

# Background information and frequently asked questions about CUPE 402-01 Bargaining and Job Action

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**April 2014**

## **Bargaining**

In the fall of 2012, CUPE 402-01 members completed a bargaining survey and from that survey the Union developed bargaining proposals and priorities. The proposals were then adopted at general membership meetings.

The City and the Union met in June 2013 to exchange proposals and bargaining began. After a number of bargaining meetings the parties were unable to reach agreement on key issues and in January 2014 the parties reached an impasse.

## **Our issues**

Our employer has not been willing to address the members' key issues. We have fallen behind other workers in the Lower Mainland and we need to see improvements in a number of areas. This is about treating people fairly and with respect. All members need to have clearly defined hours of work, stability and conditions for casual and part time employees need to be improved, and we are seeking for protection for workers who become seriously ill.

## **Mediation**

Mediation began after talks between the Union and the City stalled in January. A mediator was appointed to assist the parties reach a collective agreement. A mediator's role is to keep the parties communicating and working towards a settlement. Unfortunately, in this instance, mediation did not assist in reaching a settlement.

## **Strike Vote**

The members of Local 402-01 authorized the bargaining committee to schedule a strike vote and in turn the members voted 94% in favour of job action on February 5.

A successful strike vote authorizes the union's bargaining committee to call a strike if no agreement is reached.

## **Roles and responsibilities during a strike?**

A description and members of key committees can be found at the end of this document.

## **Why are we considering going on strike?**

We do not want to see services and lives disrupted in our community. Job action is our last resort. We have tried every other means to protect and improve our working conditions. The City has been unwilling to work with us on our key bargaining issues.

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## **What am I supposed to do during a strike?**

During a strike you would normally be expected to stop all work duties and instead participate in the strike. Participating in job action includes being on a picket line, helping at the strike office, or other things that have been discussed and agreed to with the strike support committee. If you are unable to participate, discuss your situation with the strike support committee.

## **Will I receive strike pay?**

Members in good standing who are on the active payroll of the City of White Rock, and hold a position within the bargaining unit when job action begins are eligible for strike pay from the union.

Most members have already signed the “Strike Pay Application” form. If you have not, signed the form or need to check, please call Mike Guraliuk at 604-812-8264.

## **How much is the strike pay?**

Our employer must pay employees their earnings up to the date the strike commences, paid on their next normal pay day in accordance with Employment Standards.

We have access to two sources of strike pay – from CUPE National and CUPE BC – and they start at different times. A member who is entitled to strike benefits shall receive strike pay from CUPE National beginning on the 10th calendar day of the strike. Strike pay shall be \$60 per day, to a maximum of \$300 for at least 20 hours of picketing or other assigned duties per calendar week.

CUPE BC strike pay starts on the third calendar day of the strike. The amount is \$15 per day up to a maximum of \$75 per week.

All members, whether full-time or part-time, temporary, casual or the Bargaining Committee receive the same rate of strike pay.

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## **What about my mortgage, rent, credit cards, loans, etc.?**

You are responsible for your debts. However, most financial institutions will help you put together a plan to deal with your individual situation should strike action occur. Many financial institutions will allow you to reduce payments or pay only interest charges during a strike. If you are experiencing financial hardship, please contact the Hardship Committee which is there to help members who are experiencing any problems as a result of the job action.

## **What happens to my benefits?**

The CUPE National Strike Fund pays for group life and group extended health premiums for the members entitled to strike pay for the whole period of the strike, so those benefits will continue.

## **What if I am on Maternity Leave?**

You will continue to receive your benefits from EI. If you prefer, you may cancel your EI benefits, sign up for picket duty and collect strike pay. You cannot collect both EI and strike pay.

## **What if I am on another kind of leave (WCB, EI, sick leave, vacation?)**

If a member is on a leave when the strike commences (e.g. sick leave, vacation leave, WorkSafe, or other approved leave), the leave continues for its duration.

## **How do I get in touch with our Strike Headquarters?**

The strike headquarters office is located on George Street. The phone number at the office is 604-992-0381.

## **Dealing with the media**

We want to make sure that the union is speaking with one voice and giving out accurate information on the central issues of the strike. Members are asked to refer any media requests to Mike Guraliuk.

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## **What committees are in place during a strike?**

**Bargaining Committee:** Mike Guraliuk, Lynn Reimer, Richard Beaverstock and Rob Limongelli

- The bargaining committee will be prepared to participate in any bargaining meetings that may be scheduled during the strike in addition to supporting the members by participating in the strike by being on the picket line or helping at the strike office.

**Strike Support Committee:** Mike Guraliuk, Lynn Reimer, Richard Beaverstock, Bonnie Hardeo, Amy Baumann, Sandi Levy, John Cufaro, Eugene Lankowski and Rob Limongelli

- This committee is the central body during a strike, responsible for coordinating all strike related activities. The committee ensures that all the preparation has been done, that members are fully aware of what is going on, and that the City is clear that the members are serious about bargaining and job action. Its work includes analyzing and deciding the best locations for picket lines, and dealing with any safety problems around picket line locations.

**Information & Social Media Committee:** Bonnie Hardeo, Sandi Levi, Chris Poulsen

- This committee is responsible for all preparation, printing, and distribution of information to the members via bulletins, web site, phone trees, text messages, and other means.

**Hardship Committee:** Mike Guraliuk, Bonnie Hardeo and Sandy Baumann.

- The hardship committee is responsible for helping members facing financial and emotional hardship during the strike. The names of members requesting hardship relief will be kept strictly confidential.