



Weekly Update for October 14th, 2022

First things first.... - I want to take a minute to thank all of you that reached out by phone, text and email to express your condolences last week while I was off for a family funeral. While it was a tough time to lose one of our pillars in the family, it was good to see people I haven't seen in a few years and tell some old stories about my uncle James and listen to just how many people he helped on a daily and weekly basis and the impact he had on his community and across the province. I sincerely appreciate your concerns and from my family to you, thank you.

Now I present your regularly scheduled update....

Picket Captains - After our historic YES vote for the OSBCU, we're now organizing for a strike if one is needed. Everyone is still hoping for a negotiated settlement, but given the events of last week and the Crown and CTA providing no response except for asking OSBCU to reconsider their proposals – it doesn't look like that is likely to happen at this point. In the event that we do go on strike, we need people to organize our people. Those people are our Picket Captains and many of you have probably already heard from someone about being your contact person. Picket Captains will be the link between the Local, OSBCU and our members. You'll be responsible for a group of about 20 people, contacting them, providing information to them on and off the picket line and assisting with picket line issues. Training is available through the OSBCU. **We need about another 6-10 Picket Captains to have everything covered for our Local and if you're at all interested in helping out – please contact either Laurie Penner at 905-518-7024 or Jason Atkinson at 289-237-5672**

Final Numbers for YES Vote – Just as a follow up and for your information, here's the breakdown of our own Local and how we voted.

Number of votes cast from Local 4153 – 489

Number of YES votes - 476

Number of NO votes – 13

Local 41553 YES vote – 97.3%

Number of votes not cast – approximately 50

Local 4153 Elections - Next Thursday, we will be having our own election for a few positions. The following positions and candidates will be on the ballot at this time. Candidates are listed in alphabetical order.

Chief Steward (1 position) – Chris Cosby, Dave Dickhout

Steward (1 position) – Donna Clappison, Chris Cosby, Marilyn MacAloney, Renata Schrenk, Laurie Penner

Bylaw Committee (2 positions) – Chris Cosby, Shelley Livingstone, Marilyn MacAloney, Laurie Penner, Dave Winger

All candidates are encouraged to submit an election letter to the Election Committee for approval. No flyers or letters should be shared in person or online without approval and candidates are reminded not to distribute material during their work shifts. Letters/flyers can be submitted to the office at cupelocal4153@bellnet.ca

Discount Auto & Home Insurance – Wouldn't it be nice if you got a discount on your insurance just for being an Education Worker? Well, guess what – you can! OTIP Insurance has fantastic deals for all Education Workers. A few years ago I called them about getting a quote after my insurance company decided that based on my postal code, my rates were going to be going up by about \$65/month. The quote from OTIP came in at \$2 less per month than what I was paying with my old insurance company – saving me about \$65 a month for the exact same policy coverages. That's almost \$800/year back in my bank account instead of being transferred to someone else's. And, just for getting a quote, OTIP will send you a gift card of your choice for \$20 to use at many popular retailers. We have set up a special link for 4153 members and your new quote and savings by visiting them at <https://www.otipinsurance.com/cupe4153>

Local Bargaining Update – We've been busy lately – working hard on your behalf as we work towards a new contract with the HWDSB. We met with the employer and their team last Friday and this past Wednesday for full days of bargaining at the Ed Center. Our days are long and there's plenty of conversation about our own proposals and how to respond to proposals given to us by the HWDSB. Without going into specifics, we ended our day on Wednesday tabling proposals that would enhance our health & safety language in our agreement, beef up our job security language and passed proposals to the employer that would make certain that your seniority is a factor in more work situations – following what our members asked for in our local bargaining survey. We ended a long day on Wednesday having responded to all of the HWDSB proposals made to our team so in a way, our team has no homework until we meet again on November 9th. And yes, if we are on strike we are making plans to continue local bargaining because we need both a central and local deal at the end of the day.

I want to give a shout out to our Bargaining Team. Darlene Barrick, Geoff Thompson, Patrick Cumbo, Dave Dickhout and Pat Amatangelo have done an amazing job of going through our local collective agreement, flagging items that could use some new language or total change and keeping our local bargaining survey results in mind on what was important to our membership as a whole. We don't always agree as a committee and we have our own opinions but one thing is standing out – our decisions as a team are based on what we believe is best for the Local, not just certain individuals.

Municipal Elections – Monday October 24th is voting day across Ontario for Municipal & School Board Trustee elections. All across Hamilton, you’ve seen the lawn signs popping up over the past few weeks and they’re in full bloom now! The Hamilton & District Labor Council has published a list of candidates that are labor friendly candidates and we’re sharing that with you in case you wanted the information to decide on how you’ll be voting. **Remember – especially important for us as Education Workers is the school board trustee elections. Trustees oversee the HWDSB and have a say in the budget, policies and other important matters that directly affect us as Education Workers.**

City Council

- Mayor - Andrea Horwath
- Ward 2 - Cameron Kroetsch
- Ward 3 - Nrinder Nann
- Ward 4 - Eric Tuck
- Ward 5 - Lynda Lukasik
- Ward 7 - Scott Duvall
- Ward 12 - Craig Cassar
- Ward 14 - Kojo Damptey

HWDSB Trustee

- Ward 1 - Elizabeth Wong
- Ward 2 - Sabreina Dahab
- Ward 3 - Maria Felix-Miller
- Ward 5/10 - Nancy Silva-Khan
- Ward 6/9 - Jay Edington
- Ward 8/14 - Ahona Mehdi
- Ward 15 - Graeme Noble

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Form E – Strike Pay – Somehow, we still have about 75-100 members that have NOT filled out the banking information for their strike pay if we do go on strike. I can’t stress how important this is because without it – some members will not be getting paid if we’re out on a picket line. This isn’t something to be done the day before a strike – stop procrastinating and call Janna in our office and get it done today!

