

July 9, 2007

Greater Victoria Municipal Bargaining Backgrounder



CUPE 1978 in the Capital Regional District votes 93 per cent in favour of strike action.

CUPE 1978 represents over 780 employees who maintain the Capital Regional District's water and sewage infrastructure and regional parks, and provide services in finance, engineering, building inspection, bylaw enforcement and housing.

Why strike action?

On July 5 and 6, after six months of negotiations, Capital Regional District (CRD) workers voted 93 per cent in favour of strike action.

Recent meetings with the employer's bargaining agent, the Greater Victoria Labour Relations Association (GVLRA), have resulted in a failure to reach a collective agreement.

Outstanding issues include:

- Achieving a modified work week, similar to that at the City of Victoria
- Establishing a "respect in the workplace" program
- Developing a fairer promotion process
- Protecting against contracting out and privatization
- The union has tabled a 6 per cent wage increase in each year of a two-year term. After six months of bargaining, the GVLRA has chosen not to deal with wage increases and improvement to benefits at the CRD's bargaining table, but has deferred these matters pending the City of Victoria's bargaining with CUPE Local 50

Employer concessions still on the table:

- Increasing management positions by removing union jobs from the bargaining unit
- Reducing injury pay for water department employees
- Reducing benefits, including taking away the Blue Net card, which allows members to purchase their medical prescriptions directly from pharmacists instead of submitting receipts and waiting for reimbursement
- Establishing a seven-day work week for all parks staff
- Increasing the employees' portion of the benefit premium costs
- The GVLRA is proposing to punish employees by withholding their sick leave advance on January 1 if they happen to be away on that day for any reason

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