

Let us not forget

There has been some discussion in the media regarding our 2017 pay increase. Unfortunately, the opinions of the media and some of the City Counsellors have taken a negative stance on the increase.

It is important for everyone to understand that the 2017 pay increase is the final increase of a 4-year deal. The detractors conveniently overlook that we settled for a contract that saw a 1.8% increase in the first year of this deal. Many Local 38 members voted to ratify the deal with the understanding that the four year deal was back loaded with the wage increases. In doing so, we agreed to forgo any cumulative value over the first three years of the settlement.

Many members will recall the years in which our increases lagged the private sector. We are constantly told that the City cannot compete with these wages, since we are the public sector. In fact, there have been circumstances where our members have been told by management that if they “want those increases and fringe benefits, then they should go work in the private sector, because you don’t get them here.”

We have always acknowledged that there is a real difference in compensation levels between public and private sector. But it is inherently wrong to expect that we will never see the upside of the strong economy, yet somehow we are expected to suffer the downside when the economy goes through its cycle.

There is no question that we are sympathetic to those Calgarians that have gone through challenging times in 2016. While their work has been reduced, our work is still increasing. Staffing levels are not increasing, yet workload expectations are rising. Stress levels are high as resources are frozen.

Calgarians have come to expect a high level of service from City employees. We take pride in providing these services. We have seen economic cycles before, and we see them again. We have survived natural disasters, and it is in large part because of the commitment, dedication and professionalism of City staff.

Excerpts from a Local 38 Scholarship Winner 2016

The following is an excerpt from the second of two Local 38 scholarship winners. Sean Lam's essay was on "*The Role of the Labour Movement in the Global Environment*"...

" Labour movements have played a crucial role in the development of workers' rights and the rise in standards of living over the course of history. The development of workers' rights were not a spur-of-the moment suggestion by compassionate souls, but rather a hard-fought battle. Dating back to the Industrial Revolution, workers have come a long way since fighting against injustices such as child labour, hazardous working conditions and the segregation of racialized workers. However, these changes took place during a time when societies were confined to their local geographic regions.

...With the introduction of globalization, a tidal wave of challenges lurking under the benefits of international trade and investment are gradually becoming more pronounced...The consequences of globalization have pitted workers, governments and business against each other to determine who will drown among the waves, be taken by the tides or receive the riches of the sea.

...What (workers) lack is a large body, which garners momentum and inertia, as well as a central core to take the helm. With these two combined, workers can approach the playing field of the titans which we call corporations and governmental bodies.

...within developed countries, the momentum behind labour movements gradually declines as governments establish trade agreements and businesses establish international foundations. Though the motivation and effects of a higher GDP resulting from a free-trade agreement are theoretically better for workers, the benefits of such actions may be partial. (Economist.com 2016).

...Numerous economists such as Paul Krugman, have pointed to overbearing laissez-faire policies and a decline in unionization as a detriment to U.S. workers. The exportation of American intermediate goods to Mexican "*maquiladoras*" for further processing after passing the North American Free Trade Agreement is only one of many of these occurrences.

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New Contract for Enmax

While many of our members were setting their mind to the busy Christmas season, Local 38 Enmax Sub-Local Bargaining Committee were hard at work negotiating a new contract for our Enmax members. The Committee spent 11 days in negotiations with the employer to get to the deal. The memorandum of agreement was ratified on January 5, 2017 by a majority, and CUPE Local 38 Enmax members now have a new contract.

The contract is for 3 years and members will see a 6.5% increase in wages over the life of the contract. No concessions were given to the employer, which means nothing in the preceding contract language was lost. This is important to note, as in the current economic climate, many employers are looking to dismantle many collective bargaining agreements to save a couple of bucks on the backs of members. This was not the case in this round of bargaining and the committee remained diligent in protecting the current language and structure.

What is most important in this contract is that there is a negotiated increase in each of the three years. Enmax is clearly optimistic about where the economy is headed. This is also reflected in other forecasts, which see growth in both the Alberta and National economy in 2018 and 2019.

We currently have one year left in the City contract before we enter negotiations, and the optimistic outlook should set a positive tone for the next round of bargaining.

On behalf of CUPE Local 38 Executive Committee and all the members, we would like to acknowledge and thank the Bargaining Committee for their time and effort. Getting this agreement ratified in such a swift manner, allows the members to continue with their work knowing that their rights will remain intact for another 3 years. Congratulations all!

Cities Bringing Services Back In House

Faced with rising costs and declining quality of contracted out services, cities in Canada and around the world are taking back control of their public services.

