

Bargaining Agenda

The Union proposes the continuation and renewal of the current provisions in the collective agreement between OPSEU and the LCBO (including relevant Schedules, Appendices, Memoranda of Agreement, and Letters of Agreement), with the exception of the modifications to be proposed under separate cover.

In this document, we have not tabled specific language because concepts often need to be discussed fully and agreed upon prior to turning energies to capture the accord in contract language.

Successful collective bargaining cannot be achieved unless each party understands the other's interests, motivations and pressures.

Relevant Background

To begin, and for complete clarity, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) is not the Ontario Liquor Boards Employees' Union (OLBEU).

The membership of the former OLBEU merged in its entirety with OPSEU in July, 2005. Since then, OPSEU has continued to hold the representation and bargaining rights on behalf of its newly-founded Liquor Board Employees Division (LBED).

OPSEU is a fully democratic, member-run Union. It advocates a bottom-up, member-driven style of representation, working on two levels. Elected Local Executives exercise a high degree of autonomy in addressing the needs of their members. They are supported by Regional Staff and receive funding directly from OPSEU. Provincially, elected Sector or Divisional Executives take issues forward and coordinate Local activities, assisted by the Head Office Staff of the Union. This structure and philosophy of representation rejects the notion of top-down control or interference. The two levels complement one another and work cooperatively.

Since the merger, and in keeping with the provisions of the OPSEU Constitution, this Division and its elected leadership have exercised their mandate and function to address labour relations matters with the LCBO on behalf of the OPSEU membership in the Division.

Last May, the Division elected its Negotiating Committee for this round of bargaining. It is significant to note that this is the first time such a Committee was elected to negotiate for LCBO bargaining unit employees. During the Summer, Locals held workplace Demand Setting Meetings and submitted their demands to the Team.

Demands

Those demands were then collated and presented in November at the Final Demand Setting Meeting, where they were debated, short-listed and prioritized by the elected Delegates.....another first.

OPSEU actively promotes a representation style that utilizes a problem-solving and relationship-building approach as a preferred means to resolving differences between the parties. However, over the past three years that approach has yielded few results. Many important issues remain outstanding, such as:

- Terms of Reference for most Committees
- Health & Safety processes
- casual availability issue
- contracting out
- Union leave and participation
- application of seniority
- technological change implications
- employee transfers and job postings
- access to Employer and bargaining unit information

As directed by the Delegates last November, many of those unresolved issues will now be tabled by the Union for resolution at the bargaining table in this round of negotiations. We will be seeking to address chronic problems and the important issues affecting our membership.

In no particular order of priority, those problems and issues include:

Casuals, Seasonals, PPT

The Union seeks to address systemic problems regarding the use of Casuals and other less-than-full-time employees, and their precarious work. Scheduling, equal pay for equal work, access to benefits and pension, and the uncertainty of regular employment all factor into concerns raised by OPSEU members. It is known that full-time workers are more productive. It is also known that part-time precarious work is linked to the 'poverty' agenda now at the forefront of the McGuinty government's agenda.

Job Security

A significant recurring theme relates to bargaining unit work: who performs it? and where has it escaped to?

The Union continues to raise the spectre of Agency Stores as a means to erode bargaining unit jobs and dilute revenues back to the LCBO. Privatization: the word conjures up serious concerns for the job security of employees and the viability of the LCBO as a whole.

Salary & Compensation

We need to address equal pay for equal work across the bargaining unit. It manifests in many forms: multi-tiering of wages, fixed-term inequities, Casual inequities, etc.

Employees helped build the LCBO. There is a concept in the retail industry that employees should share in the productivity gains they produce. The Ontario Government 'dividend' is reflective of that at a macro level.

Health & Safety

In the view of ALL bargaining unit employees, the Employer must do more....and the Union seeks to be a participant stakeholder/partner in this regard.

A corporation aspiring to be a Top 50 Employer must be a leader in this area and show interest in the well-being of its employees and the legitimate role of the Union.

Pensions & Benefits

Improvements to pension and benefits entitlements are the norm at a bargaining table. However, we consider all employees to be equally worthy of fundamental protection.

Hours of Work

Let's schedule some discussion on this. Notice periods, minimum number of hours, Casual availability, seniority rights, 'creative' scheduling experiences...all factor into the demands received from frustrated members.

Leaves

We need to address improvements and access to Union leave, vacation, Employer-paid time off for face-to-face meetings, and special/compassionate leaves.

Postings & Transfers

Fair rules for transfers and postings exist in most other contracts. There is chronic frustration with existing posting procedures, their limitations and opportunity for misuse.

Seniority

It has been said that seniority is a way of life. Most collective agreements acknowledge the principle.

In closing, the Employer is fortunate to have a first-class workforce in place to achieve its goal of providing excellent customer services in its Retail, Logistics and Head Office environments.

The Union demands to be tabled reflect the results of OUR employee survey.....and our members say: "Yes, We Can !"