

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Capone Almon Sets Example, Seeks Board of Education to do the Same**

*East Haven, CT* – As a follow-up to her previous announcement, Mayor April Capone Almon has asked Superintendent Anthony Serio, Jr., Assistant Superintendent Frank Meoli and other top Board of Education officials to join her administration in taking four (4) furlough days before the end of this fiscal year (June 30, 2009), as well as a pay freeze for next fiscal year.

“It’s pretty simple; leaders lead by example,” said Mayor Capone Almon. “We’re in a situation that requires the cooperation of every employee, union and non-union, on the town side as well as the Board of Education side; but it starts first with leadership setting the example. How can I ask the unions to forgo a wage increase if I don’t demand the same from myself and my staff?”

At a recent meeting that included members of her staff and Superintendent Serio and Assistant Superintendent Meoli, Mayor Capone Almon expressed her concerns about the current fiscal year’s budget as well as next year’s.

“Just like every other municipality, East Haven is struggling to reach a balanced budget due to the unanticipated shortfall in projected revenue,” said Mayor Capone Almon. “East Haven is a working class community that ranks above the national average in terms of foreclosures, personal bankruptcies and unemployment; coupled with the fact that many of our residents are living on a fixed income, there’s no way I can subject the taxpayers to an additional burden (tax increase).”

Instead, Capone Almon’s plan is to set the example, have the Board of Education leadership follow suit and then request an agreement with the unions that includes among other concessions, an across-the-board pay freeze for everyone.

“I’ve asked Paul Hongo, the Town’s Deputy Director of Town Affairs to craft a proposal to the unions that will incorporate universal cost savings for the Town, but at the same time keep every worker gainfully employed,” said Mayor Capone Almon. I don’t believe laying off employees is the answer to our budget problems. It just compounds the problem.”

When asked if it were possible to craft such a proposal, the Town’s Deputy Director of Town Affairs stated, “Of course it is; anything can be achieved if there is a willingness by everyone around the table to work together for the greater good. Hongo went on to say, “I believe if we can come together as a collective workforce, meaning we all understand we wear one uniform with the same name, the Town of East Haven, and that

we're all going to make the same sacrifices, we should be able to weather the storm and get through these tough economic times.”

As an example, Hongo cited the need to bring uniformity into the fold.

“The unions raise a good point; if they're subjected to a premium cost share for their medical benefits, so should we,” said Hongo. “As far as I'm concerned, and I know the Mayor wholeheartedly supports the same, no one single town employee is better than the other or should be afforded preferential treatment. We all work for the same employer – the Town of East Haven; the only thing that should separate one employee from another is their rate of pay, and that is obviously based upon their respective job title.”

To that end, Deputy Director of Town Affairs Hongo met yesterday afternoon (Tuesday) with the Town's department heads and union representatives, and unveiled the Town's pay freeze proposal. He requested they give it their careful consideration and provide a response back to him by Friday morning.

To date, the Board of Education leadership has not followed Mayor Capone Almon's lead in taking four (4) furlough days and a pay freeze for next year.