



# **RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF MEADOW LAKE**

**LOCAL 5293**

**BARGAINING GUIDELINES**

**2021**

**BARGAINING GUIDELINES**

**SGEU**

**Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union**



# **Rural Municipality of Meadow Lake Local 5293 Bargaining Guidelines 2021**

**APPROVED BY THE MEMBERSHIP OF  
RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF MEADOW LAKE  
LOCAL 5293  
ON OCTOBER 6, 2020**

**AND**

**APPROVED BY THE  
MEMBERSHIP, CONSTITUTION & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE  
ON MAY 18, 2021**

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**Rural Municipality of Meadow Lake  
Local 5293  
Bargaining Guidelines  
2021**

**1. STRUCTURE OF THE BARGAINING UNIT**

**1.1** The Union members of **RM of Meadow Lake** are the in-scope employees as described in the Collective Agreement.

**2. DEFINITIONS**

**2.1** Simple majority vote: a term to describe a vote that is determined by a fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) count of the votes.

**2.2** Plurality vote: a term to describe a vote that is determined by a count of the most votes received.

**2.3** AGM: an acronym for Annual General Meeting.

**2.4** Recall: a term referring to a process by which an elected Union official can be removed from office.

**3. ELECTED OFFICIALS**

**3.1 Stewards**

**3.1.1 Election of Stewards**

- a) Stewards shall be elected by members of the Bargaining Unit.
- b) The election of Stewards shall be held every two (2) years, and occur in odd years in accordance with SGEU Constitution and Sector Bylaws.
- c) The election of Stewards shall be conducted in accordance with Sector Bylaws and in the month of June.
- d) The election of Stewards shall include a nomination process.
- e) A notice shall be posted on the Union bulletin board in the worksite, and mailed or sent electronically to the members of the Bargaining Unit, fourteen (14) days prior to the date of election.
- f) The notice shall state: the purpose of the notice, outline the procedures for making nominations, state how and where nominations are to be submitted, state the deadline date for submitting nominations, include information regarding how to

access nomination forms, and state the election date, time, location, and voting procedures.

- g) The election of Stewards shall be conducted by secret ballot vote.
- h) Nominees receiving the most number of votes cast shall be deemed elected as Stewards.
- i) At the conclusion of the election, members shall be notified about the outcome of the election of Stewards by posting outcome on the Union bulletin board.

### **3.1.2** Term of Office for Stewards

- a) Stewards shall serve a two (2) year term of office from July 1 to June 30, or whenever a vacancy occurs, shall serve for the remainder of the vacant term.

### **3.1.3** Responsibilities of Stewards

- a) Stewards shall perform duties in accordance with the SGEU Steward Job Description. Refer to Appendix 1 of these Bargaining Guidelines.
- b) Stewards shall advocate on behalf of the members of the Bargaining Unit.
- c) Stewards shall organize and maintain accurate records and required documentation, including an accurate mailing list of members.
- d) Stewards shall organize and update the Union bulletin board.
- e) Stewards shall participate in Bargaining Unit meetings.

### **3.1.4** Steward Vacancies

- a) When a vacancy occurs before the expiry of a term, an election by the members of the Bargaining Unit shall be conducted within thirty (30) days of the vacancy and in accordance with Article 3.1.1 of these Bargaining Guidelines.

## **3.2 Chief Stewards**

### **3.2.1 Elections of Chief Steward/Area Council Executive**

- a) Nominations and Elections of Chief Steward/Area Council Executive members shall be conducted in accordance with Community Services Sector Bylaws.
- b) Nominations and Elections of Chief Steward/Area Council Executive members shall occur at the Community Services Sector Annual General Meeting.

### **3.2.2 Term of Office**

- a) Chief Steward/Area Council Executive members shall serve a two (2) year term of office in accordance with SGEU Constitution and Community Services Sector Bylaws.

### **3.2.3 Responsibilities of Chief Stewards/Area Council Executive**

- a) Chief Stewards shall perform duties in accordance with the SGEU Chief Steward Job Description.

