transit Windsor. In the Armed Forces this is called reverse psychology (if he does not know, that means blaming others for their own mistakes), we will present the facts.

This pandemic has spread throughout the world at an unprecedented rate and has been a grave concern for all. As front line workers, all of our members are going above and beyond, along with nurses, doctors, retail workers and truck drivers putting ourselves in harms way for the greater good of all the communities around the world.

We do not know if the Mayor is aware that our members were not provided hand sanitizers for 3 weeks and when Transit Windsor finally provided them, they were expired. The members of ATU 616 were not provided with masks or disinfectant wipes which we have continually asked for. Management has continually given excuses as to why they cannot be provided instead of doing everything, they can to get the basic essentials needed to protect us from harm.

Our members are scared, yet they have continued to come to work to provide the service this community so desperately needs. Some are even sending their children to live elsewhere for the time being or finding other living arrangements as not to expose their loved ones to the dangers that they face on a daily basis during this outbreak. They come to work everyday to do their due diligence and to do their job with pride in knowing that they are doing their part in helping on the front lines. The Union has approached Transit Windsor Management daily and so many emails have been sent to the Executive Director of Transit Windsor telling him what our members are willing to do for him and willing to do for the corporation. The Skilled Trades staff even agreed to take a pay cut to help in cleaning buses and our members have worked almost to the point of exhaustion to keep the public and the members of this Union safe and have continually given more than should be required of them. Our members never questioned what we had to do, they were willing to do whatever it would take to make it work.

We are unsure if the Mayor is aware of the incompetence of the Senior Manager of Fleet and Support Services and the Maintenance Manager at Transit Windsor. Both have continually undermined the efforts that have been organized to help with the efforts to keep everyone safe. He should talk to the corporation's Executive Director Pat Delmore, the City CAO Onorio Colucci or City Engineer Mark Winterton about how many times this Union has expressed a great deal of concern with the ineptitude of the maintenance management staff at Transit Windsor. This Union has never declined help. This Union Executive even on their own accord cleaned and sanitized every facility at Transit Windsor on their days off and without pay.

This was done without question when management refused to step up and do their jobs to protect all of the employees.

All of this has come down to cost. When other governments are doing all they can to protect the public and their employees this corporation is only looking at ways to save money. The Transit Windsor Corporation and now the Mayor have continually used this pandemic as a cost saving tool. It is unethical and completely unacceptable to put the health and safety of the community at risk for the almighty dollar. The Mayor decided immediately to cut the service, however when we mentioned back door exit and entering for the driver and public safety he said he was not ready to implement that at this time, to which we had to force the issue and let him know that if it was not done, we would not have service on the road on Friday of last week.

As to the Mayor's comments that the buses were not cleaned up to his standards, we highly doubt besides a couple political photo opportunities, he has never even stepped foot on a bus let alone ride one. Our buses have never been cleaner and have continually been sanitized over and over again to protect everyone who comes in.

To the Mayor and the members of this Union, we are continuing to be at work and continue to support the community in its transit needs as long as we possibly can. We will be anxiously awaiting by our phones for the call to continue the service needed to help those who require our services to get to their employment in order to help each and everyone through this crisis.

We apologize for the inconvenience to the public and our supporters, but you have to understand we were not part of the discussion to stop transit. We were told at 2:30pm yesterday that the Mayor was going to announce at 3:00pm that he was going to terminate the service at the end of the day Sunday for a 2 week period. Our position is that this is a terrible mistake that he has made, our position has not changed that we want to be out there helping in any way we can. At least the members of this Union and the public deserve the truth from the Mayor as to why this has transpired. Ben Hannaa from Windsor Car Spotters stepped up to help provide our members with masks.

ATU Local 616