MGEU
Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union

www.mgeu.ca

The Bargaining PULSE
Negotiation News for Local 911

Paramedics of Winnipeg

Contract Talks Head to Conciliation

Negotiations on reaching a new contract for Local 911 are now moving into conciliation. Earlier this spring, MGEU Staff Representative Shelley Neel sent a request for conciliation services to Minister Jennifer Howard's office.

The Minister responded on May 8 in a letter appointing Linda Cayer, Conciliation Officer. She will be contacting both parties in the next few days to set up meeting dates, which could begin as early as the week of May14.

At the moment, we have several outstanding issues to deal with at the bargaining table; including benefits, wages, sick leave and other operational issues. Our arbitration proceedings are still scheduled for October 2012 – the MGEU's legal team will continue to prepare our arbitration case throughout the summer. By moving into conciliation now, we hope we'll be able to work through these issues before arbitration is necessary or, at the very least, reach a resolution on some of the issues this summer and narrow the focus on what must be dealt with through arbitration this fall.

Your Staff Representative - Colin Ghostkeeper

Local 911's current Staff Representative, Shelley Neel is moving into a different assignment with the MGEU. Colin Ghostkeeper will be taking her place as Staff Representative for the Local and will be transitioned into his new role within the next few weeks. Colin brings with him a great deal of experience serving MGEU members in health care, civil service and crown corporations.

What is conciliation?

Conciliation is a dispute resolution process whereby two parties agree to utilize the services of a conciliator, who then meets with the parties separately in an attempt to reach a resolution. The goal is to lower tensions, improve communications, interpret issues, explore potential solutions and bring about a negotiated settlement. In conciliation the parties seldom, if ever, actually face each other across the table.

How does conciliation differ from arbitration?

In arbitration, each party presents their case to a qualified third party arbitrator, who then assesses the arguments and makes a legally-binding ruling. The conciliation process, in and of itself, has no legal standing, and the conciliator does not have the authority to impose a ruling. Conciliation is a much less adversarial proceeding; it seeks to identify what is wrong and searches to find the optimal solution.

How does conciliation differ from mediation?

Mediation and conciliation are sometimes used interchangeably, but they are not the same. Mediation takes place with all parties sitting at the same table with a neutral third party mediator, while conciliation often takes place without the two parties ever actually seeing each other.

In conciliation, the conciliator plays a relatively direct role in finding a resolution and even advises the parties on certain solutions by making proposals for a settlement. In mediation, the mediator at all times maintains his or her neutrality and impartiality. A mediator does not assume responsibility for generating solutions but works together with the parties as a partner to facilitate discussion and assist in finding a solution.