

November 24, 2008

TO: All Central Council Delegates

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

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Greetings:

Listed below please find a review of some of the key issues our Local has dealt with since our last Central Council meeting.

**1. "Positively Public" Campaign - Update**

The Positively Public campaign continues to move forward with workplace meetings being a top priority. Our member email databank is increasing day to day – this system is an excellent way to get information out quickly to our members.

The Local has been under attack in many areas of our service and clearly privatization and selling off the citizens' assets remains to be a key issue/concern for our union.

We need members to distribute our campaign brochure which details information about our campaign. If you haven't already done so, please take some time to hand out/distribute our brochure to your family, friends and neighbours. If every member could hand out 50 brochures the numbers would be in the thousands. Please contact the Local 500 office at 942-1001 if you can help out.

Finally, if your workplace hasn't been visited yet, we would be pleased to come out and talk about the campaign and other issues facing the Local. Workplace meetings can be held before work, during lunch or after work. Please contact the Local 500 office to schedule a meeting date and time.

## **2. City Council Votes in Favour of Exploring City Owned Municipal Corporate Utility**

On November 19, City Council voted in favour of a proposal to explore setting up a City owned Municipal Corporate Utility “as a new arm’s length business model to operate city owned utilities”. They also approved actually using that model to design, construct, finance and operate two water and wastewater control centres. In other words, while Councilors said they were open to exploring new ways of providing these utilities, they are going forward with a business/public-private partnership (P3) model to provide these services.

They also want the Province of Manitoba to make the necessary legislative changes to ensure that future water and sewer rates proposed by the Municipal Corporate Utility are reviewed and approved by the Public Utilities Board. And to do all this, Council approved \$4.25 million to move forward so the other decisions can take place.

This political initiative was based on the Proof of Concept Report, A New Model for the city of Winnipeg’s Utility Services” by Deloitte & Touche LLP (D&T).

### **Here’s how council voted:**

#### **Opposed to the motion to proceed to explore a “Municipal Corporate Utility”:**

- Jenny Gerbasi
- Harvey Smith
- Lillian Thomas
- Dan Vandal

#### **In favour of the motion:**

- Jeff Browaty
- Scott Fielding
- Harry Lazarenko
- Grant Nordman
- Mike O’Shaughnessy

- Mike Pagtakhan
- Gord Steeves
- Justin Swandel
- Russ Wyatt
- Mayor Sam Katz

\*Note Bill Clement and Brenda Leipsic were not present.

### **3. Water and Sewer Rate Increase**

The City of Winnipeg is in the process of completing a \$300 million water treatment plant and is in the midst of a \$1.8 billion wastewater upgrade. Both of these initiatives are important to the citizens of our city and need to be addressed. Property taxes have been frozen for over a decade and business taxes reduced which puts added pressure on a rate increase.

Providing clean drinking water and servicing wastewater is a core function for any municipality. The Free Press reported that the “average household to pay \$20.00 water hike” – November 1, 2008.

Council voted 11-3 to increase water and sewer rates by 2.65% in 2009.

Here’s how they voted:

#### **Opposed to the motion to the increases were:**

- Harvey Smith
- Lillian Thomas
- Dan Vandal

#### **Voted in favour of the motion:**

- Jeff Browaty
- Jenny Gerbasi
- Scott Fielding
- Harry Lazarenko
- Grant Nordman
- Mike O’Shaughnessy
- Mike Pagtakhan
- Gord Steeves

- Justin Swandel
- Russ Wyatt
- Mayor Sam Katz

\*Note Bill Clement and Brenda Leipsic not present.

#### **4. CUPE Manitoba Solidarity Conference**

CUPE MB recently held a Solidarity Conference in Brandon, Manitoba at the Keystone Centre. A number of workshops and meetings were held at this event. Topics such as privatization, organizing the organized and strategic bargaining were discussed.

Speakers included National President Paul Moist, CUPE Manitoba President Kevin Rebeck and Brother Barry O'Neil just to name a few. This type of conference was the first of its kind in Manitoba and allowed all the sectors of CUPE in Manitoba to meet other than at the provincial convention. We have many different sectors with common interests in our province - from municipal to health care. This type of event only strengthens our union.

#### **5. City Unveiled the New By-Law Enforcement Team**

This enforcement team is to be housed in one office and enforce the city's new neighbourhood livability by-law or parts of 27 existing municipal by-laws and two sections of provincial health acts.

There are 13 by-law enforcement officers, 13 public health inspectors and two fire prevention officers who are part of the team. By-Law enforcement services are very important work to our citizens of Winnipeg and our members do a great job!

#### **6. Domestic Violence Poster Tour**

Earlier this month, CUPE took part as a key sponsor to address the issue of domestic violence in society. Throughout the week of November 3-5, events were planned to talk about this very important topic. Guest speakers at the opening ceremonies

included the Honorable Gord MacKintosh, Honorable Nancy Allan and CUPE National President Paul Moist.

Staff from Genesis House conducted a workshop on dating violence and on the last day of the tour, a speaker talked about the effects of domestic violence on children. This global exhibition was about raising awareness about violence against women and children. Thanks to the organizer for hosting and helping out with this very worthy event.

## **7. Cultural Research Project**

The Cultural Research project is complete and the results will be incorporated into our upcoming executive policy conference, Positively Public campaign and used in our day-to-day functions of the Local.

This information identifies underlying values and priorities from the members and trends in the rest of the country.

About 1,200 members took part in this important research and we thank everyone for their active participation.

Receiving feedback from our members, increasing our line of communication and keeping our members informed on current issues is key to our success.

## **8. Good Of The Union**

Our thoughts and deepest sympathies go out to our members at Assiniboine Park Zoo on the recent loss of Debby, one of the world's most famous and loved polar bears who passed away on November 17<sup>th</sup>. She was well loved and cared for by many of the zoo staff over the years and has touched many lives and hearts in Winnipeg and worldwide. A ceremony in celebration of Debby's life was held at the Zoo on Saturday and was well attended by staff and members of the public.

**Conclusion:**

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

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Davidson". The letters are cursive and somewhat slanted to the right.

Mike Davidson  
President

MD/ng  
cope 342

c.c. Sandra Oakley, CUPE Manitoba Regional Director