

OPSEU Impact

NEWS FOR OPSEU MEMBERS AT MPAC FROM YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

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Mappers finally face-off with Management

Concerned for their futures amidst "Futures", M.P.A.C. Mapping Staff and Registry Clerks met with MPAC management representatives at a Markham hotel on April 25, 2002. Peter Thachuk attended as an observer from the OPSEU MPAC leadership team.

MPAC management representatives' Paul Griffiths and Craig Draper provided overviews of the status of the Ontario Parcel Alliance negotiations (agreements with vendors as yet remained unsigned), the status of and roll out plan for their Scarborough Central Processing Facility (late spring) and their concerns regarding current back log issues.

This information, in failing to address a local role for the knowledge and expertise built up over the years by mappers, only served to underscore the high level of anxiety and frustration already felt by staff at MPAC. In a powerful display of their disdain for the insensitivity and wastefulness of MPAC's plan and in recognition of the many years of experience that MPAC is willing to flush down the drain, the 35 mappers and registry clerks in attendance stood as their names along with their vast years of experience were called out.

Mapping Staff in an attempt to understand the rationale behind MPAC's plan, prepared and presented a statement and a series of questions. Issues and questions raised, discussed and left unresolved made it readily apparent to all bargaining unit staff present that this is a poorly thought out plan with a questionable future.

The interactive aspect of the meeting really got underway when Management asked for input from the mappers as to the best way of dealing with their backlog. Collectively, the mappers questioned the rationale behind assisting MPAC in working themselves out of their own jobs, especially after Paul Griffiths stated that their

function would cease as of December 31, 2002. When pointedly asked whether the mapping operation was closing down as of the end of the year Paul Griffiths reiterated that their jobs would cease as of Dec. 31, 2002.

Mapping staff raised concerns about MPAC losing the expertise and infrastructure that had been built up over the years and handing it over to a company (Teranet) that is allegedly facing financial problems and is currently over budget. Craig Draper glossed over this latter issue by suggesting there are provisions built into the master contract to deal specifically with this type of situation, notwithstanding the lack of a plan B that was able to be shared with us.

In response to how title searches will be done until everything is on line, management indicated that they are considering using private title searchers - in other words firing Peter to pay Paul.

Craig Draper claimed to not have any knowledge or control over the fact that Teranet has been contacting our mapping staff and enquiring as to when they will be out of work. This latter issue being another example of someone else (Teranet) understanding the value of an experienced workforce that our own employer is all too willing to throw away.

In the MPAC "my way or the highway" fashion Paul Griffiths was adamant that staff must recognize where we are heading. MPAC has approved the Ontario Parcel Alliance and there will be no turning back. When questioned as to why anyone would make this type of decision, management acknowledged that it was strictly a business decision made by those without the technical expertise or understanding of the mapping function possessed by those in the room.

Recognizing the folly of allowing this much expertise to collectively walk out the door, Mapping Staff enquired as to the possibility of MPAC creating positions that current staff could fit into. Apparently, positions remain unfilled for the similarly skilled but lower paid L.P.U.C. positions. Paul Griffiths would not make any promises, but had earlier invited people to e-mail him on any suggestions to help alleviate the backlog.

Mapping staff who had come seeking reassurance that there was a future for them at MPAC left frustrated that the only thing offered was a reminder that they would be able to avail themselves of the current Collective Agreement and Protocol re: developmental opportunities, educational provisions and most importantly the current ban on layoffs.

Competition grievances coming in

The MPAC process is now clear. They totally relied on interviews.

Arbitrators have clearly rejected this as improper.

It seems that nobody so far was told they did not get a job due to seniority...very curious. If you have ANYONE who got that answer, please let your team member know.

We think MPAC has completely botched the hiring process and will be doing it again...and maybe again, if they do not start paying attention to the jurisprudence.

This is terrible for all members, both the successful and those who were not (so far). We remind you that junior members who were promoted by management are not responsible for the botched process. In fact, they may suffer as much or more as the senior people who did not have their skills, ability, qualifications and experience AND seniority properly considered.

It is hard to imagine how a corporation could do this in a WORSE way than MPAC has to date.

VEO denials must be challenged by member

Many members have tried to obtain some security by applying for VEO in late 2002. If you do so and get a call from MPAC to ask you to revise your date, you are not obligated to comply or to

negotiate. The only way they can deny an eligible employee's application is for real operational reasons. You should force them to comply with our agreement and furnish those reasons in writing. When you have the denial you can then choose to; amend your date, under protest, and file a complaint asking for payment for the time period between the two dates; or, file a complaint insisting on your preferred date.

These complaints (they are not regular grievances) will go back to Mr. Adams and should be dealt with before summer.

If you agreed to some revised date due to MPAC's intimidation, please file your complaint. See your steward.

The MPAC/OPSEU Union Management Committee met on April 18 at OPSEU Head Office. The agenda was long, and we finally resolved several long-standing issues. The following is a summary.

If you have any questions, PLEASE put them to your steward. If a steward cannot answer a question, then the team member designated for your office will gladly assist them. We discourage members from bypassing any of these steps. It takes a big team to run our union at MPAC, and we want every steward to be in the loop so that all members can get the help they need.

Compliment numbers for VA and DC positions

Repeated questions about office complement by hundreds of members, and your team pressing this point, have not lead to an early answer. OPSEU was very distressed that the central answer was that no numbers were ready, even as managers released projections in various field offices (MPAC HR' investigation showed that this "not happening").