### **3.2.4 Chief Steward / Area Council Executive Vacancies**

- a) Vacancies shall be filled in accordance with SGEU Constitution and Community Services Sector Bylaws.

## **3.3 Negotiating Committee**

### **3.3.1 Election of Negotiating Committee**

- a) The Bargaining Unit of RM of Meadow Lake shall have a Negotiating Committee of three (3) members in accordance with SGEU Constitution and SGEU Policy.
- b) The Negotiating shall be elected by members of the Bargaining Unit.
- c) The assigned Labour Relations Officer shall be responsible for conducting the election of the Negotiating Committee.
- d) The election of the Negotiating Committee members shall include a nomination process.
- e) Nominations and election of the Negotiating Committee shall occur ninety (90) days prior to when the most recent Collective Agreement expires.

- f) A notice shall be posted on the Union bulletin board in the worksite and mailed or sent electronically to the members of the Bargaining Unit, fourteen (14) days prior to the date of election.
- g) The notice shall state: the purpose of the notice, outline the procedures for making nominations, state how and where nominations are to be submitted, state the deadline date for submitting nominations, include information regarding how to access nomination forms, and state the election date, time, location, and voting procedures.
- h) The election of the Negotiating Committee members shall be conducted by secret ballot vote.
- i) The three (3) nominees receiving the most number of votes shall be deemed elected as Negotiating Committee members.
- j) Results of the Negotiating Committee election shall be announced by posting on the Union bulletin upon conclusion of the election.

### **3.3.2** Term of Office for Negotiating Committee

- a) The Negotiating shall serve a term commencing from the date election results have concluded and remain in place until a new Negotiating Committee is elected in accordance with SGEU Constitution and SGEU Policy.
- b) Any member of the Negotiating Committee missing three (3) consecutive Negotiating Committee meetings, without prior communication with other Negotiating Committee members regarding absence, shall be deemed to have resigned.

### **3.3.3** Responsibilities of the Negotiating Committee

- a) Represent their membership and negotiate/bargain on behalf of their members a Collective Agreement with their Employer.
- b) Organize a process for gathering proposals and information from members of the Bargaining Unit.
- c) Develop a proposals package for the Bargaining Unit.
- d) Maintain open lines of communication between members of the Bargaining Unit, Stewards, and the SGEU Labour Relations Officer (LRO).
- e) Ensure confidentiality.

- f) Organize the ratification of the tentative Collective Agreement in accordance with SGEU Constitution.

### **3.3.4** Negotiating Committee

- a) When a vacancy occurs within the Negotiating Committee, the Negotiating Committee Chair shall appoint the Alternate, or in circumstances where there is no existing Alternate shall appoint a member to fill the vacancy on an interim basis until an election can be held in accordance with Article 3.3.1 of these Bargaining Guidelines.

## **3.4** Negotiating Committee Chairperson

### **3.4.1** Election of Negotiating Committee Chairperson

- a) The Negotiating Committee shall elect a chairperson from among the elected Negotiating Committee members.

### **3.4.2** Term of Office for Negotiating Committee Chairperson

- a) The Negotiating Committee Chairperson shall serve a term commencing from the date election results conclude and remain as Chairperson until a new Negotiating Committee is elected.

### **3.4.3** Responsibilities of Negotiating Committee

- a) Act as chief spokesperson for the Negotiating Committee.
- b) Organize and chair all Negotiating Committee meetings.
- c) Organize and chair all membership meetings of the Bargaining Unit that pertain to current negotiations of a new Collective Agreement.
- d) Communicate with the assigned SGEU LRO.
- e) Prepare and distribute all printed material, correspondence, and information required by members of the Negotiating Committee.
- f) Sign all communications related to negotiations, including communications to members of the Bargaining Unit.
- g) When applicable, communicate with the Sector Chairperson, SGEU Administration Committee, and SGEU President in accordance with SGEU Constitution and SGEU Policy.
- h) Appoint a member to fill a vacant position on the Negotiating Committee until an election can be held.



