We've got your 6 – Six issues for upcoming negotiations

IMLA 2020

Steven J. Serbalik, Esq.

Presentation Summary

- The climate
- The criticisms
- The solution?
- Questions

Presenter introduction

- Steve Serbalik
  - JD/MBA University of Notre Dame
  - Police officer representation history

The Climate

- Conspiracy theories regarding public employees (particularly police)
- Reform/Defund
- Economic pressure
- Recruitment difficulties
- Retirements

The Criticisms

- Alleged lack of accountability
- Calls for increased oversight
- “Nix the Six” (their words – not mine)
  - Police union contracts blocking accountability
  - Rehiring officers fired for misconduct
  - Police Bill of Rights laws
  - Police union influence over police budgets
  - Police unions buying political power
  - Negotiations without community representation

The Solution? (1/6)

- Police union contracts and accountability
  - Why do we have due process?
  - Is the process fair?
  - What is the purpose of internal investigations?
    - Is there respect for career public servants attempting to do their job well?
    - Finding the truth – without a "gotcha" moment
- Solution – training and involvement
  - Collaborative involvement of civilians

The Solution? (2/6)

- A fair discipline review process
  - Why do we have due process?
  - Is the process fair?
  - Can cooler heads prevail?
  - Is there respect for career public servants attempting to do their job well?
- Solution – training and involvement
  - Police advisory boards
  - Neighborhood group leaders' involvement
  - Explain how the process works

The Solution? (3/6)

- Police Bill of Rights Laws
  - Officers have less rights than the suspects they arrest
    - Officers are compelled to give a statement
    - If officers get it wrong – they can be fired – and lose their careers
  - Why do we have due process?
  - Is the process fair?
  - Can cooler heads prevail?
  - Is there respect for career public servants attempting to do their job well?
- Solution – Support due process
  - Not a city-level issue
  - Work to enhance trust without compromising due process

The Solution? (4/6)

- Public Safety Budgets are Critical
  - Officers are asked to do more…with less
  - Thought experiment – who suffers if staffing is cut?
  - High crime/lower enforcement destroys neighborhoods
- Solution – Real community involvement
  - Invest in surveys
  - Identify and partner with community leaders – invite them and they will invite you
  - Non-traditional outreach programs

The Solution? (5/6)

- Public Safety Groups can be Partners
  - We don't need to agree on everything to agree on some things
  - Unions can be the source of good ideas to improve communities and departments
- Solution – Encourage engagement
  - Value communication – internally and externally
  - Highlight shared priorities

The Solution? (6/6)

- Negotiations can involve public input
  - Highlight shared priorities
  - Encourage partnerships that add value
  - Budget meetings and proposals allow others to be heard
- Solution – Hear real voices
  - Don’t assume the loudest yell is the most common voice
  - Engage partners who share values
  - Remember the end goal – an efficient, reliable, and trustworthy workforce

The end?

- This presentation is not the end
- Thank you for considering another perspective
- We have your back!
  - The employees I represent want successful cities and departments
  - We add value – and deserve respectful consideration