

Monthly meeting

Wednesday, November 19th, 2014,
at 12:00 pm
in Room S6-100,
125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa



Assemblée mensuelle

le mercredi 19 novembre 2014,
à 12 h 00
à la Salle S6-100,
125, Sussex, Ottawa

Minutes

19 XI 2014

Minutes

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m. by Gordon McAllister, who chaired the meeting.

2. Roll Call of the Executive:

Gordon McAllister, President
Chantal Di Franco, Treasurer
Kinga Nogrady, Secretary
Jean Lalonde, Health and Safety Officer

Regrets:

Stéphane Allard, 1st Vice-President
Pierre Lamy, 2nd Vice-President
Harold Thériault, 3rd Vice-President
Archie Campbell, Chief Shop Stewart

It was noted that Stéphane Allard, as part of the bargaining team, is at the table with Treasury Board this week. It was also noted that Pierre Lamy and Harold Thériault are on TD. Also of note was that Archie was in a grievance proceeding all morning and therefore could not attend the meeting.

3. Adoption of proposed Agenda

Jean moved that the agenda be adopted. Chantal seconded the motion. All were in favor and the agenda was adopted at 12:08 p.m.

4. Adoption of minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the October 15, 2014 General Meeting were tabled for adoption. Jean pointed out a typo on page 4 of the minutes. Kinga moved that, with the understanding that the correction be made to the minutes, the minutes be adopted. Jean seconded the motion. All were in favor and the minutes were adopted at 12:10 p.m.

5. Reports

a. Financial Report

The Financial Reports were tabled by Chantal Di Franco, Treasurer. She noted that there is an available balance of \$24,613 for the remainder of the calendar year.

Jean queried as to whether this balance is similar to how the Local stood financially last year at this time. Chantal did not have those figures available at the meeting, but felt that we were in the same financial situation regarding an available balance. She noted that last year we had \$1,000 earmarked for RAND that went unspent and we once again have \$1,000 available for RAND.

Question from the floor: The budget shows a line item for a Christmas party. Why does it read a zero balance?

Answer: In 2013, the Local did not host a Christmas party. Members expressed a desire to have a party in the year 2014 so, at the 2014 Annual General Meeting, it was passed that we would earmark \$5,500 for a holiday party. The Local put out numerous requests for volunteers to assist with organizing a party, however no members came forward. During the October 2014 Monthly Meeting, it was proposed that the Local forgo a holiday party and move the funds to the hospitality line of the budget. This would allow the Local to continue to provide lunches at Monthly Meetings for the remainder of the year. This issue went to vote and was passed unanimously.

b. President's Report

Gord attended the Directors General Labour-Management Consultation Committee (DGLMCC). Of discussion was the fast-tracking of the move of Corporate Services from 125 Sussex to 200 Promenade du Portage. Moves will commence in December 2014. The Finance IT branch will move 1st, then the HR section and finally the International Platform Branch (IPB). The employer has stated that by amalgamating the locations of DFATD to 3 locations (125 Sussex, 111 Sussex and 200 Promenade du Portage) it will save the Department approximately \$20 million. The Local voiced questions regarding the savings, as the location at Bisson is less expensive than commercial space 200 Promenade du Portage. The Local plans to submit an ATIP request regarding the costs. It was noted that workspace 2.0 will not be implemented at 200 Promenade du Portage, since older furniture is in use at that location and it would cost considerable funds to purchase the new furniture necessary for workspace 2.0. It was noted that the leases at Labelle and 219 Laurier have been renewed.

Also of discussion at the DGLMCC was Compensation. Compensation will move to Miramichi in January 2016. Compensation services within the Department will be on track for normal service delivery by next month.

Gordon and xCIDA Local President Shahrzad Sedigh were called into a meeting by the PSAC with regards to an article that was published in the October 1, 2014 Embassy Magazine entitled "**Merger creating human resources headaches at Foreign Affairs**". The article describes the HR assignment process inside the department. Apparently a CAPE executive leaked the information to the press. A reporter contacted Gord on three occasions however he did not give any comments. Gord has advised management of the leak. The PSAC offices reprimanded Gord and Sharhrzad for engaging in classification conversations with the employer.

Question from the floor: If CAPE leaked the information to the press, why did the PSAC have issue with Local Presidents?

Answer: The article indicated that the employer spoke to Union representatives. The Locals do not have jurisdiction for classification issues: these are handled at the PSAC level. The meeting was to reiterate that Locals are not to engage in these types of conversations with the employer.

c. Secretary Report

Kinga has been working on matters regarding the administration of the Local.

d. Health & Safety Report

Jean tabled a written report, indicating that he would provide a more comprehensive report next month. Currently the employer is not meeting their requirement to hold Occupational Health and Safety Policy Committee meetings 9 times per year for the workplaces. Additionally, there is an on-going issue with the employer co-chair which needs to be addressed. Jean has sent e-mails to the National Policy Committee but has not received responses.

The shooting in Ottawa on October 22, 2014 highlighted issues regarding security.

Comment from the floor: At 219 Laurier, the guard on the 12th floor did not have any orders.

