



565 Alive

A Newsletter for OPSEU Members Working for the AGCO

February 8, 2007

Your bargaining team is pleased to announce that we've reached a tentative four-year agreement with management at the AGCO. We think it would have been difficult to get a better deal than this without a strike or lockout, and we are unanimous in recommending that you accept it. We are setting up a province-wide ratification vote, tentatively scheduled for *February 22, 2007*.

The money

In addition to a \$500 lump sum bonus (pro-rated for contract and part-time), we negotiated general wage increases of:

- ✦ Jan. 1, 2007 – 2.5 per cent
- ✦ Jan. 1, 2008 – 3.0 per cent
- ✦ Jan. 1, 2009 – 3.0 per cent
- ✦ Jan. 1, 2010 – 3.0 per cent

The 2007 increase will be retroactive for all bargaining unit employees on the payroll at the time of ratification.

Management has directly told us these are the highest amounts for which they could get cabinet approval. Cabinet approval for wage increases is required under the *Alcohol and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act* – the legislation which governs the administration of the AGCO.

Performance Appraisals and Merit Increases

Your supervisor must now limit their performance appraisal to looking at your performance (not your personality or other irrelevant factors) and must have it completed no later than the end of the month following your merit review date.

Benefits

During the 2003-2004 round of negotiations, we had to fight off management's proposed takeaways in the benefit area and ended up agreeing to some minor concessions. However, this time, there were no concessions and we were able to negotiate the following improvements:

- ✦ Better vision care coverage (an increased amount that can now be applied to eye exams as well as eyewear and laser surgery)
- ✦ Referral by a doctor is no longer required for "paramedical" services like chiropractors, dieticians, massage therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists and others
- ✦ An increased allowance for hearing aids

We also negotiated a guarantee that meal and kilometric allowances will not drop below the levels we negotiated last fall and that we will automatically get any rate improvements mandated by Management Board Policy.

Personal Days, Bereavement and Family Medical Leaves

The new contract will reflect changes to the *Employment Standards Act* which guarantee employees the right to take up to 8 weeks' unpaid leave to care for a dying family member (some restrictions apply). It will also feature two paid personal days to be taken for any reason you like – this is in addition to your paid vacation.

Bereavement leave has been extended to include part-time, contract and student employees and has been improved for probationary employees.

Improved Job Security

Now all layoffs can only occur for certain reasons – shortage of work or funds, the abolition of a position, or substantial change to the AGCO – including short term layoffs of less than 90 days. Any laid off employees who are placed in a lower level position will now see their salaries maintained until their new, lower range catches up. (This is usually a significant disincentive for management to lay anyone off in the first place.)

Employee Investigations

The AGCO will be limited to investigating you in matters relating to the performance of your duties, compliance with AGCO policies and procedures or your status as an employee at the AGCO.

Improved Union Representation

We've negotiated a number of measures that we hope will allow us to serve you better, including a larger bargaining team, more stewards and local officers, the ability to have a steward review and photocopy the contents of your H.R. file upon your written request, clearer language on having stewards attend grievance arbitrations and meetings where employees are terminated, and more union leave days to work on t.

Ongoing Dialogue

Unfortunately, on some of your most important issues Management was unwilling to agree to anything more than ongoing discussions at the Joint Consultation Committee. However, we've signed a letter of understanding to continue talking about more flexible work hours, training, work assignments, stress, employment equity and more.

More details

The full details of the contract will be on the OPSEU website shortly. If you have any questions, please talk to any members of the bargaining team. We would be happy to explain these changes. Thanks for your confidence and support in this round of bargaining.

YOUR OPSEU LOCAL 565 BARGAINING TEAM

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