



Bargaining 2014

NEGOTIATIONS NEWSLETTER #7

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February 19, 2015

Report on Bargaining

Local Bargaining

We met this morning for our twentieth meeting and continue to make progress. We are starting to discuss the content of our agenda and the timing of the next phase. The settlement of the Common Agreement table last week (Feb 5) will hopefully speed up bargaining as VCC management seemed to be waiting to see what happened.

We anticipate being able to go into a more focused set of meetings and will need to meet with and inform members of the situation more frequently. There's a General Meeting scheduled for March 12th (2:30 pm, Room G222, Building B, Broadway Campus). As we mentioned at drop-ins last week at both campuses, we may need more leverage to settle the deal.

Common Table

Eight locals (North Island, Northwest, CNC, Okanagan, Rockies, Selkirk, Camosun, and Douglas) reached tentative agreement for a 2014-2019 contract that follows both the term and wage pattern already well-set in the BC public sector. The eight employers were represented by the Post-Secondary Employers' Association, which in turn reports to PSEC, the Public Sector Employers' Council, which is part of the Ministry of Finance.

Unlike the VCCFA, those locals had been stymied in their attempts to start bargaining and so agreed to meet as a Common Table in order to get bargaining started. Some locals had hoped for some combination of a "local pot" and for resolution of secondary scale issues. There was no agreed-to local pot, although employer representatives indicated a minor amount of flexibility.

They met for two weeks in Vancouver and reached agreement Thursday, February 5, 2015. The VCCFA was not a signatory but we had observers there every day and took part in union caucus discussions.

The main highlights of the tentative agreement are as follows:

1. Unions made a trade in the area of benefits:

An increase of \$25 to the annual deductible for extended health (currently \$25 for VCCFA members) and two other minor concessions, allowed for the following benefit improvements:

- i) Vision care levelled in 2017 for the couple of locals that weren't at the level of \$500 every two years. (VCCFA is at this level.)
- ii) Hearing aid increase in 2017 from \$600 every five years (current VCCFA level) to \$1000 every three years.
- iii) Paramedical benefits up in 2016 from \$10 reimbursement for the first 12 visits before full coverage to \$10 for 5 visits before full coverage. (VCCFA has superior benefit, 95% of expense.)
- iv) Payment for addictions treatment to a lifetime cap of \$25,000. (VCCFA does not have this coverage.)

- v) Short term disability (employer-paid) coverage to age 70, from 65. This is within the context of a provincial plan with 30 days sick leave. (VCCFA members pay this premium and coverage ends at 65.)
2. Adjustments in the Harassment language to allow for more redaction of identifying information plus further discussion of investigator training.
 3. Review of the standardization of collective agreements for those in Common Agreement
 4. Working Committee on Secondary Scales to research the issue further and report back before the end of the new agreement. (VCCFA doesn't have secondary scales)
 5. Wages – 5.5% over 5 years following the public sector pattern, plus the economic stability dividend*.

	February	March	April
2014		End of 12/14 Agreement <<	>> Start 2014/19 Agreement
2015			+1% (if all bargaining done by Sept)
2016	+ ESD*		+ .5%
2017	+ ESD* and 1%		+ .5%
2018	+ ESD* and 1%		+ .5%
2019	+ ESD* and 1%	End of 2014/19 Agreement<<	

*The ESD, Economic Stability Dividend, is a promise by the government that public sector workers can have a half-share in any percentage growth of real (i.e., inflation-adjusted) Gross Domestic Product **above** GDP growth forecasted by the Economic Forecast Council (a group appointed by cabinet). This half-share would be a percentage amount of one's pay.

Example: for the first potential Dividend next February, the Council's forecast GDP growth for 2014 has been published as 2.3%. (Interesting that the government predicted 2% growth. *BC 2014 Budget*). The real GDP 2014 growth will be published in November of 2015.

If real GDP growth comes in, for example, at 2.8%, there would be a positive difference of 0.5% between the real and projected growth and the public sector half-share would be 0.25% which would become a February 2016 pay increase. (*Disclaimer: it's going to be more complicated than this! Do not count on this.*) The process would repeat three more times.

Other Employer positions:

Employers ended up withdrawing concession demands such as deletions of the employment security and regularization provisions (VCCFA already has superior benefit) and program transfers and mergers language of Article 6, the superior benefit language of Article 13, and that unions agree to the Pharmacare formulary (this was also withdrawn in 2012-2014 bargaining).

VCCFA Negotiating Committee