



## GREATER VANCOUVER REGIONAL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES' UNION

Sept 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Following the overwhelming support the Bargaining Committee received with a 97.2% strike mandate, we returned to the bargaining table this past week (Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>) in the hope that a fair and equitable deal could be reached. These bargaining sessions were undertaken as we wait for the Essential Services Designation (ESD) process to conclude.

On September 13<sup>th</sup>, we received an offer from the Employer for a settlement. While some of the problematic concessions were dropped, others remained. The offer contained neither a satisfactory inflationary adjustment, nor the desired benefit improvement package, both of which have become the framework for settlements that are being seen in the region, and as such the offer remained unacceptable.

We (the Union) worked through the remainder of the day and countered with an offer later in the evening. The following day the Employer returned with a response that they had very little room left to move and requested the Union to pare down more. We engaged with the Employer in exploratory discussions, however the framework for an agreement could not be reached. We are currently at an impasse with the Employer but are looking at future bargaining dates at the mediator's availability.

We will be focusing our efforts on finalizing the ESD process, as is legally required before any job action can be undertaken. Regrettably, the process has proven a long one due to the Employer's continual pressing for a "business-as-usual" approach to work during a strike, by attempting to expand the scope of our work that they want to be deemed essential work. We are working with our legal counsel to see that the ESD is completed as soon as possible.

The stumbling block for the Union is the result of the Employer being entrenched in an opinion of what a fair settlement looks like. As some of you may know, Metro Vancouver has provided bargaining services for many member municipalities through an arm of its Labour Relations branch called Regional Employer Services (RES 360). Over the past few bargaining cycles their influence has faded, and now has become a trend in this last round of bargaining throughout the region. Select member municipalities are no longer having RES 360 as active participants at their respective bargaining tables, as they have been counterproductive in achieving deals that reflect the current economic realities.

While Metro Vancouver (being the principal of RES 360) continues to negotiate with the GVRDEU, we are optimistic as other regional agreements fall into place, the Employer will realize that their approach is morally wrong and accept the pattern of settlements being reached in the region.

Hopefully this reality will become apparent sooner than later as we continue to work to put ourselves in a legal strike position to pressure the Employer in making a fair and equitable offer. In the meantime, we remain open to such an offer, and bargaining although stalled for now has not been abandoned by either party.

Thank you for your continued support through this particularly difficult and frustrating bargaining process.

In Solidarity,  
Your GVRDEU Bargaining Committee