



Local 220

WRHA Community Programs

Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union
www.mgeu.ca

bargaining bulletin

Committee Gives Employer's Offer the Thumbs Down

Your Bargaining Committee

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Your bargaining committee has been working hard to establish a new collective agreement for well over a year now.

We know members have a lot of questions, particularly why it takes so much time to negotiate an agreement. Negotiations can be a very tough, slow process, which this round of bargaining has proven to be. We thought it would be helpful to go back to the beginning and explain to members how this round of bargaining has unfolded.

The process started well before the agreement expired back on January 21, 2010 when the MGEU provided the employer with notice to bargain. At that time, the committee expressed our desire to begin negotiations as soon as possible, but the employer didn't agree to begin negotiations until May 2010.

Since then, the WRHA Community Programs (Local 220) Bargaining Committee has met with the employer on 25 occasions over the past year to reach a tentative agreement. Negotiations have been slow going, with very little discussion from the employer regarding monetary items (i.e. wages and benefits). Even some non-monetary items (contract items that generally have very little effect on the employer's bottom line) couldn't be resolved easily.

Finally on April 4, 2011 the employer presented their monetary offer and your bargaining committee responded to that proposal the very next day with a counter offer.

The employer didn't respond to our counter offer until April 20, when they presented a final offer (meaning they were not prepared to negotiate any further). That package included their offer on the remaining non-monetary items as well as monetary items.



We closely evaluated the whole package and have come to the decision that it is not a fair offer for Local 220 members. Because we are still technically at the table, we are not able to divulge the full details of the offer. However, we can say that this offer is less than what the WRHA is offering to other groups; it fails to provide details on wage rates for some groups in specific years; and it divides the Local by treating each group separately.

For these reasons, the bargaining committee believes that conciliation is our best option in getting the employer to put a fair and reasonable offer on the table. We understand how frustrating this process has been for members of our Local and no one is more frustrated by the employer's attempts to stall negotiations than the bargaining committee. With your continued support we feel we will be able to obtain a fair and reasonable settlement for all members of Local 220.

- Your Local 220 Bargaining Committee

FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions about Conciliation

From the Manitoba Department of Labour

Now that the Local 220 Bargaining Committee has decided to apply for conciliation services, we thought it would be helpful for members to understand how the process works. Here's a few frequently asked questions from the Department of Labour's website.

What is a conciliation officer?

A Conciliation Officer is an individual employed by the Department of Labour to provide assistance in resolving outstanding labour relations issues between employers and employees. Conciliation Officers are available to assist parties to overcome difficulties and reach an agreement in collective bargaining. An Officer's task is to keep the parties communicating and working towards a settlement. Conciliation services are conducted under a strict code of confidentiality.

When is a conciliation officer appointed?

A conciliation officer may be appointed at any time after notice to commence collective bargaining has been given.

How is a conciliation officer appointed?

Either party may apply for conciliation services by writing to the Minister of Labour, stating the parties involved and outlining difficulties in negotiations. A copy of the letter should also be sent to the Conciliation and Mediation and Pay Equity Services Branch. The Minister may also appoint a conciliation officer where, although the parties have not made a request, the Minister is of the opinion that it is advisable.

After appointment, a conciliation officer will, as soon as possible, confer with the parties and endeavour to bring about an agreement. Each party must attend meetings called by the conciliation officer and must provide a list of its terms of settlement. The failure of either party to co-operate with a conciliation officer may be construed to be an unfair labour practice.

Does the conciliation officer have the power to impose a settlement?

No. Conciliation officers have no power to impose a settlement, but have considerable skill and experience in negotiations and labour relations. Often, the officer can suggest to the parties' different approaches or a compromise that is acceptable to both.

Within 30 days [or longer as the parties may agree or the Minister may allow], a conciliation officer reports to the Minister setting out the issues [if any] on which the parties cannot agree and recommendations as to further steps that might be taken to facilitate a settlement. [Section 68]

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