

Bargaining team and mobilizers meet to review 2009 bargaining round



LBED mobilizers, bargaining team members and staff reviewed their achievements – and the challenges they face in the next round of bargaining – during a day-long meeting in Toronto on Oct. 22.



Achievements gained and the challenges ahead marked the outcome of a special one-day meeting of the bargaining team and mobilizers who met in Toronto on Oct. 22 to review this year's round of bargaining that resulted in a new collective agreement for LBED members.

“We enjoyed a full day of frank discussions about what went well and where we can make improvements in our next round of bargaining,” said LBED chair Vanda Klumper. “I think it was a very valuable exercise for everyone involved.”

The meeting brought together more than 30 mobilizers, bargaining team members and staff who reviewed every stage of the bargaining process from the perspective of what worked well and where changes can be developed in time for the next round of bargaining.

Bargaining team member Laurie Miller summed up

the mood of those in attendance when she looked back at the moment when a tentative deal was struck with the Employer.

“I got goose bumps on June 23 when we reached a tentative agreement. It was then when the Employer finally got it. They understood that this was about our members and not just a bargaining team. They finally heard what the members were saying,” Miller told the meeting.

Mobilizers expressed satisfaction with the way the campaign unfolded, but also indicated that next time around more training, more time and more resources will be needed.

There was general agreement that one immediate outcome of the new collective agreement is the apparent reduction in the amount of bargaining unit work being done by managers.

November 25-28

Planning underway for BPS Conference

LBED locals are reminded that they should begin preparations soon for OPSEU's bi-annual Broader Public Service (BPS) conference, scheduled for Nov. 26-28 in Mississauga.

Locals are allowed to elect delegates based on the convention formula contained in OPSEU's bylaws. All members-in-good standing are eligible to be selected as local delegates, as well as to stand for a position on the LBED executive and standing committees. Members can contest these positions as delegates from the floor at the LBED divisional meeting on Nov. 28.

Changes to LBED's bylaws will also be put to a vote at the divisional meeting. Locals are reminded they can draft bylaw amendments at their local general or executive meetings to be brought forward for consideration by the bylaw review committee.

The 2009 BPS conference will take place at the Doubletree Airport Hotel in Mississauga.

Employer ratifies contract

After considerable fits-and-starts, the LCBO and the government of Ontario finally ratified our new collective agreement in late August.

But the path that took us to this point raised eyebrows at OPSEU and among members of LBED's bargaining team who asked why it took more than six weeks between the time the Employer's board of directors approved the contract on July 16, and the time an Order in Council (OIC) was issued by the Premier's office on Aug. 28.

"In all my years at the bargaining table I've never quite seen anything as bizarre as this," remarked Rob Field, OPSEU's senior negotiator. "New contracts are supposed to represent a fresh start, but this one took an awfully long time to get off the ground."

While the LCBO took the position that provisions in the new contract would not kick in until an OIC was issued, the union pointed to Item 4 in the Memorandum of Agreement which clearly states that final ratification occurs on the latest date the contract is ratified by both parties.

Casual benefits: On the way!

One of the great improvements in our new collective agreement with the Employer is that, for the first time, casual employees of the LCBO are now eligible for benefits.

Although there are some details that still need to be ironed out with management, the benefit plan is now in place and this is what it provides:

The plan includes supplementary health costs – prescription drugs, for example – and dental coverage, but not long-term disability.

To be eligible for coverage a casual employee will need to have been employed for a minimum of five years, including 1,300 hours in the previous year (i.e. Jan. 1, 2009 - Dec. 31, 2009) as calculated on April 1 of the following calendar year for the duration of the four-year agreement.

What still needs to be hammered out with the Employer is the issue of maintaining your benefit status. The Union's position is that once you're in the benefits program you stay in for as long as you are employed by the LCBO – regardless of whether you fall beneath the 1,300 hour threshold.

Full details about the benefits package to casual, part-time employees will be distributed shortly.



LCBO needs to get serious about pay equity

With a new collective agreement under our belt it's time the LCBO got serious about working with OPSEU to develop and post a pay equity plan for LBED members. After all, it's the law!

