



NEWSLETTER

CUPE LOCAL 2269 — September 2022

CUPE / Canadian Union
of Public Employees

Hello CUPE 2269 members,

Our collective agreement expired December 31, 2021. The last time the bargaining committee set out to bargain was in 2019, and after months of preparation - we ended up in a pandemic and everything came to a halt. The decision was made to leave the contract wording as is, and the members voted to just continue on with 2% for 2020, and 2% for 2021, and start negotiation in 2022. The world has changed so much in so little time. There has been a major changes to our community since our last real negotiations in 2016.

A Message from the Bargaining Committee below;

Thanks for your engagement in the survey that came out this spring – the committee has gone top to bottom and sent out proposals to CUPE National refine the package.

Please attend a meeting and get sworn in so you an have a vote on what your next collective agreement will look like! The District of Squamish runs because of YOU – help us build a better WORKPLACE

CUPE has a number of interesting training opportunities coming up – Please contact your shop steward if you're interested in getting involved.

Please be aware this process takes time. Please email your questions to 2269cupe@gmail.com!

The list of Bargaining Committee members below;

Iain Larkin – iainlarkin@hotmail.com

Lisa Turpin – lisaturpin@icloud.com

Chetan Kaur – chetandeep13@gmail.com

Renee Hurford – rhurford@telus.net

Dan Arnold – president.cupe.2269@gmail.com

The Bargaining Committee - **~Strength in Numbers~**

In solidarity,

Dan Arnold | President CUPE 2269



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New Collective Agreement ratified between the DOS and IAFF;

SQUAMISH, BC – After a number of successful negotiation meetings, the District of Squamish and International Association of Fire Fighters Local 2874 (IAFF) have ratified a new Collective Agreement for a term of January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2023.

The agreement outlines the terms of employment between the IAFF membership (Squamish Fire Rescue's full-time career fire fighters) and the District of Squamish. A significant outcome from the bargaining results in a move from the current complement of eight full-time fire fighters to 10 full-time fire fighters in September 2022, and then to 12 full-time fire fighters in January 2023. This outcome reflects the rapid community growth of Squamish, and the increased service needs as a result.

This increase in staff allows for 24-hour paid full-time fire fighter coverage which will improve the level of service delivered by getting more fire fighters on scene quicker. The move to 24-hour coverage also creates a schedule that all parties acknowledge will positively contribute to fire fighter mental health and reduced fatigue. These improved staffing levels and service ability further supports the Fire Services Five Year Strategic Plan.

“The District of Squamish is pleased with the collaborative efforts that the Union, the employees and the employer brought to the table to finalize an agreement,” says District of Squamish Chief Administrative Officer Linda Glenday. “All staff at the District are recognized for their contribution to the highest levels of service to the community and this includes the staff within Squamish Fire Rescue.”

“We are appreciative of the collaborative efforts to finalize this agreement and we thank the Union for their hard work and positive approach,” says District of Squamish Acting Mayor John French. “The IAFF members are exceptionally dedicated to serving their community, and the outcome of this agreement will help them do that in a more productive way, resulting in even better service for Squamish.”

Annual wage increases over the four-year term are 2.5% for 2020, 2021 and 2022 followed by an average of the comparable communities identified during negotiation for 2023, which are consistent with other fire departments across the province.



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Current Disputes—Strikes and Lockouts

Please respect the unions' picket lines in the following disputes, and do not patronize these businesses until the dispute is settled.

BCGEU vs. Government of British Columbia

Major Issues: Wages (meaningful cost of living protections)

Commenced: August 15, 2022

Update: The parties have returned to negotiations, and the BCGEU has suspended its job action for now.

UNITEHERE! Local 40 vs. Pacific Gateway Hotel

Major Issues: Recall Rights, Concessions

Commenced: May 3, 2021

IBEW 213 vs. Ledcor

Major Issues: First agreement (in bargaining for 2 years), mass terminations, working conditions, pay & benefits, job security & seniority

Commenced: September 30, 2019

Settled

ILWU 400 vs. OpenRoad Auto Group Limited, DBA Mercedes-Benz, Surrey

Major Issues: Wages, Fair First Contract

Settled: August 19, 2022

Boycotts & Hot Edicts

Boycott: SAS Group (Scandinavian Airlines System) - CLC

Boycott: Pacific Gateway Hotel, Richmond, BC - UNITEHERE! Local 40/BCFED



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“State of the Squamish union” from Squamish Chief (writer Hollie McGowan)

As with many communities throughout B.C. these days, Squamish labour industries are feeling the pinch.

As the world slowly recovers from a pandemic-induced recession, skyrocketing inflation rates, costly real estate, and loss of big industry have made survival a battlefield for workers.

Labour strikes among various industries have recently been popping up all over the province.

Tuesday, [BCGEU’s Public Service Bargaining Committee stood down](#) its job action at BC Public Service worksites after getting back to talks with the BC Public Service Agency (PSA).

Earlier this year, [Unifor was also able to make headway in their fight for wage increases](#), better pensions and benefits for part-time as well as full-time Sea to Sky transit employees.

Yet, the general fight for workers in these industries is nowhere near over. Employees in all labour industries feel the struggle to make ends meet in today’s climate, labour leaders say.

Rob Ashton, who represents ILWU said that current wages do not compensate for the high cost of everyday living expenses such as fuel and food.

Another looming concern is the cost of renting and buying homes in today’s market. Today, the goal of investing in property is becoming far less tangible.