We were told they intend to release these numbers by May 1. The Futures bomb was dropped LAST May.

The current rumours that the new PA2 or PA3 positions are due to be discontinued next was absolutely denied by HR.

The rampant rumour that current PA2s or PA3s will be demoted is not true; our protocol protects them in Article 5.

Can a surplus notice be issued during the Protocol?

For some months we are aware that MPAC feels that they can still issue layoff notices despite the Protocols ban on layoffs. We tried to get to the bottom of this belief and did not find that management had actually contemplated those mechanics. To be surplus, you have to get a legal notice. The notice must contain a date. That date must be beyond the protocol's term, but that term is not set as it will float with our bargaining in the next contract round.

So our legal advice is that no surplus notice can be issued until the term of the protocol has expired, as it is only then that a date can be determined.

We will also attempt to bargain improvement to layoff notice provisions and severance payments in the next round of bargaining.

Education subsidy continues with new job

The employer says they will deny the education subsidy to all those redundant employees who are granted a new Futures position. Please file a complaint if you are denied.

Job sharing rejected by MPAC

The Feds fund job sharing through EI. OPSEU asked MPAC to investigate this win-win option.

MPAC did. They say it does not work for them as the program is for temporary staff reductions.

OPSEU intends to revisit this option, possibly in collective bargaining.

Pension Bridging finalized

We have concluded the discussions envisaged under the collective agreement with an MPAC policy that allows a surplus employee to get to an unreduced pension. This ONLY applies to surplus employees within 18 months of a pension commencement date. Look for the complete policy on the Intranet shortly. Remember, no layoffs can occur before the end of the protocol.

Pre-retirement seminar to start

MPAC has concluded an agreement to include our members in OPS pre-retirement seminars. This will take effect after the OPS strike ends. The program is to be advertised on the Intranet. MPAC is still actively seeking ways to provide OMERS information to the participants, as the OPS is not included in OMERS.

Certification of Health and Safety Reps falls flat

It is apparent that MPAC's current policy of only paying for training through the employer associations is not working. Most of our offices do not have the proper allocation of certified representatives. As the number drops further, we expect MPAC to revise their policy so that the Ontario Workers Health and Safety Centre (which is endorsed by all Ontario labour, and many employers) will be an option for our members.

Harassment and Discrimination independent advice to come

Over a year ago MPAC requested that your team review their new policy on H&D. We had many suggestions, and have just now received the second (confidential) draft for our input. .

In the meantime, we told MPAC that they were violating their current policy (which is the old OPS policy and is on the Intranet). In particular, members needing assistance had no option to go to independent advisors as the policy stipulated. MPAC has agreed to contract with an outside agency to provide this service to our members who need ADVICE. Look for an announcement shortly.

As always, your OPSEU steward and staff representative are willing to help members facing these concerns.

MPAC not responding to stage two grievances

We told MPAC that it was their responsibility to hold stage 2 meetings when requested. Not only are they NOT holding them, they were not even replying to the requests from our stewards. They committed to getting those replies made. If you are a steward and have this problem, please contact Greg Volkes and let him know the details.

OPT Factor 80 outlook

Given the OPS strike and the expiry of the 80 factor, OPSEU decided to use money put aside

for an emergency in 1999 to extend this benefit. There was enough money to fund it until the end of October this year.

As you can find in OPT reports and their web-site, every three years a plan valuation is done (by law). This is a mammoth project and it gives an accurate picture of assets and liabilities. If money is accrued in what is called "experience gains" OPSEU can use its share to improve the plan or reduce contributions. The expectation is that there will be "some" money, but this is in no way guaranteed.

The Ontario Government is currently trying to force the OPS to give up its right to decide how to use our money (see OPS strike support below). (However even the Government's longstanding bargaining position is that they are prepared to allow Factor 80 for surplussed employees for 3 years).

While some employees are naturally consumed with Factor 80 prospects, the month of May should reveal the details we need.

Assessment Review Board hearings during OPS strike

The ARB is running on scab labour. The government wrote legislation which set out the principles for essential services to be run during an OPS strike. The parties bargained an agreement to set out those services exactly.

The ARB function is NOT a service that is permitted to be run by OPS workers during a strike. But the government encourages members to scab and run around their own law.

Some employers avoid the bad public relations and anti-striker stigma by discontinuing their relations during a legal strike. Some permit their employees to maintain their self-respect by not forcing them to cross picket lines.

MPAC has taken the government side and taken the strongest anti-union position possible and ordered union workers to cross their own union's picket lines.

OPSEU members at MPAC generous to OPS strikers

OPS members are in a life and death struggle who wants to reduce their job security, remove

hard-won OPT pension benefits and give pay for performance instead of real wages.

Sounds like someone you are close to?

Many members responded generously to our collection efforts. Our total donated to alleviate our brothers and sister's sacrifice is over \$12,000 to date. Should we ever need it, we can expect a return of our generosity from 45,000 OPSEU members. Nice to know.

The OPS Real Deal

Issue #50 May 1, 2002

Hold those lines

The employer has tabled a comprehensive proposal on the key issues at stake in our negotiations.

The teams worked overnight last night to respond to this proposal. Your good work and perseverance have gotten us this far.

Let's hold the line - and complete the job.