While there are strict rules at missions regarding security, HQ does not have the same security, such as airlocks and bullet-proof glass. Jean indicated that the Health and Safety Committee can only go so far with issues and that many of these issues need to be raised at the DGLMCC. He also noted that yesterday in the House of Commons, the Official Opposition brought up the fact that the funds allocated to mission security were not spent. The PM addressed the issue.

Gord noted that the Minister is not liable for issues arising from security (or lack thereof). For example, if there is a shooter at an embassy, the DM is involved and not the Minister.

Question from the floor: Are any security measure being taken with regards to parking? Nothing stops individuals from entering the parking garage at 111 Sussex and wandering around the building.

Answer (from Jean): This issue has been raised numerous times.

Comment from the floor: Last year, there was an incidence where someone's life was threatened.

Response (from Gord): There is clearly a requirement to have a commissionaire stationed at the entrance.

Response (from Jean): There are many issues with security at 111 Sussex. For example, there is security at the Sussex Pavilion but not at the Bytowne Pavilion. A visitor's pass is required to enter the Sussex Tower but not the Rideau Pavilion.

Response (from Gord): Training of the commissionaires is a concern. The commissionaires at the desk are from PWGSC and there is concern regarding how they perform their rounds. Apparently there is a breakdown in reporting. The Local needs to remind the employer of their legal liability. Once 111 Sussex is fully DFATD, without any outside groups occupying space, security will likely improve.

Jean mentioned that there are also issues with mail at 111 Sussex. Mail should be routed and accepted only at 125 Sussex, where scanners are available to assess mail.

It was noted that if any member would like to participate in Health and Safety, to contact Jean Lalonde.

6. Collective Bargaining Update

The bargaining team is meeting with Treasury Board this week, November 17-21, 2014. Sick leave is in discussion once again. A news article on the CBC website (*posted November 18th*) quoted a Ian Lee, a professor at Carleton university's Sprott School of Business, saying he is in favour of the government model because it is closer to what is found in the private sector. At this point, the PSAC is remaining strong in their position that going to work sick is absolutely not acceptable.

The bargaining team has worked this week to clean up the language in the collective agreement. It was noted that the collective agreement is between the employee and Treasury Board, not the individual managers. There are managers in the department who do not understand this relationship and feel they can change the rules of the collective agreement.

The PSAC has asked that members show their support for the Bargaining Team by wearing a red bracelet. Gord has 2 boxes of bracelets that are available to members who wish to wear them. Gord distributed bracelets to those in attendance at the meeting, instructing members to have the bracelets visible at all times. Gord also pointed out that the PSAC is looking for signature in support of healthy workplaces. The pledge is available on the PSAC website at <http://psacunion.ca/support-healthy-workplaces>.

On October 25th, the PSAC requested that Gord organize a sick-leave campaign at 125 Sussex, asking that he distribute and have members wear medical masks. In speaking with the PSAC, Gord recommend that, given only 3 days prior there had been a shooting, it did not seem appropriate to have members walking around the building wearing masks. As such, our local did not participate in the campaign for security reasons. The Local will look into showing our support in some other way. Gord noted that campaigns cannot occur during working hours unless the Union is in a strike position.

Jean noted that there is a Health and Safety aspect to wearing the masks, particularly with regards to allergies. He noted the irony that the employer is often not providing N95 masks when they should be. He suggested that we could approach the campaign as a labour issue.

Gord described how, during the SARS scare in 2003, members at Passport offices were instructed to wear masks and suggested that this was due to a legal liability issue.

Gord noted that Prime Minister Chrétien suspending collective bargaining for 3 years during his term off office and, given the pending election, it is possible that the current government could do so as well. This would mean that sick-leave benefits would remain, but members would see 0% salary increases during the suspension.

Gord will be attending another Mobilization Meeting on Wednesday, November 26, 2014.

Comment from the floor: Despite Treasury Board's claims, I don't believe short-term insurance for sick leave is beneficial to the employee. There is a 7 days waiting period for insurance, requiring employees to go 7 days without pay, which will pose a financial hardship for many employees. Our PA group has employees with the lowest salaries within the Federal Government.

Response: Please send PSAC President *Robyn Bensen* your comments. The PSAC is looking for feedback regarding how strongly members feel about the sick leave issue and wants to know whether members would be willing to strike over this issue. Members can also write to PSAC National Capital Region REVP *Larry Rousseau* and the UNE President *Doug Marshall*, indicating whether they would be willing to go on strike. The Local encourages members to voice their opinions

and the Local will post contact information on our website to facilitate a dialogue with union officials. While there are some militant members of the Union, there are also younger members who are more willing to accept these types of changes.

Question from the floor: Will signing the pledge suffice? Or do we also have to contact union officials?

Answer: Signing the pledge shows you support the bargaining team and PSAC efforts to negotiate provisions that will result in a healthier workplace. Sending an e-mail to union officials would allow you to voice whether or not you are willing to go on strike to protect your sick leave.

7. Review of current structure within the UNE (PSAC)

Gord reviewed the structure of the PSAC for members.

8. New Business

Due to lack of time, no new business could be introduced at the meeting.

9. Adjournment

Chantal motioned to adjourn the meeting. There was a unanimous consensus and the meeting was adjourned at 12:58 pm.

Minutes prepared by: Kinga Nogrady, Secretary