

REPORT ON BARGAINING

Public Service/Government Employment Bargaining Unit

June 2006

New Negotiating Committee Elected for Three-Year Term

At the May Proposals Conference, the new Negotiating Committee was elected. The Negotiating Committee is comprised of six members, one from each component. They are responsible for negotiating the collective agreement and letters of understanding with the employer. The Committee is responsible for taking forward issues and concerns that arise on behalf of the PS/GE membership.

The Negotiating Committee for the upcoming round of bargaining is:

Barry Nowoselsky, Chairperson, Human Services Component.

Steve Lane, 1st Vice-Chair, Vehicle, Equipment & Operations Component

Hank Lashta, 2nd Vice-Chair, Legal, Inspection & Regulatory Component

Joanne Belesky, Support Services Component

Lyle Miller, Administration & Communications Component

Sid Wonitowy, Trades & Technical Component

Barry works for Corrections and Public Safety out of Prince Albert and has been a union activist for twenty-six years. Steve, who has been active in SGEU for nineteen years, is from Creighton and works for Highways and Transportation. Joanne works for Environment out of Preeceville and has been a union activist for ten years. Lyle works in Information Technology Office in Regina and has been a union activist for five years. Hank, active with SGEU for twenty-six years, works in Corrections and Public Safety out of Saskatoon. Sid works for Highways and Transportation in Yorkton and has been a union activist for over twenty years.

Bargaining Council representatives provide direction to the Negotiating Committee. Bargaining Council is comprised of one representative from each of the locals plus representatives from each of the six PS/GE components. Your local representative is the liaison between your local and the PS/GE Bargaining Council.

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The Bargaining Council for the next round of contract negotiations was also elected:

NAME	COMPONENT/LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES	CONTACT #
Allonby, Jim	Support Services	787-1468
Bathgate, Gregg	Local Rep.	694-3652
Belesky, Jo Anne	Support Services	775-7206
Bossaer, Lori	Local Rep.	446-7819
Cook, Andy	Local Rep.	425-6626
Cook, Donna	Local Rep.	865-2522
Earing, Tim	Trades and Technical	953-2713
Elberg, Dan	Local Rep.	924-9000
Ericson, Gary	Trades and Technical	825-6436
Evanovich, Sandy	Local Rep.	786-1688
Hogarth, Kirk	Local Rep.	463-5400
Hogarth, Mary Ann	Support Services	463-5422
Holiday, Ron	Vehicle & Equipment Operations	752-6202
Holderbein, Randy	Trades and Technical	778-8607
Horstman, John	Legal, Inspection & Regulatory	596-6629
Howden, Cindy	Support Services	787-4633
Johnson, Shelley	Legal, Inspection & Regulatory	539-9893
Kelly, Cam	Human Services	933-7240
Kent, Stephen	Legal, Inspection & Regulatory	953-3083
Krienke, Rocky	Local Rep.	287-8630
Lane, Steve	Vehicle & Equipment Operations	522-8571
Lashta, Hank	Legal, Inspection & Regulatory	522-8571
Lay, John	Local Rep.	637-4545
Marcotte, Sandi	Support Services	637-4595
MacDonald, Gord	Admin & Comm.	787-6658
McGarry, Angi	Human Services	787-8644
McKay, Tim	Vehicle & Equipment Operations	236-7650
Miller, Lyle	Admin & Comm.	787-9095
Monteith, Ron	Human Services	933-7240
Norton, Herb	Local Rep.	235-1753
Nowoselsky, Barry	Human Services	522-8571
Ratray, Jason	Legal, Inspection & Regulatory	536-5700
Sather, Landis	Admin & Comm.	778-8359
Schwartz, Ernie	Local Rep.	236-7691
Sheldon, Norma	Local Rep.	953-3072
Stockdale, Jim	Vehicle & Equipment Operations	425-4585
Thompson, A. Terry	Human Services	787-0082
Ullman, Terry	Local Rep.	384-3911
Viglas, Brian	Admin & Comm.	933-6140
Whitford, Kurt	Local Rep.	848-2442
Wilson, Danny	Local Rep.	778-8359
Wonitowy, Sid	Trades and Technical	522-8571
Yew, Donna	Admin & Comm.	933-5512
York, Brian	Local Rep.	862-1780
Zimmerman, Caren	Local Rep.	752-6181

Proposals Conference

The PS/GE Bargaining Unit Proposals Conference took place May 24th to 27th, 2006 in Prince Albert. Delegates endorsed proposals to take to the bargaining table.

Long-Term Disability Update

In 2005, the LTD plan received \$8,501,000 in LTD dues, and paid \$7,136,000 in benefits. Total expenses to operate the LTD Plan were \$8,687,000. Although the LTD plan had an actuarial surplus of 5.5 million dollars at the end of 2005, our actuary recommended maintaining the current dues and benefit levels as the LTD Plan continues to approve LTD benefit payments beyond the age of 60 for those members who have inadequate early retirement benefits.