Rentals & EasyConnect Issues – We have a meeting with the board coming up to discuss concerns and issues with rental permits and the EasyConnect system. **If you have any concerns or examples of what's not working right – please send an email (by Wednesday of next week) with any details to our 2nd VP Pat Amatangelo.** The more information and examples we can provide about what's not working right gives more validity to our arguments and getting things changed for all of our members.

Who To Call ? - When you have an issue, the vast majority of the time you should be contacting your supervisor first. Especially with Health & Safety issues as it's the law. We do have elected people to help if you think your supervisor is wrong or doesn't pay attention to your inquiry or concern. When talking to someone from the Local, don't be surprised if they ask if you have talked with your supervisor first.

After 4pm, any issues needing a supervisor should be directed to Answer Plus at 905-667-3079. An operator will take your name and number and whoever is on call for the evening will call you back at the number you provide.

-Health & Safety issues – Supervisor first (by law), then one of our health & safety reps.

Collective Agreement, Overtime, Schedule or School issues – Supervisor first, then one of our stewards. If the steward needs assistance, they will reach out to one of our Executive.

Once you have talked to your supervisor first – if you need to call a steward or h&s rep – please don't call more than one person. It ends up creating more work and calls for people that is wasteful. Leave your question with one person and let them get the answer for you. That's what you elected them to do.

As always, you can call our office at 905-544-7733 or email us at cupelocal4153@bellnet.ca and Janna will either find the answer for you or have one of our elected officials get in touch with you.

PURPLE SHIRTS ARE HERE!!! - Our mobilizers were out and about over the last few weeks speaking with members before our strike vote and they took shirt sizes from everyone they talked to. Well, after some printing delays and shipping issues, our shirts have arrived! Our office will be open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday next week for members to drop by and pick up your shirts from 8am to 4pm. The office is located at 795 King St. East at the corner of Stirton. Park around the back of the building and follow the prompts on the buzzer at the back door. Janna will be in the office on those days to hand out the shirts.

Vacations – There's been lots of questions about vacation allotments lately and I wanted to let everyone know what's going on. Almost a year ago, Flora and myself had meetings with the HWDSB about the change in vacation language from the last collective agreement. Turns out vacation allotments are a Central (OSBCU) issue and shouldn't have been changed locally. We signed a letter of agreement that the vacation language from the 2014/17 collective agreement would be put back in during our current local negotiations. Once we have a signed and completed collective agreement (both central and local parts), some members vacation allotments will be adjusted. Unfortunately, if members have lost a week over the past 3 years there will be no way to recoup those weeks from past years. The new agreement will be backdated to September 1st, 2022 and as of that date the vacation allotments will be updated for this present year.

Back To Work Legislation – There's lots of talk around what happens if we're ordered back to work if we go out on strike. It's an excellent question which doesn't have a clearly defined answer because we've never been in this position before with someone like Dougie and Skinny Jeans Stephen. What I can tell you is on multiple occasions, our CUPE National President and Secretary Treasurer have both stated quite clearly that if OSBCU members are ordered back to work by legislation and we choose to defy that legislation and stay on strike – CUPE National will pay the fines for any members for not going back to work. If you watch the OSBCU webinar that you can find on the OSBCU YouTube page about Why Vote Yes, towards the end of the webinar you can hear it for yourself. The process of staying on strike when there's legislation ordering you back to work isn't crystal clear yet, but the result of staying out on strike to get your demands met is clear – there will be no negative financial impact for any members.

Squashing a Rumor - Heard this one yet? "If we go on strike the Executive still get their full pay so they don't care if we go on strike or not." Well, the truth is that if we're on strike, we all get the same strike pay that you do and that's it. There will be no honorariums paid while we're on strike either, no matter what role anyone plays in the Local. I can't speak to what was done decades ago when our Local was on strike, but that's exactly what will be happening this time. We're all equal when it comes to strike pay.

Christmas Parties – I wanted to end this update that seems to have way too much in it – on a good note. Thankfully with Covid restrictions largely gone, we can have a full blown Christmas Party for our members and their families this year. **Our adult party will be held on November 26th with buffet style food, a dance, a cash bar and lots of raffle and door prizes.** **Our kids party will be held on December 10th and feature gifts and a visit from the jolly old man himself!** Yeah, we got connections so we can make that happen. More details will be coming in a few weeks about tickets, pricing, food, etc. Thanks to our Social Committee for pulling this together in the middle of strike planning, local bargaining, mobilizing and everything else going on. Thanks to Darlene Barrick, Janna Thomson, Michelle Madley, Laurie Penner, Ana Mayorga and Kristin Cox for giving up weekend time to have a meeting and get the ball rolling on planning what will be an epic event for us to get together, see our fellow members and have a great night out!

Cheers,

Blake

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