

IMPORTANT NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE TO CUPE LOCAL 3550 MEMBERSHIP

Please share with your Local 3550 colleagues

SUMMARY

Our bargaining committee received a verbal proposal this morning from the employer that appears to be a tactic to distract our membership and move us away from preparation for our strike vote. We are not prepared to accept or recommend this proposal to the membership because it does not meet the mandate from the membership our committee has been given to achieve a fair agreement.

UPDATE

Our bargaining committee was invited by the employer on Friday, October 11th to come back to the bargaining table on the morning of Tuesday, October 15th (today), less than 24 hours before our strike vote opens at 6:00am on Wednesday, October 16th. We accepted this meeting, acknowledging that it may be a last-minute attempt on the part of the employer to significantly improve their offer.

However, when we met this morning, the employer wasn't willing to provide an updated offer in writing, and it was clear their position is still significantly constrained by the provincial government's pressure to cap wages. The employer verbally suggested they would extend the 4-year contract to an 8-year contract, but this would be on the condition of zero movement in the first 4 years, holding to 2.75% over the first 4 years and the following 4 years would be limited to 3% each year, equating to approximately 52 cents per year over the course of the contract. That's not enough.

This is the same wage cap for the first 4 years that has already been rejected by our membership which is lower than what has already been offered to other CUPE education support locals. The remaining 4 years would be far less than what is needed to make up the wage gap in our sector that's grown over the years and is far below what is being offered to other public sectors in Alberta.

A small increase of 3% per year does not make up for the 30% we have lost in purchasing power, it doesn't make our work sustainable, and it doesn't correct the systemically low pay our sector has struggled through for too long. This remains out of line with the expectations of our members, given the years of rising cost-of-living, increasing workloads, and understaffing our members have been enduring. The effort by the employer to try to

pressure our membership with a last-minute proposal that falls short is an attempt to disrupt and divide our membership going into a strike vote.

We understand that the employer plans to share a copy of their proposal with the membership in an attempt to dissuade our members from a strike. It is a strong-arm effort to lock us into terms they hope we will accept out of fear. It would prevent us from bringing any other items onto the table in the next round. This is not a situation we are prepared to accept.

GOING FORWARD

We know that our members expect and deserve wages they can live on. Our bargaining committee is very committed to achieving a fair deal. We are not prepared to accept zero movement for the first 4 years of the contract and sub-par percentages for the following years. At this time, there are no changes to our plans. We will continue to hold a strike vote tomorrow and we encourage all active members to participate in the vote.

Our Local is very united and well-supported by our community of parents and allies. This outpouring of solidarity is demonstrating our strength and understandably putting appropriate pressure on the employer.

Our Local is in a position of profound strength, along with the EPSB custodial members of Local 474 who are also preparing for a strike vote. We ask that members continue to support each other and remain united in our resolve to close the gap in our wages that has developed over the last decade. We are committed to achieving the fair deal you deserve.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For voting information, please go to the website 3550.cupe.ca

Please send any questions you have to cupe3550@telus.net

Thank you for your solidarity and continued strength throughout this process.