

On the Road to Bargaining

January 2012

PUTTING
PEOPLE
FIRST

MGEU

Manitoba
Government
and General
Employees'
Union

GOOD JOBS

QUALITY SERVICES

STRONG COMMUNITIES

How to Stay Informed During Bargaining

We want to make sure you have all of the information you need during bargaining. That's why we'll continue to mail you these bargaining updates.

Remember, your elected bargaining committee must still keep some information confidential to protect your interests at the bargaining table. But when we have information we can share, we'll make it available.

Other ways to stay informed

- Visit www.mgeu.ca
- receive e-mail updates from the union
- follow the MGEU on Facebook and Twitter

Attend a Local Meeting

Bargaining will also be on the agenda at Local meetings. Watch your mailbox for meeting notices.

Questions?

If you have any questions or would rather receive this newsletter by e-mail, please contact the MGEU Resource Centre at 1-866-982-6438 or by email at resourcecentre@mgeu.ca.

Workplace Tour Generates Outpouring of Ideas and Concerns

Last month we (your LMGEU bargaining committee) completed our tour of 22 MPI work locations. We held 43 meetings, which were generally well attended by members from many classifications. You told us about the issues concerning you in our workplaces and we've already started to address them.

By far, the number one issue we heard about was high workload and this was true everywhere – both city and rural, at all position levels, and across departments. Many of you said you don't want more overtime, while others are working free overtime just to get the job done.

Not surprisingly, workplace stress is also increasing, which is affecting members' personal lives and their level of engagement with work. When employees finally try to take a break, there are some inconsistencies with the vacation approval (mostly in Winnipeg) and family leave approval processes.

Some of these issues don't translate into clear cut bargaining proposals, but the committee is raising them at every possible opportunity, including labour management meetings, meetings with Vice-Presidents, and at the bargaining table. In fact, we've scheduled a labour-management meeting for January 24 with members of MPI senior management. Watch for the minutes on the intranet.

For the individual concerns raised, we've been working to address those through the regular HR processes. Feel free to call your union reps if there is any further follow-up needed.

The bargaining committee was very pleased to see members getting involved and submitting



Your Bargaining Committee (from left to right):
Sharon Stoltz, Val Doherty, Paulina Harron, Beth Hazelwood,
Miranda Lawrence, Doug Eyres, Melissa Gosnell, Jacques Lambert,
Marc Moins, Amanda Caufield

proposals, but your influence on bargaining doesn't stop here. In order for us to achieve success on any of these fronts we'll need your continued support. This comes in many forms, including having the courage to tell management what is wrong and / or reaffirming that the issues the union is talking about are, in fact, valid and having an impact on you.

During bargaining we may need the support of the entire bargaining unit to send a clear message to the employer. We're your committee and we're MPI members just like you, so we want what's best for everyone at MPI. Please stay engaged throughout the process and show your support when it's needed.

MGEU Bargaining Committee:

Doug Eyres, Area 1
Sharon Stoltz, Area 2
Paulina Harron, Area 3
Val Doherty, Area 4
Jacques Lambert, Area 5
Beth Hazelwood, Area 7
Amanda Caufield, Area 7
Marc Moins, Area 7
Melissa Gosnell, Area 8
Miranda Lawrence, MGEU Negotiator



MGEU Negotiator
and Area 7 Rep
Miranda Lawrence

Bargaining Package Takes Shape

Your bargaining committee and component executive met on January 6 and 13, 2012 to review all of the proposals we gathered as we research and finalize our package to bring forward to the employer. While much of the bargaining process must remain confidential for strategic reasons, we want to share with you what we can. Some of the top concerns included in our package will be:

1. increases to wages, benefits and vacation;
2. a process to appeal heavy workloads;
3. fairness in promotion & temporary assignment selection (opportunities for employees over consultants);
4. improved health benefits including increases for part-time employees and retirees; and
5. fair and consistent rules for vacation selection.

PUB Order Goes Beyond its Rate-setting Role

If you haven't already heard, MPI was recently ordered by The Public Utilities Board (PUB) to decrease its premium rates. MPI had previously offered to reduce premium rates by 6.85%, but the PUB decided MPI would have to reduce its annual premium rates and revenue by an additional 1.15% to 8% in 2012/13.

The PUB's role is to set rates for monopoly crowns and utilities. However, in the PUB order (published on December 2, 2011) the Board also ordered MPI to address a number of other key operational expenses, including personnel levels and wages. Their argument is based on staffing levels, which as they say "have increased significantly since 2000."

In what is perhaps the most important part of the report for the MGEU, the Board also noted that in the current economic downturn "... the Government has imposed wage freezes on Civil Servants, yet MPI proceeded with cost of living increases for even its non-union staff... Control of costs, including personnel costs should be a priority for MPI."

The employer's response was that reducing its staffing levels would hamper the quality of service, which is a priority for MPI.

We're encouraged by the Corporation's emphasis on staffing for the purposes of maintaining customer service over arbitrary cost-cutting. Your union representatives will continue to maintain that the foundation of MPI's customer service are the hard-working individuals like you who keep the Corporation

functioning every day. This can only be sustained by treating employees with respect and fairness and the MGEU feels that any mention of wage freezes or staff reductions runs counter to the employer's stated corporate goals.

We wanted to assure you that your issues will remain at the forefront as your elected representatives head into negotiations. We will not be sidetracked by the PUBs inappropriate comments on how MPI should run its business.

MPI MEMBERS HAVE THE LUCKY TOUCH IN HOCKEY RAFFLE

MPI members came out to fall meetings in record numbers – which is why it's no surprise that MPI members took home the top two prizes in the MGEU's Hockey Raffle, drawn on January 3.

First Prize of two tickets to the Jets vs. Panthers game on March 1st went to Troy Reashore, while a very happy Shirlyn McGinnis (above) took home a Jets jersey. Congratulations to you both!



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