

BARGAINING UPDATE

APRIL 8, 2021

TOWN OF PONOKA

LOCAL: 118
CHAPTER: 004

ALL EMPLOYEES
(except those on IBEW certifications)

TOWN OF PONOKA: EMPLOYER FILES MOTION TO FORCE VOTE NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE ENCOURAGES MEMBERS TO VOTE NO TO PROPOSED PACKAGE

On April 7, the employer at the Town of Ponoka informed our bargaining committee that they planned to file an application with the Alberta Labour Relations Board to force a vote on its latest proposal for a new collective agreement.

Our negotiations committee is united in calling to vote “no” on this proposal.

This is yet another unnecessary escalation from the employer, just like when they asked the mediator to leave on March 25—beginning a two-week “cooling-off period” which, legally, can then be followed by a strike or lockout vote.

Throughout this entire bargaining process, the Town of Ponoka has refused to consider improvements to our wages or benefits. More recently, they have claimed that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they cannot raise our wages without increasing taxes or laying some of us off. They have not shown us the numbers to back up this claim.

In their proposal, the town makes no monetary improvements to our contract beyond a footwear allowance. The employer has also committed to review our benefits, but has refused to make any assurances to actually improve them.

The deal has no significant monetary advantages for us, and the employer is unwilling to even consider our proposals. Two years of zeros, with the rising cost of living, actually translates into a reduction in pay. And with a proposed term that would end at the end of this year, we’d be back in bargaining in a matter of months. That’s why our bargaining committee is encouraging us to vote no on this proposal.

We want to get back to the bargaining table, bring back the mediator, and work out a deal that is fair to everyone. A no vote would allow us to do just that.

Our response to the employer is simple—we don’t want the moon, we just want a fair contract. We continue to be disappointed with the unnecessary level of escalation that the employer has shown in making this move. As Town of Ponoka workers, we have kept this town running through a year that has been very difficult for everyone. We deserve better than zeros.

What’s next

Once the Employer has made the application to the Alberta Labour Relations Board, our negotiations committee will review the application, and work with the Board to finalize the details of how the vote will proceed.

Please stay tuned for more information as we move through this process. Also, make sure your contact information with AUPE is kept up to date by calling 1-800-232-7284 or filling in this online form.

We will also be reaching out to members to discuss this latest development and plan our response together. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with any questions, concerns or feedback you may have.

(See page 2 for contact information)

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