



Municipally Speaking

Spring 2021

You're front-line heroes: thank you

Greetings,

As the temperatures rise again and mass vaccinations draw ever closer, we'd like to thank each and every one of you for helping get your communities through a tough year and a terrible winter.

You've shown courage and compassion on the front lines of this pandemic. As members of OPSEU/SEFPO Sector 13, you do a wide variety of work. But, if this past year has taught us anything, it's that you're united in your dedication to the municipalities and the people you care for and help.

As many of you head towards bargaining, it's time to recognize the incredible value of your work. And it's time to work together to ensure that your employers recognize the value of your work, too.

The provincial government clearly recognizes your value. Many of your sisters and brothers in OPSEU/SEFPO, and across the public service, are facing three years of capped wage increases because of Bill 124. It's a blatantly unconstitutional move, and we were one of the first unions to launch a Charter challenge against it.

The Ontario government did not cap wage increases for most of you. They recognize that bargaining wages impacts your ability to serve your communities well.

That doesn't mean that bargaining will be a walk in the park. Not by a long shot. While government spared most of you from Bill 124, it is continuing the decades-long practice of downloading services to municipalities – your employers. We have no doubt many of these municipalities will come to the



facebook.com/OPSEUmunicipalities/



twitter.com/municipalopseu



Municipally Speaking

table crying poor. But never let that stop you from standing up proudly and demanding what you know you're worth.

Work with other locals in Sector 13 to identify common issues and priorities. Elect good bargaining teams. Set bold, creative demands. And count on OPSEU/SEFPO to stand strong with you every step of the way. We've grown to 170,000 members and our finances have never been as solid. Our strength is your strength, and your strength is ours -- you're never alone when you go to the table as a member of OPSEU/SEFPO.

And again, we want to recognize all the hard work you do, especially over the past year.

You're the front-line heroes getting us through this pandemic.

On behalf of all of Ontario: thank you.

In solidarity,

Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President, OPSEU/SEFPO

Eduardo (Eddy) Almeida
First Vice-President/Treasurer,
OPSEU/SEFPO



facebook.com/OPSEUmunicipalities/



twitter.com/municipalopseu



Municipally Speaking

BARGAINING CONFERENCE - APRIL 15, 2021

Great News! The OPSEU/SEFPO Executive Board has approved our proposal to host a Bargaining Conference. It will take place virtually on Zoom on Thursday, April 15.

The conference will give everyone a chance to learn more about current bargaining trends, best practices, and strategies to achieve stronger contracts.

The goal is to provide Sector 13 bargaining team members with tools to improve their skills on a host of issues and bargaining techniques.

This year, we'll cover recent bargaining settlements, best language for contracts, and the potential impacts on our sector of recent government changes.

The call-out for this meeting has been sent and registration is now open.

Please join us!

Changes to the Sector 13 Divisional Executive:

We would like to congratulate Vice Chair Theresa O'Connor on her retirement! We would also like to thank Dwayne Ebbers of Local 496 for his efforts on the Sector Executive in his role as Secretary over the past several years. Dwayne has resigned from the Divex and we would like to announce the following changes to the Divex:

- Kerri Wells of Local 266, has stepped into the role of Vice Chair.
- Janet Irwin of Local 496 has joined the Divex and has taken over the role of Communications Representative.
- Nicole Wilson of Local 496 has joined the Divex and will take part in her first meeting on March 22, 2021.

Farewell and thank you to Theresa and Dwayne. And hello and welcome to Janet and Nicole!



facebook.com/OPSEUmunicipalities/



twitter.com/municipalopseu



Municipally Speaking

Message from Theresa O'Connor

Retirement is upon me and I am now stepping out of the many roles I have had with OPSEU/SEFPO and into a whole new world.

I have accepted a contract with M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre as the Program Manager. As a friend said to me: "who fails at retirement?" Well, I don't actually see it as a fail, but certainly not a retirement. It's a great opportunity I could not pass up.

My years with OPSEU/SEFPO's Indigenous Circle -- and all that I learned from my fellow Circle members, Elders, and being on the Indigenous Mobilization Team -- have all led me to this career opportunity. I am so grateful for all the wonderful teaching and experience.

I have been actively involved in OPSEU/SEFPO since being a Steward for a short time back in 1987. I then moved to a job in which I was a CUPE member, but came back to OPSEU/SEFPO in 2010 and have been actively involved from the minute I made it through probation and became permanent.

I have been a Steward and a delegate to Convention and many other conferences throughout my years with OPSEU/SEFPO. My experiences with OPSEU/SEFPO include: Sector 13 DivEx Vice-Chair for 7 years, Indigenous Circle for 8 years; Strike Mobilizer; Local Bargaining Team Member; We Own It Campaign Mobilizer; Indigenous Mobilization Team; Delegate to World Indigenous Peoples Conference in Toronto; Presenter at many conferences, including in Chile in 2016; attending one to two conferences a year; being on the picket line in Regina; attending a Pow Wow at Queens Park; and a Blanket Exercise

with MPPs. I have been a trainer but also been given so many training opportunities through OPSEU/SEFPO. I was most honoured when given the Tom Brown Award at Convention 2015, and Grey Bruce Labour Council's Activist of the Year Award in 2020.

My OPSEU/SEFPO experience has been a true journey and I am so grateful for all the opportunities it afforded me. When I lay it out here I know that I am truly not doing justice to all that I have been gifted from the OPSEU/SEFPO family. All I can say is Chi Miigwetch!

All My Relations

Theresa



facebook.com/OPSEUmunicipalities/



twitter.com/municipalopseu

Hardship Fund

The longer the global pandemic goes on, the more some of the members around us may need financial assistance.

Please remember that the OPSEU/SEFPO regional hardship funds are available to all members in good standing.

It is there to help those who are experiencing unexpected or temporary financial hardship. The regional hardship fund provides emergency financial assistance to eligible OPSEU/SEFPO members based on need, duration and available budget.

When the pandemic hit earlier this year, the Executive Board passed a motion increasing the amount of money available to our regional hardship funds. If you are finding yourself needing help, please ask.

These are challenging times for everyone, and we are here to support our brothers and sisters in a time of need.

Click here to submit a request:
https://opseu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2020-12_Regional-Hardship-Form_fillable_c.pdf

ShOPSEU

There's a lot of new branded OPSEU/SEFPO merchandise, and you can now view, order, and pay for it all on our online store: shOPSEU.com.

As always, Local Presidents and/or Treasurers can buy items for their local and have the cost deducted from their local rebate.

OPSEU/SEFPO has partnered with Canadian Star Marketing – which is proudly represented by UFCW Local 102 -- to provide our members with an improved online shopping experience.

Canadian Star Marketing will donate a percentage of all sales to OPSEU's Live & Let Live Fund and other charitable causes supported by OPSEU.

Visit shOPSEU.com regularly for the latest merchandise!

**YOUR GEAR.
HERE.** *Sh*OPSEU



Authorized for distribution by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Warren Thomas".

Warren (Smokey) Thomas,
OPSEU/SEFPO President

facebook.com/OPSEUmunicipalities/

twitter.com/municipalopseu