

The Bargaining bulletin

Manitoba Housing Authority

Your MHA Bargaining Team

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President, MHA - Dauphin
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MHA Locals

Local 127: MHA The Pas

Local 128: MHA Dauphin

Local 129: MHA Brandon

Local 130: MHA Portage

Local 131: MHA Selkirk

Local 132: MHA Winnipeg

Bargaining Committee Wants to Move Forward

On April 6th, 2011, your Table Officers from the six MHA Locals across the province met to discuss the lack of progress being made by the employer on the transition to the Civil Service.

This has been an extremely slow process, with very little result. Given this, your Table Officers agreed that in the absence of any meaningful progress in moving ahead with the transition, we're going to pursue collective bargaining. We are not closing the door to transition negotiations, and the employer has stated that transition to the Civil Service is still on the table, but we simply can't wait any longer for the employer to move forward.

As you may know, about two years ago, your bargaining committee held bargaining proposal meetings. When we asked you to submit bargaining proposals, it was done based on the employer's plan to transition you into the Civil Service and on your desired changes to the Government Employees Master Agreement (GEMA). Given the current circumstances, however, we must approach bargaining based on changes you'd like to see to the current MHA

agreements. Your bargaining committee believes it would make the most sense, then, to start from the beginning and collect bargaining proposals based on those agreements.

Now is Your Chance to Have a Say!

If you haven't received one already, bargaining proposal meeting notices are being sent out very soon. Think about what you'd like to see in the next contract, put your ideas on a proposal form (a blank form is included in this mailing). Are there particular benefits you would like to see improved? Do you have concerns about working conditions, workloads, or workplace rules? Be sure to bring the proposal forward at the bargaining proposal meeting in your area. **Remember - all bargaining proposals have to be submitted and voted on at your local bargaining proposal meeting.**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact anyone on the bargaining committee (listed on the left). They can be reached through the MGEU Resource Centre at resource.centre@mgeu.ca or by calling (1-866) 982-6438.

2011 MGEU/NUPGE scholarships now available

Every year, the MGEU and its National Union (NUPGE) award several scholarships to union members and their families, in order to help them succeed in their educational goals. More details and applications for all bursaries/scholarships are available for download at www.mgeu.ca/90.

MGEU Area Bursaries

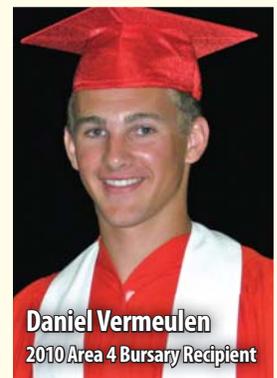
Right now there are eight MGEU bursaries, worth \$1,000 each (one per area) available to any registered, dues-paying member, or spouse of a member, or child or ward of a member.

Application Deadline: May 9, 2011

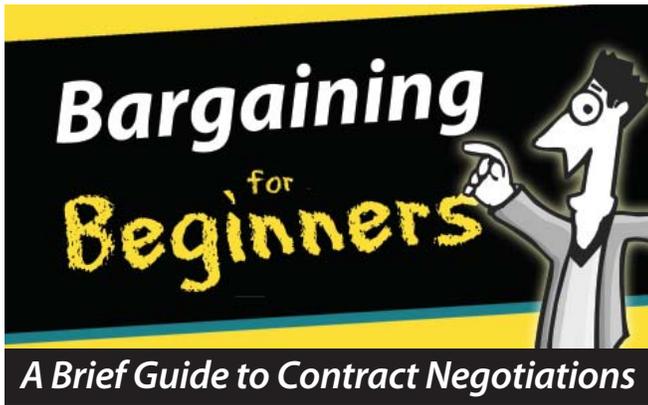
NUPGE Post-Secondary Scholarships

Once again, the National Union of Public and General Employees is sponsoring a number of scholarships for children of NUPGE members throughout the country. All MGEU members are eligible to apply for the four scholarships available (worth \$1,500 each).

NUPGE scholarship deadline: June 30, 2011



Daniel Vermeulen
2010 Area 4 Bursary Recipient



Now that the decision to pursue collective bargaining negotiations has been made, your bargaining committee thought it would be helpful to provide an overview of how the process of bargaining usually works.

Collective Bargaining Begins at Local Meetings

The bargaining process begins at a Local meeting, where members elect who will speak on their behalf (usually the Local Table Officers). At this stage of the process, their first order of business is to organize a series of meetings to collect bargaining proposals from members like you.

Have Your Say in Negotiations - Submit a Bargaining Proposal

Bargaining proposal meetings are your chance to share what you'd like to see in your contract, or to suggest improvements to what currently exists. Members complete a proposal form and bring it to one of the scheduled meetings. At these meetings, members will discuss each proposal and help the committee determine key priorities to improve the contract.

Based on this feedback, the bargaining committee will work to create a package of proposals (including things like wage or benefit

improvements, or remedies to workload and health and safety concerns) that they will bring to the negotiating table on your behalf.

Bargaining - A Give and Take Process

At the outset of negotiations, your bargaining committee will sit down with the employer and present the package of proposals. The

employer will also come to the table with changes they'd like to make to the contract. From there, the negotiating process, which can last anywhere from a few weeks to several months, usually involves a kind of give and take as each side accepts, amends, rejects or withdraws the proposals put forward. At all times, the bargaining committee is working to maintain and/or gain as much as possible for you and your fellow members.

Protecting Your Interests at the Table

Until negotiations are finished and the agreement is ratified, nothing is set in stone. That's why it's not always possible for your bargaining committee to share all of the details being discussed at the table.

Throughout negotiations, the committee will do its best to keep you informed. But to avoid damaging their negotiating position, there are times when they won't be able to share all of the details. Like a game of cards, they don't want the employer to know what their strategy is – and they know that any information sent to you will be read by management – so sometimes the committee must keep their cards close to their chest.

3 Scenarios for Getting a Deal

Scenario #1

Most often a settlement is eventually reached between the bargaining committee and management. At that point, the proposed contract is taken to members of the bargaining unit for a vote. The settlement must be accepted by the majority of voting members before it's considered "ratified." Once signed by both the union and management, you'll get a written copy of the contract.

Scenario #2

Occasionally, the majority of voting members do not accept the tentative settlement. In this case, the employer may agree to return to the table, but most often the membership will then take a strike vote. More than fifty percent of all voting members must vote in favour before any strike action is taken. After a successful strike vote, the employer will sometimes agree to return to the bargaining table and try to resume negotiations.

Scenario #3

There are times when a tentative settlement can't be reached between the union bargaining committee and management. Depending on the situation, both sides might agree to request third-party assistance from the Manitoba Labour Board, or the union might go directly to a strike vote.

MGEU

Manitoba
Government
and General
Employees'
Union

contact us...

MGEU Resource Centre:
982-6438 (toll-free 1-866-982-6438)
TTY toll-free 1-866-982-6599
e-mail: resourcecentre@mgeu.ca
www.mgeu.ca

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Send an e-mail to resourcecentre@mgeu.ca and tell us you'd like to receive future editions of this newsletter by e-mail.

Remember to include your full name .