

# Teamsters local rocked by insider allegations

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The secretary-treasurer of a Hamilton-based Teamsters local is alleging corruption and the misuse of nearly \$250,000 in union dues in a bombshell letter to members.

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters is investigating the unsubstantiated accusations in Tyler Kernaghan's letter to members of Local 879, which is headquartered in Hamilton but represents 6,000 workers from Tobermory to Niagara in industries like manufacturing, construction and transportation.

No report related to the matter had been filed with Hamilton police as of Friday afternoon, said spokesperson Sergeant Terri-Lynn Collings.

Teamsters Canada is taking the surprise allegations "very, very seriously," said national communications director Stephane Lacroix. "It's not a hoax, it's not a joke ... unfortunately, it's not," he said, adding the late August letter caught national union leaders off guard. "Once we were informed, we took action right away."

Lacroix said the allegations will be reviewed by the Washington, D.C.-based legal counsel of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

He expects "inquiries" to take a

few weeks.

Kernaghan, a full-time executive with the union, said in an email to The Spectator he can't comment further on the matter because of the union investigation. "Until it has been completed I'm unable to respond back," he said.

In his letter, Kernaghan said the widely-distributed appeal for an investigation comes after he "attempted to deal with these issues internally ... so we could resolve the financial problems without any publicity or fanfare."

The letter also says Kernaghan will release documents proving his allegations to local members if "no action is taken in a timely manner" by union leaders.

Local 879 president John McCann referred all questions about the letter to the national Teamsters office.

Lacroix said no changes in leadership or day-to-day business are expected at Local 879 during the investigation. "They (the IBT) will have to determine what is true and what is not true," he said. "It's too early to take any action ... against any of the individuals involved."

The Teamsters' parent organization is also investigating an open letter alleging corruption at a Quebec union local. The union has addressed that investigation publicly on its website, providing a chronology of events and an outline of next steps.