### **3.5 Grievance Committee**

**3.5.1** The Negotiating Committee shall act as the Grievance Committee.

**3.5.2** Stewards shall process grievances and follow Grievance Procedures as directed by the pertaining Article of the most current Collective Agreement of the Bargaining Unit.

**3.5.3** In accordance with SGEU Policy, Stewards shall process initial stages of grievances in the Bargaining Unit.

### **3.6 Occupational Health Committee**

**3.6.1** The Occupational Health Committee shall be comprised of: two (2) worker representatives and, in accordance with SGEU Constitution, at least one (1) Steward.

#### **3.6.2 Election of Worker Representatives**

- a) Worker Representatives shall be elected by the workers of the worksite that they represent.
- b) Elections of Worker Representatives shall occur in odd years.
- c) Elections of Worker Representatives in each worksite shall occur in June.
- d) Stewards shall be responsible for conducting the election of Worker Representatives.
- e) The election of Worker Representatives shall include a nomination process.
- f) A notice shall be posted on the Union bulletin board in the applicable worksite fourteen (14) days prior to the date of election.
- g) The notice shall state: the purpose of the notice, outline the procedures for making nominations, state how and where nominations are to be submitted, state a specific date for when nominations need to be submitted, include information regarding how to access nomination forms, and state the election date, time, location, and voting procedures.
- h) The election of Worker Representatives shall be conducted by secret ballot vote. Stewards shall provide the voting ballots on the day of election.

- i) The two (2) nominees receiving the most votes will be deemed elected as the Worker Representative for the applicable worksite.
- j) Results of the election of Worker Representatives shall be posted on the Union bulletin board in the applicable worksite upon conclusion of the election.

**3.6.3** Election of Steward Representative

- a) Elected Stewards shall elect a Steward Representative to serve a term of office on the Occupational Health Committee.

**3.6.4** Term of Office for Steward and Worker Representatives

- a) The Steward Representative and Worker Representatives shall serve a two (2) year term of July 1 to June 30 or whenever a vacancy occurs shall serve for the remainder of the vacant term.

**3.6.5** Responsibilities of Steward and Worker Representatives

- a) Participate in the identification and control of health and safety hazards in or at the place of employment.
- b) Cooperate with the occupational health and safety service, if any, established for the place of employment.
- c) Receive and distribute to workers information regarding health and safety.
- d) Receive, consider and resolve matters respecting the health and safety of workers.
- e) Carry out any other duties that are specified in The Occupational Health and Safety Act and prescribed in The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations.

**3.6.6** Occupational Health Committee Vacancies

- a) When a worker vacancy occurs before the expiry of a term, an election by the workers of the worksite shall be conducted within thirty (30) days of the vacancy and in accordance with Article 3.6.2 of these Bargaining Guidelines.

#### **4. OATH OF OFFICE FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS**

**4.1** In accordance with SGEU Constitution, all elected officials shall take the Oath of Office as follows:

**4.1.1** "In accepting nomination, I, \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby sincerely pledge my word to the Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union that I will truly and faithfully perform the duties of my office in accordance with the SGEU Constitution, Code of Ethics, Statement of Equality, the Policies and the Bylaws of the Union. I will safeguard and protect the assets of the Union and return all assets at the close of my term in office.

#### **5. RECALL OF ELECTED OFFICIALS**

**5.1** Elected officials of the Bargaining Unit include: Stewards, Chief Stewards, Members of the Negotiating Committee, the Negotiating Bargaining Committee Chairperson, and Worker Representatives of the Occupational Health Committee, and any position so designated as an Elected Official by SGEU Constitution.

**5.2** An elected official may be subject to a recall process in accordance with SGEU Constitution.

**5.3** A Sector/Local wishing to recall one (1) or more of its elected officials may do so subject to the following stipulations.

