

CUPE BC Municipal Committee
Report to Convention – 2018

New and returning members of the Committee are ready to defend and promote public services and good paying union jobs in our municipalities. One of the committee's goals for this year is to create a short video that will be educational and will promote the work we do in the municipal sector. A very large number of our members in the sector will be going into bargaining over the next couple of years and we want to remind the public of the value they receive from the tax money that pays for our work in the public sector. The exponential growth of precarious work with some of our employers requires us to pay closer attention and for us to shine a light on it whenever we can. We will make sure that precarious work is part of this video project.

Working together on CUPE BC committees gives our members a great opportunity to connect and share stories of struggle and success. With the help of CUPE staff, municipal and library locals from Sea to Sky through the Lower Mainland and the Fraser Valley, we are in the process of planning a massive communications campaign to highlight the work and the value we bring to our communities. The goal is to increase our bargaining strength. Part of the inspiration for this came from a similar campaign done in the Okanagan that brought CUPE locals and the community together, and those locals are planning to try it again for the next round of bargaining. Over the last year we've seen successful collective bargaining in Nakusp, Comox, Prince George and Victoria, but it didn't come without a fight.

Another way that municipal workers across the province can promote our work and our value is to get their CUPE local involved in National Public Works Week. This year it will be May 20 - 26. While this is organized by an employers association, many of our employers put on events and open houses in our communities, showcasing our work. CUPE locals are encouraged to actively participate and promote themselves at these events and to let CUPE BC know when you do.

A common theme for all of us across the public sector is the sense of relief with the election of our NDP Provincial Government last year. For the municipal sector, serious threats to free collective bargaining and further downloading of services without increased funding seem to be in our rear view now, but we all wait to see how the new government will manage to repair 16 years worth of damage. 2017 was a big year for political action and 2018 will be no different with municipal and K-12 workers electing our bosses on October 20th in local government elections. We encourage everyone to be thinking of all aspects of this electoral process. Pay attention to candidate recruitment and encourage members to be on the look out for good candidates in the community. Communicate with members about the value, and the consequences, of electing our bosses and maintaining relationships with them. If your local doesn't have a Political Action Committee, consider forming one. Make sure your local is participating in your Labour Council candidate endorsement process. Invite candidates to your local's meetings and have members attend local events where the candidates may be speaking so that you can ask strategic questions and give them an opportunity to speak up on issues that are important to members.

Finally, we want to acknowledge some of the losses we've had this last year. Three workers, two of them CUPE members - Wayne Hornquist and Lloyd Smith, died in a workplace accident at the Fernie Arena. Everyone should be able to come home from work at the end of their shift. We also lost two fierce sisters from our committee last year, Brenda Coombs from CUPE 15 and Janet Bigelow from CUPE 1048. Rest in power Sisters.

Respectfully submitted:

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April 2018

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