

WRHA COMMUNITY PROGRAMS BARGAINING BULLETIN

The bargaining newsletter for MGEU Local 220: WRHA Community Programs

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Making headway on contract language changes – seven-day schedule remains biggest bargaining hurdle

Since our last *Bargaining Bulletin*, we've continued contract negotiations with the employer over several meetings held in March and April.

We're pleased to have made some headway on non-monetary items (things like contract language and working conditions). We still have a few more issues to resolve, but the main issue – the employer's proposal to shift a number of employees over to a seven-day work schedule – remains our single biggest hurdle in this round of negotiations.

As we've told the WRHA before, this proposal is unacceptable to our Local and we will continue to negotiate against it. We disagree with their position because the employer already has existing provisions available within the collective agreement to help them deal with this issue.

For several years, they have had the ability to place newly-hired workers in a seven-day schedule. But due to errors on their part, this hasn't

consistently happened. The root of the problem (short-staffing causing high workloads) remains, and expanding services over seven days without hiring new staff won't fix that issue. In fact, having the current staff spread out over a longer work-week could increase workloads.

We believe there are other options to explore. Perhaps the option to work a seven-day schedule on a voluntary basis would be appealing to some members? Either way, it's essential we find a solution that respects the current language in the collective agreement and provides members with the ability to have some input on a change that could impact their professional and personal lives.

While bargaining presses on, our Committee also continues to meet with the WRHA's representatives to negotiate an essential services agreement, which would be put into place in the event of job action.

-Your MGEU Local 220 Bargaining Committee

Our Local representatives continue to work on a number of important workplace issues. Here are a few of the issues we've been working on with members lately:

PHIA Breaches - The WRHA is performing data audits and taking a firm stance on anything that could be deemed in breach of the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA). There have been several instances of members in our Local looking up their own personal file or the file of a family member. In some cases the breach has been inadvertent; in other cases it is not. The Local has asked the WRHA to provide members with more information and possible PHIA compliance training in the future.

Remember to always exercise caution with personal health information and contact your supervisor if you have any questions about PHIA.

Planning for retirement? Make sure your hiring date is right - Please be aware, the employer is currently reporting a seven-month delay in processing retirement requests. The WRHA blames short-staffing in HR and inconsistencies in the start dates they have on file for some people who transitioned into the WRHA from government or other authorities. If your employment transitioned into the WRHA, it's a good idea to speak with HR about the hiring date recorded in your file. This could save time, and headaches, later when you retire.

10 days or less for severance pay - We also want to remind members that in accordance with the Employment Standards Code, severance should be paid within 10 days after employment ends. If it takes any longer, the MGEU can help you file a grievance.



HOW AN IDEA BECOMES PART OF YOUR CONTRACT

All MGEU members work under the protection of a contract (aka collective agreement) negotiated with their employer. The MGEU oversees hundreds of contracts and each one is built upon democratic principles. Bargaining is a complicated process and no two rounds of bargaining are the same.

Here's generally how it works.



STRIKE – Can help apply pressure on employer. A majority must vote in favour, but a positive vote does not automatically result in job action.

ARBITRATION – Each party presents their case to a third-party arbitrator who assesses the arguments and makes a legally-binding ruling.

CONCILIATION – To help reach a resolution, the two parties each talk separately with a conciliator, who advises and makes proposals to each side but doesn't impose a settlement.

MEDIATION – Both parties return to the bargaining table with a neutral third party mediator who facilitates face-to-face discussion but doesn't impose a settlement.