

BARGAINING UPDATE



AGECARE COLUMBIA LOCAL 084 CHAPTER 003- ALL STAFF

Negotiations reach an impasse

Working alone grievance has been advanced to Level 3

After limited progress was made in the previous session, your negotiating team continued collective bargaining with the employer on August 2. The employer provided a verbal update on their positions on all outstanding items; however, their positions had not evolved substantially since May. They continued to reject most monetary items and reiterated their unchanged in-going proposals of 0% for 2023 plus 1% lump sum, 1% for 2024 and 1% for 2025.

As a policy for working alone is another high priority, your negotiating team reengaged the discussion on the need to provide safe procedures to be followed when working alone occurs. Unfortunately, the employer has a narrow definition of what constitutes working alone: a definition which does not align with that of the negotiating team or with Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) regulations. The employer continues to claim that an individual who is required to work alone on a nightshift due to their colleague reporting ill and not being replaced, does not meet their definition of working alone. However, "to work alone or in isolation," according to OHS regulations means to "work in circumstances where assistance would not be readily available to the worker: a) in case of an emergency, or b) in case the worker is injured or in ill health." These regulations do not draw distinctions between particular circumstances under which working alone may arise.

As Article 6 of the collective agreement requires the employer to have a policy in place for working alone, we have advanced the union policy grievance to level 3.

Your negotiating team provided a written response on all outstanding issues that were significantly revised from its in-going proposal. These include extending the term of the agreement to three years and reducing the salary ask to 2.5% per year. The employer responded that their positions will not change on several significant articles, including Health Benefits, Vacation Leave, RRSP and Layoff and Recall.

Your negotiating team feels that we have reached an impasse with the employer and we are pushing to get an Essential Services Agreement (ESA) in place as soon as possible.

We are also monitoring informal mediation that is taking place at the AgeCare Valleyview site, to determine if there is any value in seeking informal mediation for Columbia. If the employer expresses the same inability to move because of their mandate, we will not waste our time going to informal mediation and will instead wait for an ESA to file for formal mediation.

The negotiating team will discuss how to best move forward following the mediation session in Medicine Hat.

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