

January 12, 2021

For member information

Bargaining moves to conciliation after reaching an impasse

Your bargaining team has completed two days of negotiations with the Employer to renew your Collective Agreement.

Your elected bargaining team has been working very hard and are dedicated to bring forward your demands to reach a fair, equitable and respectful Collective Agreement.

While we did receive a response to our proposals, the Employer spent much of its time arguing to limit the number of our proposals tabled because of the Pandemic and the compensation restrictions imposed by Bill 124. OPSEU, along with other trade unions, is presently challenging the validity of Bill 124 in the courts. Bill 124 restricts overall compensation increases to one percent per year for three years.

Your team tried very hard in these two days to respond to the employer's demands in order to keep them engaged. Despite pulling a substantive number of our items off the table to expedite bargaining, the Employer only made minimal movement on our remaining demands and failed to pull any of their items off the table. Further they have brought forward a number of substantive take-aways from the present collective agreement that would impact your rights.

The Employer gave us notice right from the start that they would file for conciliation after two days of bargaining. While both sides could still utilize the bargaining dates we had originally scheduled for this week, there was not sufficient progress to warrant doing so without the assistance of a Ministry of Labour conciliator given we had largely reached impasse on most items.

The Ministry of Labour provides a conciliator whose job it is to try and bring the two sides together, although unlike arbitration, they have no authority to impose an agreement. In the event that conciliation fails, both sides would advance to binding arbitration.

Details of bargaining are confidential, so we cannot share with you any of the specifics from the table. It is important that accurate communication occur so that everyone has a clear understanding of the steps during this process. It is anticipated that it will be several weeks before we can establish a date to return to bargaining with the assistance of a conciliator. We will continue to keep you updated as we move through this process.

Your Bargaining Team

Leanne Beaudry, Sarah Carde, Denise Wagler-Allan, Tracy Bray, Gabriela Turnbull, Jackie Schumacher, Jonathan Leung, Rick Janson (Staff Negotiator)

**Please continue to visit the Local Union web site
www.opseu331.org for updated information.**