**5.3.1** Petition Process

- a) Recall must be petitioned for by twenty-five percent (25%) of the members who are represented by the person being recalled. The petition must outline the reasons for recall in clear and concise language.
- b) Upon receiving the duly signed petition, the elected official responsible for the person being recalled will call a meeting for that purpose. The notice of meeting must be advertised at least fourteen (14) days in advance. The notice must include the time, date, location and purpose.
- c) The official facing recall shall receive a copy of the petition, reasons for the recall and notice of the meeting where the vote will take place. Such notice shall be at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting.

### 5.3.2 Recall Process

- a) The official facing recall shall have the opportunity to present his/her position or response to the petition prior to the vote occurring.
- b) The two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those members in attendance shall be required to unseat the incumbent. Only those who are members of the Committee/Councils or Delegates to the body that elected the person being recalled can vote on the recall.
- c) Voting shall be done by secret ballot.
- d) Vacancies created by a recall shall be filled following the election process for other vacant positions.

## 6. **ROLE OF STAFF ASSIGNED - LABOUR RELATIONS OFFICER (LRO)**

6.1 SGEU shall assign the LRO to the Bargaining Unit in accordance with SGEU Constitution and SGEU Policy.

6.2 The role of the LRO is to assist, advise and support the Bargaining Unit. The LRO shall always be attendance during negotiating meetings when a new Collective Agreement is being negotiated with the Employer.

6.3 With substantiated reasons, the elected officials of the Bargaining Unit can request that the assigned SGEU LRO be removed.

## 7. **PROPOSALS GATHERING AND RATIFICATION OF PROPOSALS PACKAGE**

### 7.1 **Proposal Submissions**

7.1.1 In accordance with SGEU Constitution and SGEU Policy, every member of the Bargaining Unit in good standing has the right to submit proposals for changes to the Collective Agreement.

### 7.2 **Proposal Organizing**

7.2.1 In accordance with SGEU Constitution, the Negotiating Committee shall organize the proposals gathering process.

### 7.3 **Format of Proposals**

7.3.1 A proposal is a suggested change to the Collective Agreement.

7.3.2 A proposal must be in written form and worded clearly.

**7.3.3** Proposals shall include:

- a) Statement of the desired change.
- b) Reasons for the change.
- c) Reference to relevant article(s) in the agreement.
- d) Reference to other agreements, if applicable.

**7.4 Proposals Gathering**

**7.4.1** Proposals gathering should occur prior to the expiry of the most recent Collective Agreement.

**7.4.2** The call for proposals shall be made by the Negotiating Committee.

**7.4.3** A notice shall be posted on the Union bulletin board in the worksite, and mailed or sent electronically to the members of the Bargaining Unit fourteen (14) days prior to the deadline for submissions.

**7.4.4** The notice shall state: the purpose of the notice, outline the format for making proposal submissions, state how and where proposals are to be submitted, and state the deadline date for when proposals are to be submitted by. The deadline for proposals shall be at adjournment of the proposal meeting.

**7.4.5** A membership meeting will be held to discuss changes to the agreement and gather / construct proposals.

**7.4.6** After proposals have been gathered, the Negotiating Committee shall develop a proposals package for negotiation with the Employer with consideration for the intentions of the membership and the policies and objectives of SGEU.

**7.5 Ratification of the Proposals Package**

**7.5.1** Ratification by the Bargaining Committee

- a) In accordance with SGEU Constitution, the Bargaining Committee shall be delegated with the authority to ratify the proposals package on behalf of the Bargaining Unit.
- b) The process of Ratification shall be by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, a secret ballot vote of the Bargaining Committee shall be conducted with a fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) vote deeming the proposals package ratified.

**7.5.2** Following ratification by the membership, the Negotiating Committee shall present the ratified proposals package to the Employer for negotiations.

## **8. RATIFICATION OF TENTATIVE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT**

**8.1** Ratification of the Tentative Collective Agreement shall be in accordance with SGEU Constitution.

**8.2** In accordance with SGEU, when through the process of negotiation, the Negotiating Committee and the Employer reach a tentative agreement, or a Memorandum of Agreement, the tentative agreement or Memorandum of Agreement shall be ratified by both the members of the Bargaining Unit and the Employer.

