

**CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES  
LOCAL 500**

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**Central Council  
November 27, 2017**

***CUPE*** / *Canadian Union  
of Public Employees*  
***Local 500***

TO: All Central Council Delegates

***RE: PRESIDENT'S REPORT***

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Greetings:

The following is my monthly report of the activities and issues facing the Local since our last Central Council meeting:

**CITY OF WINNIPEG CAPITAL AND OPERATING BUDGET 2018**

On November 22, the Executive Policy Committee of City Council revealed its proposed operating and capital budgets for 2018.

The operating budget is responsible for many of the programs and public services that Local 500 members provide to the citizens of Winnipeg. The Local is reviewing the budget to identify any and all service reductions and will be raising these at the upcoming standing committee meetings and with City Council, if necessary.

From our first read of the budget, there are a number of items that have us concerned:

- \$21.9 million in savings through vacancy management (increase of \$3.4 million over 2017 target);
- \$11.5 million in department efficiency savings;
- 4.3 per cent decrease in community services budget including a \$5 million dollar cut to recreation services;
- Business tax reduction;
- Increase to transit fares/cuts to transit routes.

This budget calls for approximately 293 positions to be left vacant at the City of Winnipeg. These ongoing reductions to the municipal workforce have, and will continue to compromise front line services being delivered to the citizens of Winnipeg.

There is also \$11.5 million proposed in “department efficiency savings” but does not provide any details of what or where those savings will be achieved.

On top of this, the city will be cutting the business tax from 5.25% to 5.14 % in 2018.

We do not believe that the city should be reducing the business tax at a time when front line services are being cut, and user fees such as bus fares are increasing.

As in previous years, CUPE Local 500 will be looking for leadership from City Hall to improve, rather than cut the services Winnipeggers rely on. The citizens of Winnipeg deserve a budget that meets their needs now and into the future.

The Local will keep you updated on the budget process as more information becomes available.

### **CUPE LOCAL 500 HONORARY LIFE DINNER**

Local 500 member and activist Phil Dembicki, Community Services Unit, was welcomed into the honorary life membership at a dinner held on November 3, 2017. Also attending the dinner were honorary life members who received their award in previous years.

Honorary life membership is awarded to outstanding CUPE members for their services given to the Local over an extended period of time. Honorary life membership may also be given for meritorious service to the Local.

Congratulations to Phil for his dedication and commitment to our Local and to the trade union movement over the years.

### **CCPA MANITOBA – CITY OF WINNIPEG GOVERNANCE REPORT RELEASED**

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Manitoba released a new report that examines the model of civic governance in Winnipeg, highlighting serious concerns with the centralization of power in the hands of the Mayor.

“Winnipeg is an exemplary case of the lack of democracy in civic governance across the country,” reads the report, titled *Winnipeg Free for All: Towards Democracy at City Hall*. “The overriding power of the Mayor is one of the most glaring barriers to democracy in civic governance in Winnipeg.”

Winnipeggers know, especially under the previous administration, which was plagued with scandals and closed-door meetings, that we need a more democratic governance model. We need to find ways to increase citizen engagement and open discussion on our governance model and this new report presents intriguing ideas on how to improve our civic democracy.

The report notes the historic role of CUPE Local 500 in speaking against the erosion of municipal democracy, in particular in the 1990s.

The report also observes various governance models used elsewhere in Canada, and offers some suggestions on how citizens can reclaim Winnipeg's democracy, and highlights the need to eliminate or reform the Executive Policy Committee to ensure all Councillors have a fair and equitable say in municipal affairs.

In addition, the report recommends eliminating or reforming the Mayor's selective Executive Policy Committee, reigniting citizens committees and increasing direct citizen engagement at City Hall.

### **1919 WINNIPEG GENERAL STRIKE MONUMENT UNVEILED**

The City of Winnipeg recently unveiled a new monument commemorating the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike in the lead up to the 100th anniversary of the strike, where over 25,000 workers walked off the job in support of fair wages, and better working conditions.

Remembering and honouring the struggles of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike is important to us as trade unionists and to the community as a whole. It is because of the sacrifices made by striking workers in 1919 that we are able to continue to organize as a movement and fight for our members.

The new monument, designed by Monteyne Architecture is called *The 1919 Marquee*, and is installed at the corner of Lily Street and Market Avenue in Winnipeg's Exchange District, an area that the strike took place. The project, which was led by a committee, included former CUPE National President, Paul Moist.

## **CUPE PRESENTS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS**

In late October, both CUPE Manitoba President Terry Egan and I made presentations to the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs on Bill 24, *The Red Tape Reduction and Government Efficiency Act* which aimed to eliminate *The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act*.

This P3 legislation, a first of its kind in Canada, was introduced by the former Manitoba NDP government to recognize the serious concerns over accountability that P3s represent.

In CUPE's presentation, the committee was provided with numerous examples from across Canada where P3s have failed, and emphasized the importance of strong P3 accountability legislation.

Rather than throwing out this legislation, we were asking the government to improve upon it to ensure even more transparency and better oversight of P3's from the beginning to the end of the end of P3 projects.

Unfortunately, instead of strengthening this legislation, the Manitoba government has eliminated it.

CUPE remains deeply concerned in light of last week's Throne Speech, which further reinforced the government's plans to pursue the dangerous path of privatization of public services and programs, particularly services for children.

### **GOOD OF THE UNION:**

A number of Local 500 members and their families from Public Works (Streets Maintenance, Urban Forestry and Traffic Services) and Animal Services Agency volunteered at this year's Santa Claus Parade. Thank you all for helping to make this a great community event.

**CONCLUSION:**

Please share this current issues document with your co-workers.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gord Delbridge". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

GORD DELBRIDGE  
President

KB/ng  
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