



June 2023 – Labour Relations Update

County of Wellington

CUPE Local 973

Full-time employees working in the Social Services Department at the County of Wellington are represented by CUPE Local 973. There are approximately 160 employees in the Social Services Department who are members of this Union, which includes full-time employees working in the Children’s Early Years, Ontario Works and Housing Services Divisions. This is the only union at the County of Wellington.

The three-year Collective Agreement that was in place for 2020-2022 expired on December 31, 2022, but remains in force for now as a matter of law.

Status of Negotiations

There have been seven full days of negotiation held since January 2023. During this period of time, the Union held a special membership meeting and the members voted 100% in support of a strike mandate vote. This is normal procedure and not a surprise.

Before a strike could occur, Conciliation would need to be held, whereby a Conciliator is appointed by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development as a required dispute resolution process. This step is required to take place prior to the union being in a legal strike position.

At the end of the final day of negotiations, the Union informed us that they would be filing for Conciliation.

Next Steps

The Conciliation dates have now been confirmed to be held on July 24-25, 2023.

If no agreement can be reached, the Conciliator would issue a “no board” report, meaning a deal can’t be reached. Once that report is issued, the union would be in a legal strike position 17 days later, and it also has to give five days’ notice of any job action.

If agreement is reached during Conciliation, the proposed settlement needs to be approved in a vote by the majority of members who attend the vote, and then ratified at the next County Council meeting.

Although we are hopeful a deal can be reached, we are taking a cautious approach due to the strike vote mandate of its members. Due to this, we feel it is important to provide updates on the status of negotiations as they progress. At this stage in the process, we are unable to share the details regarding the items being discussed at negotiations.