

ALBERTA UNION OF PROVINCIAL EMPLOYEES

# BARGAINING UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

**LEGAL AID SOCIETY**

LOCAL: 118  
CHAPTER: 018, 019  
**ALL STAFF**

## EMPLOYER REJECTS UNION PROPOSALS, DELAYS DETAILS OF EXTENDED WORK

Bargaining continued last week, but we didn't get very far. Going into meetings on Sept. 23, Legal Aid had committed to providing us with more details about their vision for the call-centre, which includes extending hours into the evenings and weekends. Despite serious concerns about the potential impacts on our members' work/life balance, we were willing to look at a sample schedule to better assess Legal Aid's plan.

However, the Employer was not ready to present a sample schedule in bargaining, stating that they would provide it to us in advance of our next bargaining dates in October. It is concerning that Legal Aid would propose drastic changes to our working conditions without a plan, despite being in bargaining for months and having ample time to develop one. Without this information, we were unable to discuss the bulk of the Employer's non-monetary proposals, which hinge on the change in working hours.

Instead, we focused on the Union non-monetary proposals, which addressed many priority areas of concern for our membership including training and orientation, employee monitoring and performance evaluation and provisions related to working from home. The Employer's blanket response to all these proposals was that they would not agree to any language in the collective agreement on these issues, believing they should lie within management rights to determine.

As a negotiating team, have proposed real solutions to organizational issues like high employee turnover. We've used our frontline experience to provide detailed ways to improve the service and the workplace. We've tabled robust and fulsome ingoing proposals [link] along with protections against contracting out and against the employer's extensive (and expanding) employee-monitoring system.

Legal Aid has rejected all these proposals. They make unilateral decisions and they cling to rash, half-formed ideas, such as longer call-centre hours. The employer claims that extended hours will improve caller-answering, but we know what our clients need, and we're concerned this isn't the solution.

We will meet again in bargaining on Oct. 20 and 21 to review the Employer's non-monetary proposals, especially those related to extended hours of work.

In the meantime, please continue to attend your monthly mobilizing meetings. The considerable differences between our approach to bargaining and our Employer's shows how important it is for us to build our collective strength beyond the negotiations table. If you have any questions or ideas please contact us.

*(See page 2 for contact information)*



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