

Talks continue on FPT problems

Members of your Joint Dispute Resolution Committee (JDRC) are continuing to schedule talks with management at the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Government Services over the way Appendix 32 applies to Flexible Part-Time (FPT) court workers.

“There is a firm recognition from management that problems with the FPT continue and that this is causing concern among our membership,” said Julie Weber, union co-chair of the JDRC. “The task ahead for us is to keep management’s feet to the fire – which we fully intend to do.”

In meetings with management this spring, OPSEU representatives on the JDRC continued to hammer away at the following problems facing FPT workers:

- the use of unclassified staff to do work that should go to FPTs;
- scheduling and overtime issues;
- the need to increase the FPT annual-hours categories;
- the way “overage” and overtime hours are paid; and
- the cost of benefits and the decline in members’ take-home pay.

“Management seems to be listening, but progress is too sluggish for our liking. We need to push them much harder to deliver the results our membership needs,” said Weber.

She added that the results of OPSEU’s FPT survey conducted last winter have been a very effective tool in forcing management to confront the serious problems facing provincial court workers. The FPT questionnaire was developed in response to issues raised by the members. The results of the survey are guiding OPSEU’s demands in negotiations with the employer.

Disputes being resolved

Management faced an avalanche of grievances in February 2007 when more than 200 court workers from across Ontario filed grievances over the way the employer was implementing the new FPT system. The grievances challenge the employer’s failure to “attract and retain skilled, trained and experienced (FPT) employees” as outlined in Appendix 32.

Five months later, almost all category disputes filed outside of OPSEU Region 5 have been cleared. OPSEU reps on the MAG Ministry Enforcement and Renewal Committee (MERC) are pushing the employer to pick up the pace of resolutions in Region 5.

Of more than **450** previous disputes filed with the JDRC, more than **200** have been resolved. More than **200** have been referred to expedited med-arb process. Several med-arb meetings were scheduled last month.

No additional dispute meetings are scheduled during the summer, as the employer is not prepared to agree to additional dates at this time. OPSEU aims to schedule more med-arb meetings whether or not the employer is prepared to deal with these issues.

Filing grievance forms

All future violations of the collective agreement regarding the FPT project should follow the standard grievance process outlined in Article 22 of the contract. Please use the official grievance form. Contact your local steward or local president for help.

THANK-YOUs and changes all 'round!

The end of June saw some significant personnel changes in the FPT struggle for a fair settlement for court workers. Julie Weber and Paul Myers have returned to the Brampton and Toronto courts, respectively, after 18 months of working full time on the Appendix 32 project. Because of this, they will no longer be able to access their OPSEU email accounts or phone extensions.

All court workers owe a debt of gratitude to Julie and Paul for their dedication and hard work. Julie and Paul will remain in their elected positions as Co-chair and Vice Chair of the OPSEU/MAG Ministry Enforcement Renewal Committee (MERC).

BIG thanks, too, to all the court contacts inside more than 50 courts around the province for their efforts and hard work in assisting with the FPT project. The progress we are making wouldn't be possible without you.

Happy retirement, Pauline Tapping!

Sister Pauline Tapping, a former MERC member and OPSEU Executive Board Member employed at the Newmarket courthouse, retired on June 30. *FlexTime* says a big THANK YOU to Pauline for her many years of hard work on behalf of court workers. Pauline's dedication, commitment and passion has made a positive difference in the

working lives of thousands of OPSEU members over her many years with the union. We wish her many, many years of health and prosperity in her well-deserved retirement.

We welcome Sister Brenda Clapp to the MERC. Brenda is an OPSEU executive member from Region 7 and lives in Thunder Bay.

Want more information?

For more information on flexible part-time conversion, **visit** <http://www.opseu.org/ops/merc/attorneygeneralappendix25.htm> or **contact** a member of your OPSEU MERC team, as follows:

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