
THE CUPE CONNECTION

Official Publication of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 38
1439—9th Av. SE, Calgary, T2G 0T4, Phone (403)233-2700 Fax (403)290-1757
Email—office@cupe38.org Website-www.cupe38.org

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Leadership void has impact

Now that Owen Tobert has officially retired and without a replacement being named, the City is starting to show the effects. The leadership void has left many at the City questioning the direction we are going. This has resulted in many initiatives, stalled waiting for the announcement of the new City Manager.



Many at the City are questioning how City Council could put the City into the current state. Owen Tobert's contract expired early this year. This fact was known when he signed the contract, roughly three years ago. Surely someone in authority could have ascertained his intentions in the spring last year. Even though this didn't seem to happen, it was clear to all back in September 2013, that he was not prepared to continue.

Council sat on filling the position until the start of December and made proclamations that they would have someone in place prior to Owen's departure. That however did not happen. In fact, there have been reports in the media of a split on Council, as to who is the best candidate. Council needs to put their collective minds to this issue quickly.

With a new four year business cycle being prepared, the mill rate needing to be set, and bargaining with every union on the table, it makes sense to have the person who is running the City for the next four years in the room. In the meantime, Directors and others will continue to delay decisions until their new boss is in place and has affirmed his/her support of the direction they see for their Business Unit.

Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP) Needs Your Help!

On February 24th, the Redford government announced changes to its pension reform package. Although the government and the City have characterized the revised government position as a reversal of previous cuts, a careful look at the fine print makes it clear that the government's position **hasn't changed very much**.

The Redford government is still gutting our pension plan, and we need to continue to oppose their actions.

Here is a summary of the proposed changes as they currently stand:

Early retirement: The Redford government is now proposing to change pension benefits so early retirement is only available to workers who are at least 60 years old and have a combined age/years of service total of 90.

This is slightly better than their last proposal, as a few people may be able to retire early. But it still means working longer and likely receiving a reduced pension.

They are also making it harder to retire early with a penalty. Currently, if you retire before getting to the 85 factor (age plus years of service equal 85), there is a penalty of 3% for every year you retire early. In other words, if you retire two years before hitting your 85 factor, your pension is reduced by 6%. Under the Redford reforms, that penalty is increased to 5% for every year of early retirement.

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Indexing: Under current pension rules, retirees are guaranteed to have their pensions indexed to 60% of inflation. The government is refusing to continue that guarantee, now characterizing cost of living increases as a 'target' which will not always be implemented. This means pensioners will see the value of their pension rapidly decrease as they get older.

Cap on contributions: The Redford government is still pushing for a cap on pension contributions. This could be very harmful to the health of our pension plan, particularly if there is another market crash. As long as this is on the table, no one's pension is safe from future cuts.

Three tiers of pensions: The government is proposing three different tiers of pension plans. One for pre-2016 benefits, one for post 2016, and one for firefighters, paramedics, and corrections officers. It is not fair that one group of workers will get a better pension plan than another. We all serve our communities, we all pay into our pensions, and we should all have pensions that operate under the same rules. This is an attempt by the Redford government to 'divide and conquer' public sector workers.

Joint trusteeship: CUPE and other provincial unions have long supported a pension plan where workers have an equal say with employers over the management of the fund. Alberta is far behind other provinces in not providing this method of managing public sector pensions.

The Redford government is now offering joint trusteeship – that's a good thing. But they are insisting that the reforms mentioned above be implemented first, and that the trustees cannot make changes to them. This gives employees a say over the management of their pensions after Alison Redford has taken steps to starve the plan of funds, and after she has put pensioners into poverty.

If Alison Redford is serious about joint trusteeship – she should implement it now, and employees and employers can negotiate changes to the plan as equal partners.

In summary, **the changes announced are not real changes**, and do not come about from discussions with employees and their representatives.

However, the changes announced this week do mean one thing – we are making the Redford Government nervous. Conservative MLAs do not like getting angry calls and emails from public sector workers, and they are trying to appease us into silence. We have to keep up the pressure!



Retirement Banquet & Dance

Honors

our

2013 Retirees

(all members welcome)

at the

Calgary Winter Club

4611 – 14 Street NW

May 24th, 2014

Doors open at 6:00 p.m. & Dinner at 7:00 p.m.
With dance to follow directly after

\$20.00 per person

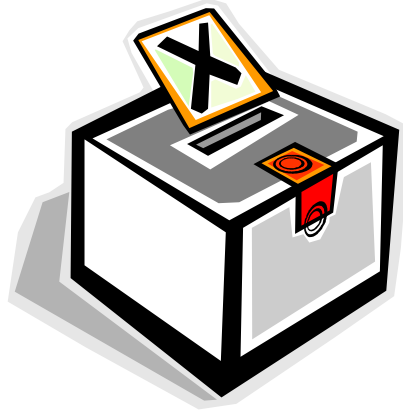
For tickets

please contact the Union Office
at (403) 233-2700

Advance Notice of CUPE Local 38 Elections

At the Regular General Meeting April 22nd the following positions will be open for a two (2) year term:

- 1) President
- 2) Treasurer
- 3) Chief Steward
- 4) Warden
- 5) Five (5) Executive Members-At-Large



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

Relief Pay

We have received a number of inquiries from members regarding how relief pay works. Given the frequency and the variety of Business Units that the calls have originated from, we felt it was best to reinforce the issue in the newsletter.

Article 112 of the collective agreement stipulates that an employee assigned the major duties and responsibilities for one (1) full working day or more shall be paid that rate in the salary range to which he is assigned which is at least 5% higher than their current rate of pay. The article also provides an extra increment in the higher pay grade if the employee has relieved two (2) or more weeks in the previous calendar year.

This Article does not stipulate how the relief is distributed within the work area. Therefore it falls under managements' rights. Some areas provide the majority of the relief to the senior staff while in others it is rotated so that the extra increment is not activated for someone relieving two (2) or more weeks in the previous calendar year.

The City has a policy that requires employees to meet the qualifications of the position they are relieving in. However, from time to time, there have been occasions when there are no qualified individuals in the area and people lacking the qualifications have been given the opportunity to relieve. This has caused the City some embarrassment when the position is posted and the person who has relieved in the position is not interviewed due to their lack of qualifications.

We would encourage all members to ensure they are going to get relief pay and establish the rate of pay prior to accepting the relief. Should this not happen, we remind you that you have the right to decline relief.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH



"It always seems impossible until it is done"

Nelson Mandela

REGULAR MEETING



Tuesday, MARCH 18, 2014
(please note date change—3rd Tuesday)

7:00 p.m.

Union Office

1439—9th Avenue South East

BUSINESS: Regular

1. Ten (10) delegates to AFL Mid-Term Forum—May 23 & 24, 2014 in Calgary