**8.3** In accordance with SGEU Constitution, the tentative Collective Agreement or Memorandum of Agreement shall be submitted to the Bargaining Unit's Sector and the SGEU Administration Committee for review and approval before ratification by the members of the Bargaining Unit.

**8.4** The Negotiating Committee Chairperson shall call a membership meeting of the Bargaining Unit to ratify the tentative Collective Agreement after the required approval has been obtained.

**8.5** A notice of the membership meeting shall be mailed (or sent electronically) to the members of the Bargaining Unit no less than seven (7) days and no more than fourteen (14) days prior to the date of the ratification vote.

**8.6** The notice shall state: the purpose, date, time, and location of the ratification meeting, include a copy of the document being ratified, and voting procedures.

**8.7** Ratification shall be by secret ballot vote.

**8.8** The Negotiating Committee shall be responsible for organizing the voting procedures of ratification.

**8.9** In accordance with SGEU Constitution, when ratification ballots are being counted, the Negotiating Committee shall ensure that a SGEU Provincial Council member, not representing the Negotiating Committee directly, is there as a scrutineer.

**8.10** Ratification of a tentative Collective Agreement shall be achieved by a fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) vote of those members voting.

**8.11** In accordance with SGEU Constitution, all amendments to a Collective Agreement, including Letters of Understanding, that affect the entire membership of a Bargaining Unit, shall be ratified by the members of that Bargaining Unit.

## **9. STRIKES**

**9.1** Strike action shall be in accordance with SGEU Constitution.

**9.2** Only the SGEU President (or the SGEU Acting President whenever the President is not available), in consultation with the Negotiating Committee Chairperson, is authorized to serve notice of Job Action/Strike Action to the Employer on behalf of SGEU.

**9.3** Prior to withdrawal of services by all or part of the Bargaining Unit, the Negotiating Committee shall conduct a secret ballot vote.

**9.4** The secret ballot vote shall be conducted at special meetings of the Bargaining Unit called for this purpose, and/or mailed ballots.

**9.5** Those members who vote in the Bargaining Unit concerned shall constitute a quorum.

**9.6** A strike vote shall be achieved by a fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) vote of those members of the Bargaining Unit voting.

## **10. COMMUNICATIONS**

### **10.1 Public Communications**

**10.1.1** In accordance with SGEU Constitution and SGEU Policy, the SGEU President is responsible, as chief spokesperson, for all communication to those outside the Union on matters of Union policy, program and activities or on issues of provincial, national or international significance. Therefore, all requests for such communication from members, the media or other organizations must be referred to the SGEU President directly, or through the SGEU Communications Officer. The appropriate response and the responsibility for responding will then be determined.

**10.1.2** In accordance with SGEU Constitution and SGEU Policy, all members and elected officers shall consult and take the direction of the SGEU President, directly or through the SGEU Communications Officer, about all requests to speak publicly as a Union spokesperson on matters of Union policy, program or activity.

**10.1.3** The Negotiating Committee shall determine who will act as spokesperson on behalf of the Bargaining Unit subject to Articles 10.1.1 and 10.1.2 of these Bargaining Guidelines.

## **10.2 Membership**

- 10.2.1** In accordance with SGEU Policy, membership meetings of the Bargaining Unit shall be held during the course of collective bargaining to provide reports and receive feedback from the membership concerning bargaining issues.
- 10.2.2** Membership meetings regarding collective bargaining shall be chaired by the Negotiating Committee Chairperson.
- 10.2.3** The Negotiating Committee, in accordance with SGEU Policy, shall provide written bargaining report(s) to the membership of the Bargaining Unit during collective bargaining.
- 10.2.4** In accordance with SGEU Policy, members of the Bargaining Unit are entitled to a copy of the Collective Agreement and any Letters of Understanding that are signed between negotiations.
- 10.2.5** In accordance with SGEU Policy, Collective Agreements are to be distributed to members of the Bargaining Unit by Stewards.
- 10.2.6** Unless already specified in these Bargaining Guidelines, notice of all membership meetings will be no less than seven (7) days and no more than fourteen (14) days prior to the date of the membership meeting.

