

When Is It Too Much

Over the past two years, we have consistently heard that a top concern in the workplace is increasing workload. With the recent reduction in budget, and subsequent layoffs and redeployments, the workload concern has escalated. In many areas across the organization, positions have been cut or have gone unfilled, forcing the remaining staff to take on ever greater workloads.

During the economic downturn of 2015 – 2016, there was significant pressure on the City to increase spending on projects to counter the economic downturn and attempt to mitigate the impact in Calgary. This essentially meant that the City took on greater work.

Now in 2017, with increasing work, decisions at City Council resulted in constricting the City budget, initiating a hiring freeze and ultimately laying off employees.

Simply put, the work is there --- the employees are not.

Now, many of our members are told that there is no overtime in the budget. The response to the employer is this --- if there is no overtime pay, and the employer is not hiring more people to assist with work, then the work must go unfinished. If our members do extra work without claiming overtime, this will simply hide the short-staffing decisions consciously made by the City.

We are quickly moving to a moment in time when City Council must give up the illusion of “making savings by cutting fat in the system.” This mantra is old, tired and, frankly, disconnected from the current times. Whatever “fat” may have been in the City has long ago been stripped away. All across the organization, stress levels are at all-time highs. Respectful Workplace complaints are at an all-time high. Conflict between co-workers (exempt and union) are at an all-time high. Council can no longer expect that this organization can continue to absorb more work with existing resources.

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Why P3's Don't Work

In February of this year, the roof of the Fairview Arena collapsed, one day after the building was deemed unsafe and a full evacuation was ordered. While it is too early to determine the actual cause of the failure, this latest incident highlights the problems with Public Private Partnerships.

The Calgary Soccer Centre had the inflatable portion of the roof collapse in 2008 and again in 2010. Subsequently, the City took back control of the facility and invested significant resources to bring the building back up to standards.

A commonality in both of these situations was that these facilities are City owned, but had been operated by private organizations. In the case of the Fairview Arena, the Fairview Women's Hockey Arena Society operated the facility. In the case of the Soccer Centre, the Calgary Soccer Federation operated the facility.

While these non-profit groups operate exceptional programs and have significant expertise in organizing and scheduling leagues and games, they do not have the expertise or capacity to properly oversee the operations of facilities. The City does possess this expertise. Safely operating facilities of the size and scope of the Arena and Soccer Centre requires dedicated professionals in the field of building maintenance.

The underlying flaw to Public Private Partnerships such as these is that when there is a critical failure, it falls back upon the City --- and the taxpayers --- to step back in, take control of the facility and invest resources to fix it.

In other words, the public sector always retains the risk and liability in these cases. It took millions to get the Soccer Centre back in shape, and this will likely be the case with the Arena.

With the Soccer Centre, City Council understood this dilemma and made a strategic decision to keep operational control of the Soccer Centre. Hopefully the same strategic thinking will be applied to the Fairview Arena.

Redeployment

The City has concluded the redeployment process for approximately 65 members impacted in January. The positive news is that all employees were offered alternate positions within the organization, and no further impacts will arise from these redeployments.

The downside in this case is that slightly over half of the people were redeployed into temporary positions. This means that on a go-forward basis the City will continue to look for permanent positions for these members. The person will have to meet the minimum qualifications for any permanent position that is at the prior pay grade or less.

If the temporary position continues past 24 months, it will become the new permanent base position for the member.

While redeployment may not be a perfect system, it does achieve the underlying principle of employment continuity. For this reason, we have heard overwhelmingly from members that they highly value this part of our collective agreement.

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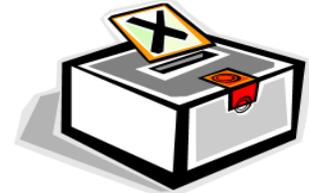
Compounding this problem is the turn-around in the economy. Unemployment is decreasing, inflation is edging up, energy prices are improving and provincial GDP rose an estimated 4.5% in 2017. Clearly the economy is resurging at the same time the City is decreasing positions and cutting budgets.

The answer is simple --- if Council wishes to take on more work, then they need to hire more people to properly resource these projects.

Advance Notice of CUPE Local 38 Elections

At the Regular General Meeting on April 24, the following positions will be open for a two (2) year term:

1. **President (Full Time)**
2. **Treasurer**
3. **Chief Steward**
4. **Warden**
5. **Five (5) Executive Members-At-Large (2 Year Term)
One (1) Executive Member-At-Large (1 Year Term)**
6. **Two (2) Trustees (1-Term to 2019) (1-Term to 2021)**



To be eligible for nominations for any of the offices, members must have attended at least 50% of the Regular General Meetings in the twelve (12) months immediately prior to the election. The member must be present at the April meeting, or indicate in writing to the Recording Secretary a willingness to stand for nomination.

In accordance with the CUPE Local 38 bylaws, in order to be eligible for the office of President, Treasurer and Chief Steward, a member shall declare their intention to run at the March Regular Meeting. This declaration can be made verbally at the March meeting or by submitting a written declaration witnessed by another member which is to be read at the March meeting.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH



The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

~George Bernard Shaw

Are you on an Occupational Health and Safety Committee in your work place?

**Local 38's OH&S Committee
WOULD LIKE TO HEAR
FROM YOU!**

Please send an e-mail to the Union office at office@cupe38.org and indicate which department you work in and the name of the OH&S Committee that you sit on.



Honours our 2017 Retirees
on
Saturday, April 14, 2018
6:00 pm onwards
at the
Calgary Winter Club
4611-14 Street NW

Tickets \$25.00 each
Contact the Union Office
403-233-2700
To reserve your ticket

Connect with CUPE 38

Email: office@cupe38.org
Phone: 403-233-2700
In-person: 1439 - 9th AVE SE, Calgary, AB T2G 0T4
Online: cupe38.org

Committees—Volunteers Beware

Periodically, our members are asked to participate on employer initiated committees in their work areas. While the union fully supports interactive discussions on work related issues, we often see our members put in conflicting situations.

When members are asked to sit on committees and give their opinion and input it is as an employee. At no time should our members or stewards be expected to approve ideas or processes on behalf of the union.

Recently we have encountered some instances where our members and stewards are brought into discussions regarding policy implementation and due to their participation the employer deems the policy "approved" by the Union; and presents it as such.

CUPE Local 38 has an elected Executive Board that is tasked with making decisions on behalf of the Union. This body is the authority of our Union.

A second concern of these committees, that our members need to consider, is that of providing their opinion. If a Committee is established to discuss a topic of some contention, the employer may establish some rules and expectations intended to provide a safe space for members to give their honest opinion and suggestions for a resolution to the issue. The concern with this is the employer may, and recently has, turn this into an opportunity to penalize the employee if they disagree with that employee's statements.

The Union encourages our members to use caution and be cognisant of how the opinions they provide could be used against them, if someone complains that they are offended by your opinion.

Get involved!

REGULAR MEMBERSHIP MEETING

All CUPE 38 Members Invited to Attend



**When: Tuesday, March 27, 2018
at 7:00 p.m.**

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

**Declaration of Intention to run for Officer Elections:
Please see Page 2 for "Advance Notice of Elections" information**