LTD dues remain at 1.25% of gross salary, excluding overtime, but including camp differential and Northern Living Allowance. LTD benefits remain at 80% of net salary.

Members can now access the LTD application from the SGEU website. Click on “For Members”, then “Benefit Plans”, then “Long Term Disability Plan”. Please make sure to download all of the forms and information under “LTD Documents”. Sending an incomplete application package will delay your application process.

LTD applications are to be sent to the SGEU LTD plan – 1440 Broadway Avenue, Regina, SK, S4P 1E2. The LTD claims are now adjudicated by Manulife Financial, Winnipeg Office.

Members who retire with excess sick leave may request a refund of LTD dues that are payable on that excess sick leave. Members may apply for this refund after their retirement date, and within one (1) year of their retirement date. For further information, contact Julie Johnson, Benefits Clerk, at jjohnson@sgeu.gov.sk.ca.

For those members who receive CPP Disability Benefits, this is taxable income. There are two ways to reduce the income tax payable:

- 1) If you receive a retroactive lump sum benefit, contact the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) to find out how best to report this income to reduce the tax payable;
- 2) You may be eligible to apply for a Disability Tax Credit through the CRA. Please contact the CRA for further information on this credit.

The LTD Plan remains financially strong, and continues to provide much needed financial benefits and other supports to our members who are unable to work due to illness and injury. In their time of high stress and financial burden, your ongoing support and understanding is much appreciated.

Parental (Paternity) Leave

Effective June 6, 2006, the public service regulations have been amended so that employees accessing parental leave supplement to employment insurance benefits can receive a top-up on their salary for the first 17 weeks of leave. In the past the supplement was provided for maternity and adoption leave; now it will allow parents taking parental leave to access the program. Under the program, wages are topped up to 95% of regular salary. The 17-week period includes the two-week waiting period. It should be noted that if both parents work for government and are sharing employment insurance benefits, then the two partners can only receive a combined total of 17 weeks.

DCR Survey Results

The DCR Issues Committee has now collected responses from its survey about workload and workplace problems. SGEU will use the information gathered in the survey to address concerns in the department during the next round of bargaining. Thank you to all the members who filled out the survey! Your input is invaluable. A preliminary report on the survey findings is now finished. Watch for more details coming out to members in the fall. The DCR Issues Committee is interested to know members' thoughts on problems or issues in the workplace through the SGEU website at www.sgeu.org. Click on "For Members", then look under "Get in Touch", and click on "Discussion Forum" to submit your input.

Benefits Coverage while on Leaves of Absence

While on a definite or indefinite leave of absence up to one year, an employee is required to pay SGEU LTD premiums. The usual method is to submit post-dated cheques for each month of the leave up to one year. After one year of leave, payment of premiums becomes optional.

Payment of Group Life Insurance premiums is optional during definite or indefinite leaves of absence. If an employee wants to continue coverage while on leave, payment can be made by submitting monthly post-dated cheques. After one year of leave, an employee requires approval from PEBA if s/he wishes to continue paying group life insurance.

Pension contributions are not paid during leaves of absence, and an employee is not eligible to pay pension arrears until s/he returns to work. For members of the old pension plan, payment of pension arrears is mandatory. For members of the new plan, repayment is optional. If an employee chooses to repay pension contributions, s/he may do so by payroll deduction or by lump sum payment.

Call for Committee Members

PS/GE needs members for the following committees. Interested members should forward their credentials, indicating their knowledge, skills and abilities to sit on the committees.

1. **Board of Trustees for Health and Dental Plan.** Three members will be appointed for a three-year term.
2. **Employment Equity Program.** Four members will be appointed, one from each of the four designated groups: persons with disabilities; aboriginal persons; visible minority persons; and women in non-traditional occupations.
3. **Regional Grievance Committees.** Four members will be appointed for each of the three Regional Grievance Committees.

Interested members can apply for these committees by submitting their names to Barry Nowoselsky at bnowoselsky@sgeu.gov.sk.ca or mail to 1440 Broadway Avenue, Regina SK S4P 1E2. Names must be submitted by July 12th. If you have questions about committee appointments, please contact Barry at 1-800-667-5221, ext. 206.

Children's Wish Foundation

PS/GE has identified the Children's Wish Foundation as its charity of choice. We sent out requests for donations to professional sporting teams, businesses, and unions. Together with personal donations submitted to the silent auction at the Proposals Conference, more than \$10,000 was raised. This total included over \$1,500 raised by the Prince Albert local social event held during the Proposals Conference, where several brothers showed their commitment to the charity by waxing their legs! If you would like to contribute to the fund, contact Sandy Evanovich at sevans@imagewireless.ca or 1-800-667-5221, ext.206.