

Negotiation Update - May 2011

Given the number of calls we've received of late it's clear an update on the status of negotiations is well overdue. The delay has, in part, been a result of our hope to have something concrete to report other than that we're continuing to meet and in part a reflection of the frantic activity in the office as a result of spring staffing and lay-offs in the service units.

From September through the end of January we spent all of our time trying to find a way to consolidate the two Collective Agreements (Main Body and PSS) into one, which was the primary interest of the CBE in these discussions. The reason for our willingness to do so was simple -- it appeared that it could potentially result in gains in areas that otherwise might be unlikely. While significant headway was made in that effort, it ultimately could not be realized when it became clear that our fundamental concerns around protecting the rights of PSS members and their conditions, both now and into the future, would not be adequately addressed by the CBE.

Since that time we've proceeded with discussing all proposals in the context of the existing two Agreements structure and have made reasonable headway in a few meetings. Unfortunately several planned meetings were cancelled and despite everyone's stated objective of reaching a tentative Agreement before the end of the school year, it became clear last week with another couple of cancellations that to do so will be impossible. Since meeting during the summer months also appears to be impractical, we'll tie-up what we can before the end of June and reconvene in September.

Clearly this is not ideal for anyone but we'll just have to make the best of it. We've recently engaged in (timely!) discussions of our primary interests involving changing hours of work and lay-off and re-call procedures and will try to resolve these over the next month. At this point salary increases and other money issues have not been discussed at any length and there is a definite reluctance from CBE to go there until all other matters are dealt with.

Over the summer we will also need to look at all options available to us in the event that an Agreement isn't reached in a timely manner. We will try to be more diligent in updating information on our Website going forward and appreciate your patience as we try to craft the best possible Agreements for you!