## **10.3 Sector/Provincial Council**

- 10.3.1** Written bargaining reports shall be provided to the Sector Executive and the SGEU Administration Committee when pertinent information arises during the course of collective bargaining.
- 10.3.2** In accordance with SGEU Policy, the Negotiating Committee Chairperson or the assigned SGEU staff shall ensure an attendance sheet is completed for each Negotiating Committee meeting to qualify members for payment of stipend, and will distribute expense claim vouchers at the conclusion of the meeting for completion. The Negotiating Committee Chairperson or the assigned SGEU staff shall submit all expense claims and the attendance sheet to the SGEU Accounting Department.



## **11. RULES OF ORDER FOR ALL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

- 11.1** Rules of Order for all membership meetings shall be conducted in accordance with SGEU Constitution.
- 11.2** The Order of Business at any membership meeting of the Bargaining Unit shall include:
- a) Statement of Equality.
  - b) Appointment of Ombudsman.
  - c) Adopting of the Agenda.
  - d) Adoption of the Previous Minutes.
- 11.3** In accordance with SGEU Policy, all membership meetings shall keep an official record of minutes of all proceedings.
- 11.3.1** Official records of minutes shall include:
- a) Place (community and location), time, date and recorded proceedings.
  - b) Name of Chairperson, name of minute recorder, list of all those in attendance, and list guests/resource people in attendance.
  - c) All motions made at the meeting including the name of member who moved, the name of the member who seconded, and the decision of the motion as to whether the motion was carried, defeated, amended, referred, tabled or withdrawn.
  - d) An accurate reflection of the actions taken and decision made regarding the business of the meeting.
  - e) Documents regarding Committee business, such as reports and financial statements, shall be attached to the minutes by the recorder of the minutes.
- 11.4** In accordance with SGEU Policy, at the close of each membership meeting of the Bargaining Unit, the Secretary or designated recorder of the minutes shall sign the attendance list directly below the last signature.
- 11.5** In accordance with SGEU Policy, after adoption, the minutes will be signed by the Chair and the Secretary or designated recorder of the minutes and be kept in a register/binder designated for meeting minutes.

- 11.6** Quorum of a membership meeting of the Bargaining Unit shall be fifty percent (50%) of those members in attendance at the start of the meeting.
- 11.7** The Chairperson of the membership meeting will vote only in the case of when a tie in vote occurs.
- 11.8** In accordance with SGEU Constitution, there will be no proxy voting at membership meetings.
- 12. AMENDMENTS TO BARGAINING GUIDELINES**
- 12.1** Every member of the Bargaining Unit has the right to submit proposals for amendments to the Bargaining Guidelines.
- 12.2** Bargaining Guidelines shall be reviewed annually by the Bargaining Unit at a meeting in October. The purpose of the annual review is to keep the Bargaining Guidelines current and ensure that any resolutions pertaining to the SGEU Constitution and or the SGEU Policy that affect the Bargaining Guidelines of a Bargaining Unit are observed.
- 12.3** Bargaining Guidelines shall be amended as required to meet the needs of the Bargaining Unit.
- 12.4** All amendments must conform to SGEU Constitution, SGEU Policy and Sector Bylaws.
- 12.5** Amendments to the Bargaining Guidelines shall be proposed and ratified by the Bargaining Unit membership at a membership meeting held annually in the month of June.
- 12.5.1** Notice of the meeting to amend the Bargaining Guidelines shall be posted on the Union bulletin board at the work site and sent electronically fourteen (14) days prior to the date of meeting.
- 12.5.2** The notice shall state: the purpose of the notice, outline the procedures for proposing amendments, state how and where proposed amendments are to be submitted, state the deadline date for submitting proposed amendments, include information regarding the format for how proposed amendments are to be written/presented, and state the meeting date, time, location, and ratification procedures. The Chairperson shall present amended Bylaws to the membership. The members shall vote on the Bylaws as amended.

