

Bargaining Bulletin No. 1

Riverbend Crossing

Date: December 15, 2020

Greetings Sisters and Brothers,

The Union and the Employer have met nine times since the commencement of negotiations on June 24, 2020. COVID-19 has played a major role on how we conduct our bargaining process, every meeting, whether it's a caucus with our committee or bargaining with the Employer, is all done on-line through virtual meeting rooms. It's not ideal, however, it is the way of the world we live in for the foreseeable future.

We tabled our non-monetary proposals on June 24, 2020. We utilized the Westpark Crossing Agreement that we bargained with this same Employer less than three years ago. Riverbend Crossing and Westpark Crossing are very similar in structure, the type of work performed and the job classifications utilized. Bargaining any new agreement is inherently slow and tedious work. Building an agreement from scratch is a mammoth task, which was why we tabled an agreement... which in our view already had the heavy lifting done by both parties. However, we have seen the Employer push back on a lot of the contract language they agreed to in the West Park Crossing Agreement. That tells us that the Employer sees the Westpark Crossing agreement as containing more benefits for our members than for themselves (the Employer). We will continue to insist that the employer do their best, not their worst, at the bargaining table.

Issues like seniority, hours of work and how our members are awarded jobs through the job posting procedure, are all critical pieces to a collective agreement. The Employer seems bent on building an agreement at Riverbend Crossing that has less protections than the West Park Agreement. That's just not going to happen, we will continue to push for parity for our members at Riverbend Crossing, in our view your rights are at least equal to those workers covered by the West Park Agreement.

We had bargaining dates scheduled in December, it was the feeling of the committee we could have closed out the non-monetary component of bargaining on the first of three days and utilized the other two to table and discuss our monetary package. I received a call from the Employer on Monday December 9, cancelling the three days we had scheduled on December 10, 11, and 12.

This Employer also owns and operates all the Extendicare's in the Province and their chief negotiator is also charged with staffing requirements for the Extendicare facilities. If you have been watching the news, they are dealing with a huge COVID-19 pandemic outbreak at Parkside in Regina. Our hearts go out to all of our members working at those facilities and whom have contracted COVID-19. Our thoughts are also with the families who have lost loved ones during this tragic event. The union agreed to the employer's request to delay until the outbreak is under control.

I want to take the opportunity to thank Unit Chair Shailini Pascua for her invaluable insight into how things work at Riverbend Crossing. She is unfailing in her efforts to get the best possible agreement for you all and we appreciate her dedication and assistance.



If you have any questions or concerns about your workplace or your collective agreement, please call the Member Resource Centre (MRC) at 1-888-999-7348 ext. 2298. The MRC Officers are able to answer your questions and, if necessary, will forward your concerns to your workplace Union Representative.

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I want to thank Katelyn Almen, your Union Representative out of the Moose Jaw office. Bargaining is hard work, her job is to keep a record of where we are on the issues being discussed and keep a running tab on agreed to language. Her insights on scheduling have been invaluable as we discuss these issues at the table.

I want to wish you all Seasons Greetings from SEIU-West. Please be as safe as you possibly can be and follow the COVID 19 guidelines. The last comment I will make is this. This group of workers showed overwhelming support to join SEIU-West. I ask that you maintain that strength through the bargaining process and support your Committee, it's the only way we can get the best deal possible for a group of workers who deserve the best treatment and the best possible life.

In Solidarity,

Bob Desjarlais
SEIU-West Negotiations Officer (South)