



## News on BARGAINING



### | PLEASE POST |

**Date:** December 7, 2023  
**To:** All BCGEU Members at Vancity Savings Credit Union  
**Re:** VANCITY BARGAINING UPDATE

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Friends,

Please join us in congratulating newly appointed bargaining committee chairperson, Samantha Moskie. Please also join us in welcoming our newest members, the Securities Administrators.

As many of you are aware, your collective agreement will expire December 31<sup>st</sup>. We are sending this update as we imagine there are questions about the process.

There are normally four stages to bargaining.

#### 1. Pre-Bargaining or Preparation

**We are in the pre-bargaining stage.** It is during this stage that proposals are developed. But before that happens your bargaining committee gathers information by reviewing grievances, changes to applicable law, discussions at labour-management meetings, and seeking member input.

During the course of our Nov 21, 22 and 23, 2023 strategic planning meetings we put in place a bargaining plan that that will assist us in achieving a satisfactory renewal collective agreement that will incorporate the members key priorities. That plan starts with you – the members. **We want to know what you would like to see in your renewed collective agreement.** To obtain that feedback, we will be utilizing a number of mechanisms starting with a member survey which will be distributed early in the new year.

#### 2. Bargaining

Once the proposals have been developed, we will sit down with your Employer to exchange proposals to begin negotiations to reach a tentative settlement which will be put to a member ratification vote. A tentative settlement is usually arrived at without the need for job action however, that is not always the case which may prove true this coming round.

We believe the Employer engaged in bad faith bargaining during negotiations for the renewal of your collective agreement. Specifically, what we say is its failure to honour - post-bargaining, its agreement to design a jointly sponsored Defined Benefit Pension Plan. The Employer's written agreement for a jointly sponsored Defined Benefit Pension Plan was critical to settlement and subsequent member ratification during the last round of talks.

We also believe that the Employer's change to the flexible health benefits is a continuing pattern of making commitments that it has no intention of keeping. In that matter, the Employer provided written commitment during bargaining, that it would not make any changes to the benefit funding formula. Despite that commitment, the amended benefit plan has downloaded the benefit costs onto employees. We believe the new plan also significantly reduces the benefits that are provided.

Although we will write more about both of those important issues in future bulletins, briefly, the Union has taken the Employer to court over what we say is its resiling on the agreed-to jointly sponsored Defined Benefit Pension Plan and has submitted to arbitration a grievance over the Employer's unilateral changes to the flexible benefit plan.

The Employer's conduct post-bargaining will be a key component of our initial discussions when we exchange proposals to renew the current collective agreement because we are not confident that it will negotiate with us in good faith despite being legally required to do so under the *Labour Relations Code*.

If negotiations reach impasse members may need to exercise their right to strike to achieve their priorities. But you will know well in advance should we feel it is necessary to obtain a strike vote; that decision will not be made without member input.

### **3. Voting and Ratification**

The terms and conditions contained in the settlement do not form the renewed collective agreement until ratified by the members. Once ratified, however, the terms and conditions are incorporated into the collective agreement and become legally binding on the Employer and, Union and its members.

### **4. Post-Ratification**

The collective agreement is amended to incorporate the ratified changes and signed off. The changes are typically effective upon ratification not when the new collective agreement has been signed off and printed. I.e. The signing off and printing of the new collective agreement does not delay implementation of the ratified changes. Preparation for the next bargaining round normally starts six months before expiry.

Until there is a negotiated renewed agreement in place your current collective agreement remains in full force and effect. The Employer and, the Union and its members, are not allowed to unilaterally change its terms and conditions.

Although there remains a significant amount of work that needs to be done, we are confident the foundation is now in place upon which we will be able to achieve a satisfactory renewal agreement. We will continue to provide updates and seek input as we progress through the bargaining process. In the interim, please feel free to contact any one of us with questions or concerns.

If you know a BCGEU member who didn't get this bulletin, please send them a copy. They should log on to the MY BCGEU member portal - [my.bcgau.ca](https://my.bcgau.ca) - to give or update their email address. Go to <https://my.bcgau.ca/signup> to create an account.

In Solidarity,

Susan Adams, Bargaining Committee Member  
Andrew Becket, Bargaining Committee Member  
Jason Lin, Bargaining Committee Member  
Melissa Maan, Bargaining Committee Member

Norman Mah, Bargaining Committee Member  
Samantha Moskie, Bargaining Committee Member  
Zoe Towle, Staff Representative - Negotiations

cc: *Dave MacDonald, Vice-President C17, Local 1703 Chair*  
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Move**up**