- 12.6** Amendments to the Bargaining Guidelines shall be deemed ratified by a fifty percent (50%) plus one (1) vote of the members voting.
- 12.7** Amendments to the Bargaining Guidelines shall come into effect immediately following the conclusion of the ratification vote, pending approval by the Membership, Constitution and Legislation (MC&L) Committee.
- 12.8** In accordance with SGEU Constitution, the amended Bargaining Guidelines shall be submitted to the MC&L Committee for review and approval within sixty (60) days following ratification by the members of the Bargaining Unit, or every three years, whichever comes first.

## APPENDIX 1 – STEWARD ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Steward is one of the most important positions within the labour movement and probably the most recognizable. You are the first person that members in your assigned area contact for information about their workplace, Union, CBA and for help resolving workplace issues. As a Steward, you are a vital link between the members, your local (or Bargaining Unit), SGEU and management.

To many members, the Steward is "the Union," and their relationship with the Steward will have significant influence on their view of SGEU. Through their actions, attitude and approach, Stewards are the SGEU that our members will remember. Therefore, it is critical that the image and reputation put forward by the Steward is one worthy of their trust, confidence and respect.

Under the guidance of your Chief Steward, you will work collectively with other Stewards, elected leaders, SGEU LROs, Bargaining Unit and sector officials. Our members will most often turn to you, the Steward, when seeking advice. In order for their opinions to be valued, the Steward must be familiar with several documents including: the SGEU Constitution, Sector Bylaws, their CBA, workplace policies and practices, and any relevant legislation. Above all, the Steward must be a fair and objective advocate for all members in their workplace.

### Qualities of an Effective Steward

- **Able to Resolve Conflict:** You will be recognized as a good problem solver.
- **Credible and Reliable:** You will be seen as an honest and credible person with a high degree of integrity who respects the privacy and confidentiality of each member.
- **Assertive:** You will be assertive (not aggressive) and decisive, with the ability to deliver difficult and unpopular news.
- **Respected:** You will be recognized and respected for possessing a strong work ethic. The Steward is positive, motivated, enthusiastic and an energetic supporter (and promoter) of the Union.
- **Diplomatic:** You will demonstrate commitment to the principles of justice, equality, security, fairness and democracy.
- **Compassionate:** A Steward needs to be compassionate and able to develop a rapport with the members. You will make members feel comfortable and provide them with support and encouragement.

- **Able to Communicate Clearly:** A Steward needs well developed communication skills, including the ability and willingness to give your undivided attention. You will be thorough, well organized and empower members to help themselves by providing them with information and support.

## **Key Responsibilities and Workplace Expectations**

As an SGEU Steward, your key responsibilities include:

- Building solidarity and promoting harmonious relationships among the members and discouraging factional bickering in the workplace.
- Serving as the protector of the rights of our members.
- Enforcing the CBA and/or any applicable legislation by identifying violations, investigating complaints and meeting with management to solve problems or file grievances.
- Providing information on programs available to members through the Union and Employer, such as Workers' Compensation, Long-Term Disability, and Employee & Family Assistance Plans.
- Defending the Union from harmful rumors by promoting and maintaining a positive, professional and proactive relationship, both within the Union and between the Union and management.
- Investigating and responding to members' concerns in a timely fashion.
- Gathering necessary research materials to support your Bargaining Unit's Negotiating Committee.
- Learning from your fellow members by asking for their advice. Their knowledge, strengths and experiences may help you to help others.

## **Union Expectations**

Your fellow members expect you, as a Steward, to:

- Support and cooperate with your Chief Steward, local executive, and SGEU leaders and their appointees, and never work in conflict with them.
- Get to know SGEU, including understanding our history, structure, mission and role within the labour community.
- Encourage members to attend meetings and (when asked) offer a brief report on the issues discussed at the meeting in such a way that those who did not attend will recognize their importance.

