
THE CUPE CONNECTION

Official Publication of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 38
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Get caught red handed

“Get Caught Red Handed” is the slogan for this years United Way Campaign which is currently in full swing.

The United Way is a charitable organization that recognizes the integrities of the labour movement. They share our vision of strong communities. They work with us to reduce poverty, involve youth and new Canadians and increase the ability of citizens to participate in society.

There are many ways to get involved:

- 1) Help with the 2008 Fund Raising Campaign.
- 2) Volunteer your time and expertise with the United Way or any of its' agencies.
- 3) Make a financial contribution.

Let's work together to make Calgary a city we can all be proud of.



Local 38 prepares for negotiations

One-third of the membership responded by returning the survey that we circulated in the spring. The contract proposal committee has had several meetings to review the surveys and the comments we received. The committee is now finalizing the proposals which they will present to the executive and then to the regular meeting on **September 23, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.** for ratification.

The committee is developing proposals for negotiations from the membership surveys and from other issues that have been raised to the office over the last few years. They have kept in mind what the majority of the members have expressed and believe the membership will support. They have also tried to keep the proposals to the issues that affect the members and have some likelihood of being successful at the negotiating table.

The committee recognizes the members desire to achieve a collective agreement that reflects the economic realities we as employees of the City of Calgary face and the desire to reach a timely settlement.

The Local served the City of Calgary notice to open bargaining on September 8, 2008, the first date we were eligible to open under the Alberta Labour Relations Code.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Hope for the best-expect the worst-and enjoy the in-between.

City benefits leave employee out in the cold

This spring a Local 38 member found themselves suffering physical and emotional injuries as a result of being a victim of a crime. While they were convalescing and unable to work the treating medical professionals felt it would be therapeutic for the member to go back East to get family support for a few weeks. The employee contacted ECM (the company the City of Calgary has contracted to administer claims adjudication), to find out what was required in order to leave town. The employee was informed by ECM that 2 notes from their attending medical professionals were required. The employee inquired if there was anything else needed to be able to leave town and have the support of family while they convalesced. Assurance was given that nothing else was required.

Upon the employees return to Calgary and work 2 ½ weeks later, the employee noticed that their vacation entitlement had disappeared. Upon enquiring as to why their vacation entitlement had been reduced on their pay cheque they were informed that the city had deducted vacation because the employee had left town while on benefits. At no time prior to the deduction was the employee or supervisor informed of the city's actions.

The employee's initial appeal was denied because the MEBAC contract with the City says that employees cannot leave town without written permission from the proper authority and that employees going out of town for longer than five working days will be expected to use vacation. MEBAC and the City have sent numerous employees out of town to seek medical treatment for addictions and other illnesses in excess of five days without providing members with letters of permission or requiring them to take vacation.

Local 38 is assisting this member with their 2nd level of appeal in order to address this inconsistency of application. We believe this to be a failure of the City and MEBAC to fulfill their fiduciary responsibility, of ensuring that their contractor properly advises members of their rights and obligations and then hold members of MEBAC responsible when they act in accordance with the advise and direction they receive from the adjudicator of their claim. Local 38 has also filed a grievance on this members' behalf with the City because we believe the City has offset their benefit costs by unjustly forcing the employee onto vacation.

We encourage all members when dealing with benefits issues whether it be the City of Calgary, MEBAC or ECM to get direction and confirmation in writing.



Scholarships announced soon

For the last four years CUPE Local 38 has awarded two, \$1,0000.00 scholarships to either members or children of members in good standing who are enrolled in a post secondary institution. The applicants had to write a 1000 word essay on "The Relevance of Unions in Today's Workplace and in Society".

We had a total of fifteen (15) submissions and the CUPE 38 PR & Education Committee will be announcing the winners in the October issue of the CUPE Connection. Excerpts from the winning essays will also be printed in upcoming issues.

E.M.S. situation undecided

In late May the Provincial Government announced that they were taking responsibility for ambulance services within the Province of Alberta. In doing so they announced that these services would become part of the health care system within the Province. They also left room for third party providers to provide ambulance service within the Province.

Shortly after the announcement Local 38 wrote a letter to the City regarding the transition of E.M.S. (Emergency Medical Services) to the Province. In doing so we inquired if the City would be pursuing becoming a third party provider of ambulance services. We feel this would not only serve the interests of our members but also Calgarians as a whole. We received a reply indicating that the City was still in the information gathering stages and would develop a transition plan at a later date. We also received a commitment to be kept informed as the City developed its transition plan.

Over the summer there have been many articles in the Calgary papers regarding the City continuing to budget for the providing of Emergency Medical Services until the transition date in April, 2009. We have been told by the City that we should not read into these statements that there has been a decision regarding how E.M.S. will be provided within Calgary. We are also assured that with the City's demographic situation (an aging workforce) and the skill set of our members the City doesn't anticipate our members being without a job.

These assurances are promising and are very likely sincere. They do not however address the concerns that we have for our members. Local 38's collective agreement provides some very significant protection for our members in that we have redeployment options as well as a severance package.

The redeployment process provides employees with the ability to retain employment in alternate positions based on their skills and abilities. The placement is also based on seniority. This process ensures that employees are not laid off while others that are less senior to them continue working in positions that the senior em-

ployee is capable of performing. The process however doesn't guarantee salary, location or choice or type of work. It is intended to be a safety net that allows employees to maintain employment with the City and retain all the associated benefits such as pensions and health coverage. It also provides the employee with the opportunity to apply for jobs that will see them reach or surpass the level that they had previously obtained with the City.

The severance option provides members the option to choose a cash payout and find employment elsewhere. This works quite well for employees who are ready to retire or are thinking about leaving the City in any event. It doesn't work overly well for relatively short term employees and those employees who want to secure ongoing employment with the City and those employees with very limited skill sets. The severance package does however discourage the City from impacting large groups of employees because it becomes very costly if long service employees with marketable skills or the ability to collect their pension choose to accept the severance. This also then leaves alternate positions for more junior employees to be retained.

If you are in a position that has the potential to be impacted by this announced change in the delivery of E.M.S. you may want to take charge of your future. Rather than waiting to see what the decision of the City is and how your position may or may not be impacted, you could look for other positions within the City that interest you. If you are successful in obtaining a position that you have chosen for yourself it is more likely to be of interest to you and at the same or higher salary than what you currently enjoy. It also provides you with the opportunity to try it out and see if you like it. In the event that your current position is not impacted by the changes to the delivery of E.M.S. you would have the right to return under the reversion period in the collective agreement. (6 months in an established position or 24 months in a limited term position). If your position is negatively impacted, you have chosen a job that works for you. However if the job doesn't work for you, you would have the option to revert to your position in E.M.S. You then would be eligible for the redeployment process.

REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, SEPTEMBER, 23, 2008

7:00 p.m.

Union Office

1439—9th Avenue South East

BUSINESS: Regular

- 1. Ratification of proposals for upcoming City of Calgary 2009 Negotiations.**

ELECTIONS:

- 1) One (1) Executive members—2 year term**
- 2) One (1) Executive member—1 year term**
- 3) Two (2) members Social Committee**
- 4) Two (2) members Equal Opportunities Committee**
- 5) Three (3) delegates to CUPE District Council**
- 6) Delegates to Calgary & District Labour Council**
- 7) Two (2) City of Calgary employees for the Bargaining Committee**
- 8) Two (2) delegates to the Parkland Institute Conference Nov. 14-16/08 in Edmonton**