



GREATER VANCOUVER REGIONAL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES' UNION

August 21st, 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Re: GVRDEU Response to Metro Vancouver Bargaining Update – August 18, 2023

We want to set the record straight on some of the issues that Metro Vancouver's CAO Jerry Dobrovolny is attempting to misguide you on the Employer's proposal and the Unions position on bargaining for its membership. We have highlighted a few of his comments below that are questionable.

1). *Reaching an agreement with a fair and reasonable deal is important for our staff, and for our region.*

- The Employer has clearly identified to the Union that the Metro Vancouver Board of Directors has directed them and approved on what wage package will be given. There has not been bargaining on that portion other than the Employer's feeble attempt to underpay their staff what they deserve.

2). *A one-time lump sum payment of \$2350.*

- This value is considerably lower when compared to other recently settled agreements in the region.

3). *Improvements to dental as well as health and wellness benefits, including etc.*

- The Employer's offer comes with this precursor "while not to be included in the Collective Agreement". In essence, the Employer are not held to any contractual obligations to continue to pay for these benefits and could withdraw at any time they wish.
- Dental implants have never been on the Employers proposal, and to suggest is disingenuous. In fact, it has been on the Unions proposal since day 1 of bargaining.

4). Hours of Work – some modest flexibility to hours of work that has minimal impacts to most GVRDEU members.

- This request has huge implications that would affect our members ability on receiving premium pay and other benefits accordingly when called in to start early.
- “mutually agreeable” sounds great but we are all aware of this current MV Management’s reaction style when you say no thank-you and the repercussions one faces with favoritism to one and bullyish to the other. This language and the impact it will have on TFT/RTE staff who already feel pressure to go above and beyond their job descriptions and the Collective Agreement in an attempt of a winning a RFT opportunity.
- RTE’s – Have not been used wisely or efficiently since their conception. The Employer initially had them in Parks and Housing, but removed them from Housing a few years later, due to the inability to make it work. Now they are not using them to their fullest extent in Parks but want to expand the hours of work of RFT and TFT employees in the Parks. The introduction of RTE’s to the LSCR is the Employer’s way of removing full-time jobs from the LSCR.

5). Introduction of afternoon shift to Fleet Services.

- Jerry characterizing an opportunity to bring work “in-house”, he and his Corporate Services division have made the decisions to keep aged out vehicles in the fleet and source out majority of this work the last few years which has caused the deterioration of service delivery.
- No current GVRDEU members would be required to work the afternoon shift unless they wished to... Once again, this all comes with “while not to be included in the Collective Agreement”. As well as mentioned before, we are all aware this current MV Management reaction style when you say no thank-you and the repercussions one faces with favoritism to one and bullyish to the other.

6). Clause 11.01 (Me-Too).

- This clause was instituted in the collective agreement on a request years ago from the Employer for a labour stabilization process and to be able to get bargaining completed sooner. This clause will “no way have a negative effect on GVRDEU wages or benefits”. The Employer wants a Me-Too settlement with the region wage settlements that they can manipulate but do not want to live up to their contractual obligations. His comment that the Union waived this clause in the previous agreement; that round of bargaining was during the Covid-19 pandemic and to meet with the Employer was nearly impossible and was quite evident that all respective groups were signing a 2-year roll over deal with no bargaining meetings taking place in person.

7). *Short-Term Illness – Linking occurrences does not impact staff's ability to apply for Long-term Disability.*

- He is correct on saying when “to apply”. What he is not telling you that linking occurrences severely impacts on successfully receiving long-term without delay. Members need to be off 26 weeks consecutively before being eligible to receive payment. The insurance carrier will mark the date you initially identified to the employer being sick as the reference date, and if one has numerous workdays in between then and last day worked, you will not be in receipt of long-term benefits until 26 weeks off work from the last day worked. Then after getting on long term, your 2-year own occupation to your job has rapidly come closer because the carrier will be looking at your initial injury date. And unless you are permanently disabled, your long-term benefits will cease, and the Employer will not accept you as fit for duty. Even with reduced short-term illness pay after 2 occurrences, you have an unlimited amount of sick pay to use. Let’s not forget during the pandemic the Employer was quick to send people home on reduced sick pay while Exempt staff stayed home at 100% pay.

8). *Grievance Procedure – This can help expedite and streamline the process.*

- This is an attempt for Jerry or Department Heads not to participate in the process for when the Union feels the employer has made a mistake or violated the collective agreement, files a grievance and wants to hear directly from the people directly in charge.
- The Union proposed changes to the Disciplinary Action clause but the Employer was not interested in streamlining or expediting the process.

9). *Pacific Blue Cross (PBC)– All health, dental and wellness benefits would remain the same.*

- We have already experienced when the Employer changed dental coverage to “Greenshield” a few years ago, the negative impact it had to our members with slow reimbursement, denial on claims, etc., all that go hand in hand with profit run companies. PBC is local, non-profit, unionized, and its administrators are local councillors and delegates that are in tune with our member’s needs.

10). *Call Out –*

- This Employer cannot recruit and retain any employees under our current wage structure. So, the only way they can get vital work done is via the overtime route. They want to do more work with less staff and work you relentlessly. Premium pays are in the collective agreement to encourage the hiring of adequate staff levels.

11). ***The Employer is looking to make wage adjustments for all GVRDEU members,***

- Jerry's is insinuating that your Union is not looking to make wage adjustments for all its members. That's the farthest thing from the truth. We canvass our members before the start of bargaining and get their input to put forward a proposal. We look at the greatest wage disparities and research the facts that will support our arguments for successful wage adjustments.

Metro Vancouver is leaning on our members to take concessions on well-deserved wage improvements and benefits for the sole purpose to make their Labour Relations division look successful to the other Municipalities they provide and want to provide bargaining services for. All the same time Metro Vancouver Exempt Staff levels have increased dramatically over the last few years to new highly paid positions that never existed before.

In Solidarity,

GVRDEU Bargaining Committee