



ONTARIO MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

CUPE ONTARIO MUNICIPAL SECTOR 2006

Bargaining Priorities

Local Union Reports

A representative from each of the municipal sector local unions attending the 2006 OMECC Conference gave a report to all of the delegates based on questions circulated in advance that reflected the priorities of the conference: increasing bargaining power through increased coordination and defending public services in the 2006 municipal elections.

Delegates were asked to report on their top bargaining priorities in the most current round of bargaining, either upcoming or recently completed.

The top bargaining priorities in the municipal sector in Ontario in current rounds of bargaining, in addition to general wage increases are:

- improvements to benefits, with special attention to retirees' benefits;
- improved job security; and
- protection from contracting out.

Sub-Jurisdictional Groups

Delegates to the 2006 CUPE Ontario Municipal Employees' Conference met in eight sub-jurisdictional groups to discuss bargaining priorities specific to their groups and ways in which they can coordinate efforts and build support to increase bargaining power.

Here are the bargaining priorities reported by seven jurisdictional sub-groups.¹

Water & Wastewater

1. Enabling members to successfully meet new certification requirements
2. Protecting members who are not able to complete certification
3. Remuneration for certification

¹ Electrical Utility Workers met but did not report on bargaining priorities.

Municipal Inside Services, including Social Services, Recreation, Museums, etc.

1. Privatization
 - a. JobsNow
 - b. Recreation facilities
 - c. Water plants
 - d. E-government
 - e. Child care
 - f. Homes for the aged

2. Workload
 - a. Increase in 24/7 operations
 - b. Gapping
 - c. Caseload/volume of work
 - d. Implementation of new programs and services without additional staff

3. Attendance Management Programs

Municipal Inside – Administration

Two workshops reporting:

1. Contracting out
2. Benefits
3. Job security
4. Pensions
5. Retiree Benefits

Municipal Outside – Solid Waste & Recycling, Transportation, Fleet, Arenas, Parks

Two workshops reporting:

1. Contracting out/contracting in
2. Health and welfare benefits for retirees post-65
3. Having health benefits cover OHIP delisted health services
4. Better access to pensions for part-timers and temporary staff
5. Sorting out job evaluation problems

Paramedics

Achieving full pension eligibility at normal retirement age 60

Libraries

Three bargaining priorities:

1. Benefit improvements
2. Employee safety
3. Improved rights for part-timers

Public Health

1. improve wages
2. retiree benefits
3. mileage compensation formula changes

How to increase bargaining strength

Delegates also discussed ways to build support for their bargaining priorities within their local unions and ways in which CUPE can increase cooperation and collaboration to build bargaining power. Here are some of the ideas presented:

Within our local union membership:

- Membership surveys
- Research the issues -- good contract language, the costs of the proposals, the costs of not making these changes to the collective agreement (eg. Staff turnover, injury, etc.)
- Think about timing
- Communication with members and education about the issues
 - Bargaining newsletters
 - Web site information and bargaining updates
 - Mail-outs to members at home
 - Use direct call services to call members' homes to announce issues and meetings
 - Hold lunch time meetings at various workplaces
 - Give concrete examples of how these issues impact - make it personal
 - Tell our stories
 - Bring proposals to members for approval prior to tabling with employers
 - Go out and visit all the work locations
 - Bring guest speakers to meetings and have door prizes in order to encourage members' participation
- Participate in bargaining committees
- Reaching out to groups who may not be active or who may be employer targets
- Hold member orientation sessions and engage new members

- Workplace actions during bargaining
 - Button campaign
 - Visible signs of solidarity with the bargaining team
 - Work to rule
 - Consider work stoppage

Between CUPE locals:

- Maintain contact with other municipal locals in the area, and discuss bargaining issues
- Discuss who will be going first in bargaining and priority demands with other locals in the area
- Have the CUPE District Council or your OMECC representative hold a session about coordinating bargaining
- Collaborate with or coordinate with other bargaining units and unions representing other employees of the same employer
- Bargain cooperatively when possible
- Share research and other resources
- Build coalitions in the communities with other locals, other unions and community groups
- Raise the profile of CUPE members through contributions to the community
- Show solidarity with other unions and locals
- Make the bargaining issues public
- Talk to neighbours, shopkeepers, community
- Use information about public safety issues, market value and retention issues

And don't forget political action:

- Know your Council
- Build a relationship
- Be visible to the Council - Make sure the Council knows where CUPE stands
- Attend Council meetings and meet face to face with council members
- Review Council agendas in advance and make deputations to Council about issues that affect CUPE members
- Know the Councillors' positions on our issues
- Work with district Labour Councils in municipal elections to elect labour friendly councillors