“People that are just trying to get into the market, it’s going to be impossible for them no matter what industry they live in or they work in. With interest rates going up, it’s going to make it even worse.”

“It’s a huge issue,” said [Sylvia Fuller, a UBC professor of sociology](#) whose research includes labour issues. “The housing costs have been just completely out of control for a very long time and the rental rates in Squamish are completely out of whack ... with what’s affordable for people. So, yeah, it’s really a crisis situation on a lot of levels.”

In addition to being hit with the rising fuel and real estate costs, labourers in Squamish are also facing the loss of industries that once sustained their economy.

“A lot of that’s gone. And so... we have to be very careful with communities because if you take all the big industry out, then what are you left with? You’re left with, I don’t know what Canadian Tire pays now, but I’m sure it doesn’t pay me like Woodfibre [Pulp Mill] used to pay,” Ashton said.

In addition to losing big industries that once fuelled the economy, Squamish is also going to eventually face a wider issue that other communities within the same size category are coming up against: a population predominantly made up of retirees.

“We have that large bulk of people who are starting to transition out of the workforce and into retirement,” said Fuller.



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COVID Factor

The pandemic has also added several layers to the problem.

"First, [there were] fewer folks coming in through the sort of immigration streams, while all those restrictions were in place with the pandemic," Fuller said. "That's a source [of the problem], for everybody to be replenishing the labour force."

"Employers haven't been willing or able to sort of really adjust to improve those working conditions to attract or retain their workers," said Fuller. "Because, you know, they face those economic uncertainties as well."

As a result, many employees left their workforces during the pandemic to go back to school and retrain for another industry.

Taking health care workers' temperature

"Health care workers have been under a tremendous amount of strain over the last two and a half years because of the pandemic," said Mike Old, co-ordinator of policy and planning with the [Hospital Employees' Union](#). "That has exacerbated staffing shortages across the system."

"Staffing is a really critical issue and there's so many ways that we can address staffing shortages," he added. "We need to make sure that we've got the kind of compensation packages in place that will keep workers in health care and attract the workers there. That's how we can build our workforce for the future."

Old said that injuries among healthcare workers are also a major concern within the industry.

"Healthcare workers experience some of the highest injury rates of any sector of the economy in British Columbia," Old said. "And that's especially true in extended care."

Demanding solutions for workers

With today's high cost of living and skyrocketing inflation rates, Squamish employees and union workers are calling for wage increases and improved working conditions and benefits.

"Employers have to pay more," said Fuller. "The wages have to be better."

Ashton says that corporations, particularly those that benefited from the pandemic, should be allowing those economic boosts felt by the companies to also go to all of the employees.

"There's industries out there that are making [good profit] since COVID started for whatever reason, and others are taking the hit."



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Old said that healthcare unions are asking for wage increases among healthcare staff as they look for ways to maintain staff, a discussion that is part of a larger province-wide collective bargaining.

“Health care workers are looking for solutions to the retention crisis,” he said. “Like, will there be more staffing or will there be higher rates of compensation, the kind of compensation that will attract more people to the sector?”

Old said that there have been positive advancements made in his industry recently, however. When the B.C. government made a commitment to bring healthcare workers back to the public sector in August 2021 after a period of privatization, employees in the industry were able to receive better wages and benefits in improved working conditions.

“At Squamish [General Hospital] and Hilltop [House], [food service workers were brought back in-house in July](#), and the housekeeping staff are going to be brought back in October,” he said. “That’s a big deal; reversing privatization, bringing wages and working conditions for those workers into line with other health care workers.”

Although some improvements have been made, Old said more work could be done to reduce levels of injuries to healthcare workers. Hiring more staff is one way to prevent injuries.

“We need to make sure that we’ve got the training programs in place so that people can kind of train up to be health care workers, and it doesn’t happen overnight. It takes a while to train a health care worker. So those are the main things to do, and that’s how we will deal with the high levels of burnout our members are facing.”

Old said that information received from recent polls taken among members revealed that one out of three healthcare workers is considering leaving healthcare in the next two years due to stress from the pandemic.

“It’s a serious problem,” he said.

“Workers in Squamish ... they have got to demand more,” said Ashton.

“Don’t be ashamed of it. Don’t be afraid of it. A worker’s value is what they provide to the community.”



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ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS

Executive Board

President	Dan Arnold
Vice-President	Maré Struve
Acting Vice-President	Celeste Bickford
Secretary-Treasurer	Lilly Marie Peterson
Recording Secretary	Sharon Gilroy
Chief Shop Steward	Nov Kang
Sergent at Arms	Tina Bennet

Standing Committees

Education	Dan Arnold/Vacant
Membership	Andy Dawson (Public Works)
Support	Rosella Bianco (Brennan Park)
&	Andrea Hunter (RCMP)
Social	vacant (Municipal Hall)
CUPE Bylaw	Cathy Humphrey/Nav Gill
Record Mgt.	Dan Arnold

Trustees

Rosella Bianco
Iain Larkin
Karine Le Du

Communications

Peter Henkelman
Kaoko Mori

Stewards

Protective Services	Lisa Turpin
Aquatics	Nicole Besler
Brennan Park	Renee Hurford
Municipal Hall	Vacant
Public Works	Vacant
Assistant Steward	Nicole Downie

Special Committees

OH & S	Navrose Kajla (Municipal Hall) Laura (Protective Services) Alt. Caitlin Sleeman-Rowe vacant (BPRC) P. Walsh (Public Works)
Scholarship /Bursary	Dan Arnold/Hanna Burton Lisa Turpin

Job Posting Shop Stewards/Executive