

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mount Vernon Urges Maureen Walker to #PayTheBills

***Threat of Catastrophic Standstill of All Plows, Fire Trucks, Police Vehicles
Because City is out of Fuel – More Than 60 Days Late on Bills***

***Comptroller's Office Refuses to Release Payment to City's Gas and Fuel
Provider – Held Up Since December of Last Year!***

(Monday, March 13, 2017) – The City of Mount Vernon is currently experiencing a fuel shortage due to Comptroller Maureen Walker's refusal to pay the city's bills for fuel and gas.

“Unfortunately, just like last time – these checks ...have not yet been mailed. We need to have all three posted before we can re-activate service per my manager.” – [Email](#) from city's fuel vendor to Comptroller Walker's office, dated 3/8/17.

Earlier today, ([SEE VIDEO HERE](#)) the Mayor and Commissioners of Public Safety, Fire, Public Works, Buildings, and Civil Defense attempted to get Comptroller Walker to release the payments for the vendor that they have been holding since January, however she refused. The Mayor and Commissioners also attempted to meet Comptroller Walker however she left the building and did not meet with them.

The city's fuel reserves are at precariously low levels and but they will not be enough current estimates indicate the supply to be insufficient to sustain municipal operations during Winter Storm Stella.

Click Here to Watch Mount Vernon's Commissioners Attempt to Meet with Comptroller Walker and Get Payment [[VIDEO](#)]

Click [Here](#) to Read Department of Public Works' Emergency Memo! [excerpted below]

Mayor Richard Thomas said, “We are alarmed that Comptroller Walker has once again allowed her personal political feelings to hijack her decision-making. The City of Mount Vernon needs fuel to plow streets, respond to emergency calls, and make sure our residents are safe and secure during Winter Storm Stella. Her indifference is an insult to every taxpayer in this city.

Comptroller Walker's childish games of hide-and-seek with our tax dollars must end. The people who elected us expect basic services. Her repeated refusal to pay the bills is a betrayal of the public trust, especially since emergency services are threatened during this extreme weather event. Given her willful and negligent conduct, I will use all the powers accorded to ensure we get access to fuel ahead of the storm.

At a time when we need to communicate with the public about what to do, ahead of the storm, it is an embarrassment that Wicked Walker is holding the city's safety hostage in exchange for self-gain

Commissioner of Public Works Frank Perone said, "I was extremely disappointed in the Comptroller's office refusal to issue payment to our oil and gas vendor. It's an embarrassment to the city that these bills have not been paid in over sixty days. Our credit is damaged and our operations are suffering for no justifiable reason. I wish Comptroller Walker had the same pride for Mount Vernon that the rest of us do."

Acting Commissioner of Public Safety Shawn Harris said, "The Mount Vernon Police Department urges the Comptroller's office to remit payment immediately. Not having fuel for police cars is unacceptable and puts Mount Vernon in peril."

Fire Department, "We have less than a third of fuel in our tanks. We expected a delivery today and it did not come. We simply do not understand why the fuel bill has become a burning issue, things like the public safety should be sacred from delays such as this."

Mayor Richard Thomas has directed the City of Mount Vernon Law Department to prepare the necessary emergency authorizations to ensure the city's emergency services and snow removal apparatus continue to operate.

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Except from Acting DPW Commissioner Frank Perone's Emergency Memo on Fuel Supplies

URGENT

March 13, 2017

Susie Valentin

2nd Deputy Comptroller

1 Roosevelt Square (Comptroller's Office)

Mount Vernon, New York 10550

RE: Sprague Energy Account

Dear Ms. Valentin,

Sprague Operating Resources provides gasoline and diesel fuel to the entire City of Mount Vernon fleet including the Department of Public Works, the Fire Department, and the Police Department. Due to the outstanding balance on their account, they have refused to supply our fleet with fuel leaving the city in a precarious situation. As a record-breaking Nor'easter Blizzard approaches our city it is imperative we pay the total balance owed in full as of today, so we are certain our vehicles will be able to operate during this emergency.

The following invoices are more than 60 days past due and must be paid immediately.

Referenced Invoice Numbers

1. Invoice Number # xxxxxx - 01/20/2017 - \$5,367.75 (included in check xxxxx)
2. Invoice Number # xxxxxx - 01/27/2017 - \$4,152.26 (included in check xxxxxx)
3. Invoice Number # xxxxxx - 02/07/2017 - \$5,026.75 (check xxxxxx)

Please void check(s) #xxxxxx in the amount \$9,520.01 and #xxxxxxx in the amount of \$5,026.75; and reissue a new check in the amount of \$14,546.76 to Sprague Energy today.

It is essential that Sprague is paid the amount past due immediately. The Department of Public Works cannot stress enough the danger the city faces due to the lack of fuel for city vehicles.

In the event that Sprague cannot deliver, due to the fact that the storm is less than twelve hours away and their payment has been delayed for so long, the Department of Public Works has a backup plan to purchase fuel from another vendor. It is the DPW's understanding that the City of Mount Vernon Law Department will take the legal steps necessary to authorize and expedite an emergency fuel purchase from a different vendor should the Department of Finance fail to issue a check in a timely manner. It is necessary that the Department of Finance be ready and able to issue a check immediately to Sprague (and any back-up vendor should one be required). It is essential that our police, fire, emergency services, snow plows, and sanitation checks receive fuel in order to operate and to ensure the safety of our citizens.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter,

Frank Perone

DPW Deputy Commissioner

CC: Richard Thomas, Mayor
Maureen Walker, Comptroller
Lawrence Porcari, Corporation Counsel
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