

A Few minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

Political Whining

Just asking, but did you know the Scranton, PA Mayor, Chris Doherty (D) rolled over on his “slashed” wages gambit? He cut the wages of cops, firemen, and other workers in his town to the minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour. He said the city is broke and couldn’t pay.

Where have we heard that before? Yes, there are towns in trouble, trouble that the elected leadership have caused—not the employee. But it is my belief that in an effort to demonize and destroy unions, some of them will result to some very sordid displays of vengeance. This could be such a tactic.

For towns that are really in the tank, unions and workers have been willing to negotiate. But just like the old concession standoff where mayors tell their workers to give back pay, reduce benefits, and take furlough days or they will be forced to lay off employees, the scare tactics of bankruptcy just isn’t going to fly.

Here in Illinois in many MAP chapters, we fought the concessions and lay off threats. Ninety percent of our members who were laid off got their jobs back because our chapters were strong and didn’t give in when initially threatened. Maybe the percentage is higher, but when you stand up to these bozos, they usually roll over. That’s why they want to destroy unions or legislate them away, because they don’t like the fair playing field that unions provide.

The concession in the municipalities threatening layoffs was a joke. Again, a couple of towns may have real problems, but how can you believe them when almost of them “whined” about concessions? And in absence of proof in these budgetary issues, this did result in proof of absence. Of their brains, that is!

So they whined and whined some more. And in most of our towns and in many across America, unions said no to concessions. We just couldn’t believe them and evidence of the “sky is falling” was not demonstrated.

Cops were hired back and some went to new departments, causing the old department to pay more money to hire and train new recruits. The concession “whine” is hardly heard anymore. In fact, towns where layoffs did occur, you saw them being rehired and receiving increased wages in negotiations or arbitrations.

It was just a cash grab. Not a smash and grab, but a “whine and grab.”

And in Scranton, in response to many union lawsuits and injunctions, the mayor, in a settlement agreement, has said that the city would pay about \$750k in compensation to his workers whose pay were slashed. He also agreed to \$5,000 in interest to his employees.

In response, the unions agreed to drop their suit to have the mayor held in contempt. The mayor should be really “Whining” now. He coughed up the \$750k plus another \$5,000.

It remains to be seen if Scranton goes bankrupt. His tactics of “whine and slash” obviously didn’t work. So continue to be wary of mayors whining about bankruptcy, concessions, give-backs, or the like. Chances are it really isn’t as bad as it looks.

Vita è bella