In accordance with the **Pay Equity Act of Ontario** the LCBO and OPSEU are obligated to jointly develop and post a Pay Equity Plan for the bargaining unit resulting from the change in bargaining agent in 2006. That means the LCBO must have a pay equity plan that reflects the new bargaining relationship between OPSEU and the LCBO based on the work you do today. And it must be a plan that it will be maintained into the future.

But the LCBO would prefer to drag its feet rather than roll up its sleeves to get the job done.

The LBED pay equity committee first met with the Employer shortly after you joined OPSEU. Little has been achieved. This is not from a lack of effort by our pay equity committee, but rather the lack of commitment from management. Unbelievably, we still find ourselves at the beginning of pay equity negotiations.

OPSEU has requested that the Employer agree to a Terms of Reference.

OPSEU has also requested disclosure documentation, job data, job descriptions, work locations, male and female predominance for the jobs in the LCBO – both union and non-union – but the LCBO has responded at a snail's pace.

In this round of bargaining OPSEU raised concerns about pay equity. The LCBO either didn't understand or didn't care to address these concerns. So far,

there's been no commitment to fix the problems before they get worse.

Where do we go from here?

We must negotiate and finalize a gender-neutral comparison system and questionnaire. We need these tools to evaluate your work. We must determine the male and female job classes, based on gender-predominance. We must gather details of our members jobs by touring the province and speaking directly to you – the people who do the work.

We must evaluate your work and make comparisons between male and female jobs. This, too, is the law!

Every attempt made by LBED's pay equity committee to engage in serious negotiations with the Employer has been met by ambivalence and a reluctance to tackle the issue on the Employer's part. We are getting no where fast.

What can we do about this situation?

We can file a pay equity complaint with the Pay Equity Commission of Ontario. The commission will investigate our complaint and determine what the parties need to do to correct the inequitable compensation practices at the LCBO, making them pay-equity compliant.

Our frustration with attempting to negotiate a pay equity agreement with the LCBO has only stiffened our resolve to get the job done. The more the Employer attempts to dodge its responsibilities, the more LBED is determined to hammer out a plan that will meet our members' needs.

Ann Wallace – OPSEU Negotiator, Pay Equity

Committee welcomes two new members

Two veteran LBED activists have been added to LBED's pay equity committee.

Bonnie Jolley, a retail casual from Local 284 in Owen Sound, and Anne Makela, a retail full-time member from Local 741 in Thunder Bay, will join the committee to fill vacancies.

"We're really pleased that Bonnie and Anne stepped forward to join us," said LBED chair Vanda Klumper, who also serves as chair of the pay equity committee. "They both enjoy a solid record of activism and were key mobilizers for our members during the recent round of bargaining."

Bonnie and Anne will join Lori Davis and Sandy Hunter on the pay equity negotiating team.

Repatriating agency stores tops anti-privatization agenda

LBED's 'Keep it Public' committee met Sept. 17 to discuss the next steps in our campaign to repatriate 89 agency stores that were identified in the 2007 repatriation report, prepared by our special consultant on this issue.

The LCBO is losing \$16 million in net profits on an annual basis by operating these 89 privately-owned and operated retail outlets. After a two year challenge through the Freedom of Information Act, the latest figures are now available and we are currently updating the original 2007 report to better reflect where we next take our campaign.

The single, biggest beneficiary from the lost revenues through the Agency Stores to the province of Ontario is The Beer Store, which is now a

foreign-owned entity. This sort of privatization by stealth is wrong.

This campaign to repatriate the most profitable agency stores is more than just about the LCBO – it is symptomatic of the erosion of public services in Ontario. The public service sector continues to lose ground through divestment and contracting out to the “for profit” sector, yet governments of the day say it’s about saving tax dollars and finding operating efficiencies. Most public services are not profit-making entities to begin with. Their true value is not realised until it is too late.

The repatriation of the LCBO’s agency stores is as important to us as it is to the citizens of Ontario. We need to bring those revenues home.

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*GOT A QUESTION? Call **OPSEUdirect** at 1-800-268-7376*
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EAP Hotline: 1-800-263-1401

The LCBO Employee Assistance Program is a confidential, hassle-free counseling service for eligible LCBO employees and their immediate families. For assistance, please call 1-800-263-1401.

To find out more about the program, visit:
www.opseu.org/leb/eap

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