The growing trend is documented in the new Columbia Institute report *Back in House: Why local governments are bringing services home*. The report reviews Canadian and international evidence about contracting out and the reasons to contract in. It also revisits pro-privatization reports dating back two decades to find that many privatization poster projects are now back in house.

Back in House tells the story of 15 Canadian communities that have ended privatization. In many cases, the services are now being delivered in-house by CUPE members. The number one reason municipalities brought work back in house was to save money, followed by problems with the contractor, poor-quality service, and the need for more flexibility.

In some of these communities, local governments saw they could do the work themselves because of increased in-house capacity. Many communities took the opportunity of a contract expiring to end privatization.

Contracting in was a major theme in the municipal meeting at CUPE's recent National Sector Council Conference. Members shared their successes and setbacks, including CUPE 3034 president Terri-Lynn Cooper who described the patient, 20-year campaign her local waged to win back solid waste services in the Town of Conception Bay South, Newfoundland and Labrador.

The local built its case over time, tracking complaints and documenting when in-house staff cleaned up after the contractor. The first step was contracting in door-to-door pickup of bulky garbage. That foot in the door helped the local showcase superior in-house service. Cooper and other local leaders worked to build support with CUPE 3034 members, including mechanics who were initially reluctant to service what they saw as dirty garbage trucks.

A spike in complaints and rising contractor costs helped strengthen the local's case as they developed a fully-costed proposal for an in-house fleet and public service delivery. In 2011, council voted to bring solid waste services in house for a five-year trial. Cooper says savings since in-house service began, are approaching \$1 million. At the same time, the workers have improved wages and benefits, and far better health and safety protection than the contractor provided. "It's a win-win for everyone," says Cooper, who announced that the trial is over and the services will be staying in house.

CUPE funded Back in House to help our members and municipal officials promote and protect public services. Read the report and order copies at cupe.ca/back-in-house

Pension Independence

Local 38 has engaged in a concerted lobby effort with Calgary government MLAs regarding our pension plan. Our goal is to educate and reinforce the need for a change in the governance of the plan.

Currently, the Minister of Labour is the sole Trustee of LAPP. It is our position that the employee groups and employer groups who fund the plan should be the trustees of the plan. Under the current model, the stakeholder groups can only advise the Minister of Finance on proposed changes to the plan. This leaves our plan open to political manipulation which we saw with the last government.

LAPP is a stable, viable pension plan. It is in our interests to ensure that it remains that way. It is common sense that those who fund the plan should control the plan. Conversely, those that fund the plan accept the liability of the plan. This model leads to prudent oversight of our pension.

We have met with several MLAs at the constituency level, and have committed to meeting with all the government Calgary MLAs to ensure they understand the need for this change. We encourage every member to reach out to their MLA to reinforce the need of an independent pension.

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...business interests still remain the main concerns in poorer less developed countries reliant on foreign investment. Examples of this are the previously mentioned "banana republics" of Guatemala as well as the plight of coffee growers of Ethiopia.

...Within developed countries, such as Canada, it can be said that our governments,... also fail to protect our rights as workers... Here in Alberta, one controversial bill passed would be the Public Services Salary Restraint Act (Bill 46) of December 2013, which imposed a four-year contract on members of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees. The Canadian Foundation of Labour Rights has been tracking legislation of this nature and claim that 218 such laws have passed since 1982. Unions have lost the power of strike action, the ability to negotiate wage packages and are replacing businesses as the targets of regulation. It can be said that the power of workers has declined not only in third-world countries, but within first-world countries as well.

...the value of the individual in terms of labour, has decreased. The world is full of billions of people, so the average worker has become somewhat dispensable and replaceable. Considering this and a decrease in unionization rates in Canada, the power of Canadian unions has been dealt a terrible blow.

...it is clear that the role of labour in the world today, is to continue what they have always done: spread awareness, seek out advocates and strive for unionization.

Labour must seek out people to aid in their "movement", not only to strengthen their momentum and protect themselves from injustice, but also to move beyond mere "survival" in the ever-changing global economy.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH



Experience is the hardest kind of teacher. It gives you the test first and the lesson afterward.

~Oscar Wilde

Get involved!

REGULAR MEMBERSHIP MEETING

All CUPE 38 Members Invited to Attend



**When: Tuesday, January 24, 2017
at 7:00 p.m.**

**Where: CUPE 38 Office,
1439-9 Avenue SE**

Business: Regular & Elections

Elections:

- 1. Eighteen (18) eligible Delegates to the CUPE Alberta Convention, March 15-17, 2017 in Red Deer.**