- Maintain open lines of communication with the Chief Steward, other Stewards, officers, members and the SGEU Office.
- Report to the local executive the successes and challenges you have faced.
- Ensure that all members are abiding by the rules set forth in the SGEU Constitution and your Local Bylaws.
- Attend and actively participate in Union meetings.
- Attend training sessions offered by the Union.
- Promote union-building activities such as: welcoming new members, recruiting volunteers to become actively involved in Union affairs and exploring opportunities for increased membership participation.
- Promote and support the "union label" by buying products that have been produced by unionized workers.

Standing in solidarity with SGEU, you will help us succeed in our efforts to enrich the lives of the working men and women. Stewards are the backbone of the labour movement and the front rank of every battle!

## **APPENDIX 2 – CHIEF STEWARD ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

You are a workplace leader who represents SGEU, coordinates Stewards and enforces the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). You work collectively with Stewards, elected leaders, and SGEU staff in your workplace, Bargaining Unit and sector. You also deal with management on behalf of the Union. As Chief Steward, you fulfill the duties of a Steward, but also work with other Stewards in your zone to do the following:

### **Communication**

- Encourage Stewards to approach you with questions about processes, contract interpretation and reports of workplace conflicts and issues.
- Advise Stewards and other members about Union activities and advise Bargaining Unit and sector leaders about workplace developments.
- Ensure new member orientations are occurring as needed.
- Ensure you have a strong relationship with the assigned SGEU LRO.
- Inform Stewards and members about changes in or interpretation of the CBA, as well as relevant arbitration decisions.
- Be accessible to Stewards by telephone or in person.

### **Conflict Resolution**

- Assist in resolving conflicts between members and Stewards or between members and the Employer.
- Be knowledgeable about both workplace and Union harassment policies and procedures.
- Encourage Stewards to talk to you when they encounter harassment in the Union or in the workplace, and work with Stewards and/or the SGEU LRO to resolve the problem.
- Hold regular meetings of all Stewards. Topics should include current workplace issues, barriers facing equity-group Stewards, discrimination/harassment of Stewards in the Union and the workplace, and strategies to address issues.
- Work to dispel, not encourage, rumors.

## **Grievance Coordination**

- Assign complaints and grievances to Stewards in your zone, taking into account:
  - Stewards' specialized knowledge.
  - The chance for new Stewards to gain experience.
  - The need to prevent Steward burnout.
- Respect members' right to work with the Steward of their choice. Assist Stewards, as needed, in writing and investigating grievances properly, and in judging whether a complaint is a grievance.
- In communications with the SGEU LRO, keep track of filed grievances and ensure the necessary tasks are completed.
- Inform Stewards that all grievances are to be fully investigated in order to identify any violations of the CBA and/or any other statutes or laws, before being filed. Educate Stewards on the internal appeal processes.
- Ensure contract enforcement by:
  - Not agreeing to any deal that violates the provisions in the CBA or any other rights defined in a statute.
  - Challenging violations of the CBA and other rights defined in a statute.

## **Leadership**

- Promote maximum involvement by members in Union activities, especially within the collective bargaining process.
- Delegate duties to Stewards (and to panel reps where relevant).
- Call and chair regular Steward meetings to share information, identify best practices, and review grievances and other workplace issues.
- Chair other meetings when necessary, such as membership or Union Management Committee meetings.

## **Recruitment**

- Actively recruit new Stewards with the goal of achieving a representative Steward body in SGEU.



## **Mentoring and Training**

- Ensure you are familiar with your CBA, related legislation, workplace policies and procedures, SGEU policies, the Steward Manual and Union resource people.
- Complete training as set out in SGEU's policy.
- Orient new Stewards and support them to meet the expectations set out in the Steward job description.

## **Mentoring Arrangements for New Stewards**

- Encourage Stewards to take appropriate training, such as LD 10, LD 11, LD 20, LD 30 and conflict resolution training.
- Update Stewards about education opportunities.
- Encourage Stewards to set appropriate limits to prevent stress and burnout.

## **Administrative Duties**

- Ensure elections are held for positions of Stewards and representatives for your workplace OH&S Committee.
- Ensure that Stewards are registered with SGEU membership records after each election.
- Ensure distribution and posting of Union information within your zone.