

BARGAINING UPDATE

LEGAL AID SOCIETY

LOCAL: 118
CHAPTER: 018, 019
ALL STAFF

JULY 16, 2021

EMPLOYER SEEKING MASSIVE CONCESSIONS AS BARGAINING COMMENCES

Your bargaining team commenced negotiations with the employer on July 8 and 9th, with full proposals (monetary and non-monetary) from both parties exchanged.

The Union's proposal sought modest monetary improvements including:

- Parity with out-of-scope staff for benefit spending account
- 2.5% wage increases in each of three years (2021-2023) for all staff, as well as a second long service increment of 6% after twenty years of service.

We also proposed measures to improve training and orientation for new staff, improvements to the way changes in policy/procedures are communicated, provisions regarding employee monitoring and quality assurance, and other non-monetary improvements.

Legal Aid is proposing significant monetary and non-monetary rollbacks, including but not limited to:

Monetary:

- Wage freeze until March 31, 2024, with no other monetary improvements (benefits, etc.)
- Extended hours of work (7:30 am - 8pm Mon-Sat.), with the employer able to schedule staff to work variable hours and/or compressed work weeks within that range
- Eliminating Earned Days Off (EDOs)
- Major reductions to general illness

- Reduction of paid holidays (in conjunction with proposed shift work changes)
- Eliminating the employer's share of benefits during maternity/parental leaves and requirement to pay back top up amount if not returning to work for a full 12 months
- Eliminating salary protections (red circling)

Non-Monetary:

- Extending the use of temporary employees from 6 to 12 months
- Reduction and/or limitation of entitlement for time off for union business (bargaining, training, EMAC, OHS etc., and deleting reference to Calgary representatives)
- Amending the arbitration process
- Overhauling vacation scheduling (e.g., employer can schedule time unilaterally)
- Reducing the employer's obligations in the job posting process

Your bargaining team communicated that moving to shift work would be a major source of concern for our membership unless such measures (e.g. working 4 days of 10-hour shifts) were undertaken voluntarily rather than imposed unilaterally. Legal Aid was not interested in pursuing that route.

Also, it is not clear how the expressed goal of improving call answering/client service can be achieved with extended hours,

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given the employer confirmed they have no plans to increase staffing.

Despite the fact remote work from home has been a resounding success these past months, Legal Aid refuses to discuss adding work from home provisions to the collective agreement unless we accept their extended hours of operation proposal.

We also question why the employer is proposing reductions to sick leave entitlements at a time when sick leave usage has dropped dramatically.

Despite the wide gulf between us on many items, we were able to sign off the following items:

Current Language/No Changes:

- Preamble
- Article 12 Disciplinary Action
- Article 18 Registered Savings Plan
- Article 22 Training and Education Leave
- Article 29 Personnel File
- Article 30 Notice of Resignation
- Article 35 Terms and Conditions of Employment Applicable for Temporary Employees
- Article 36 Printing of Agreements
- Article 39 No Discrimination or Harassment/Respectful Workplace Policy
- Article 42 Christmas Leave

Deleted (no longer applicable):

Letter of Understanding #1 - Classification Arbitration

Letter of Commitment - Severance Pay

Signed with Amendments:

- Article 3 Union Membership and Payment of Dues (the Employer will provide employee phone numbers and information regarding employee status to the union)
- Article 4 Union Representation & Employer - Union Relations (clarifying roles of union representatives for investigating complaints and orienting new employees)

Bargaining will continue on September 23 and October 20 and 21.

Your committee will keep you updated throughout the bargaining process. In the meantime, we will focus on preparing as a group to support each other. Stay tuned for more information on how to get informed/engaged in the bargaining process. If you have any questions about this update, please contact a member of your bargaining team.

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