

September 2, 2014

City requests employees vote on last offer

The City of Campbell River has made a formal request to the Labour Relations Board to have unionized employees vote on the City's last offer presented to the CUPE Local 401 bargaining team.

"We appreciate the great work done to date by both bargaining committees. Thanks to their efforts, we have come to a tentative agreement on almost all items except wage adjustments and the term of the agreement," says City manager Andy Laidlaw. *"Given that the collective bargaining process has brought us so close to an agreement, even in respect to term and wage adjustments, we wanted to share the City's last offer directly with employees affected."*

The City's wage offer presented to the CUPE executive includes increases of 2% in 2014, 1.5% in 2015, 1.5% in 2016 and 2% in 2017 (for a total of 7% over four years). The first increase would be retroactive to January 1, 2014.

Many other items were agreed to in earlier negotiation and some tentatively agreed to in mediation. Details will be provided for CUPE members to review as part of the voting process.

The City of Campbell River has asked the Labour Relations Board to arrange an employee vote in accordance with Section 78 of the BC Labour Relations Code. A last offer vote will be a structured process conducted by officers of the British Columbia Employment Standards Branch, and voting details and timing have yet to be confirmed.

"The timing of the vote is determined by Employment Standards, and we are hopeful that CUPE employees will be able to vote on a new agreement within the next week or so," adds Ron Bowles, the City's general manager of corporate services.

The City of Campbell River and CUPE Local 401 have been engaged in mediation as part of the process to renew the collective agreement. Last week, CUPE asked the mediator to "book-out", which allows the parties to engage in strike or lockout activity. Such action can occur 48 hours after the mediator has booked out, and following 72 hours of notice served to the Labour Relations Board and the employer, which was served this morning.

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