



OPS Bargaining 2012

Correctional Bargaining Unit

**RE: Union Proposals for Renewal of the Collective Agreement
Expiring December 31, 2012**

Bargaining Agenda

The Union proposes to renew the provisions in the above-noted collective agreement, including all of the current Schedules, Letters of Understanding, Appendices and Memoranda of Agreement/Understanding, except for the modifications being proposed. The Union reserves the right to table additional proposals during the course of negotiations.

In this document, we have not tabled specific language because concepts often need to be outlined first, then discussed and agreed upon prior to the parties' turning their energies toward capturing the accord on contract language.

In the Correction Bargaining Unit, the Employer is fortunate to have a dedicated and first-class workforce in place to achieve its mandate to provide excellent public services in correctional institutions and community probation/parole environments.

Success in collective bargaining cannot be achieved unless each party understands the other's interests, pressures and motivations.

In this round of bargaining, we see a particular focus on:

- Increased levels of violence in the workplace
- Pending Ombudsman's Report
- Use of force / Discipline and Investigations / Indemnification rights
- Workload, staffing levels and overcrowding
- Occupational stress, health and wellness
- Monetary improvements
- Personal protective equipment / health and safety
- Training
- Protecting core services and job security
- Fixed Term employees
- ASMPP
- Compensating Time Owing (CTO)

Key issues must be addressed in this round of negotiations. Accordingly, the OPSEU Correctional Bargaining Team will be tabling proposals with the Employer that seek to address and resolve chronic problems and the important issues affecting our membership.

In no specific order of priority, some of those problems and issues include:

Unresolved MERC issues

The Union MERC representatives have continually attempted to resolve Province-wide issues with the Employer, but with varying or no success. Consequently, many of those issues will appear as demands in this round of contract negotiations. It is hoped that the influence of representatives of the central Government at this table will facilitate some final resolve.

Pensions

Statistics indicate that the average life expectancy for workers in this bargaining unit is about fifty-eight years of age. As such, early and adequate pension entitlements are critical for all employees. Federal legislation recognizes Peace Officers, and allows them to access their pensions earlier, achieving a healthier retirement.

Compensation

There has been a lot of media regarding the current fiscal pressures and the health of the economy, including numerous Budget Statements and comments by the Minister of Finance. Further, the Minister has publicly stated that we need institute an austerity approach and “hit the pause button” on compensation and monetary increases. For the record, the Union has already offered to do exactly that by not serving Notice to Bargain. The Employer promptly served Notice to Bargain to the Union. Clearly, the Employer has a different agenda from that signalled by the Minister.

Notwithstanding any public or private perspective that the Employer may have on the appropriateness of a General Wage Increase in this round of negotiations, the Union is of the view that a fair and equitable wage increase is a clear way to signal employees that their services are valued and appreciated, and to keep us in line with increases given to other Justice Sector partners. The cost of living in Ontario continues to be above 0% and our bargaining unit members are not immune to its effects.

We will also be proposing Special Case increases for the Correctional Officer 2, Probation Officer 2 and Provincial Bailiff 1 classifications.

We are also seeking modest monetary improvements to shift premium, overtime, call back, on-call duty, meal allowance, custodial responsibility allowance, and Probation Officer allowance.

Workload / Health and Safety

Working conditions for employees in the Correctional Bargaining Unit can only be described as being in crisis. The Union has repeatedly raised concerns about staffing levels, access to personal protective equipment, directions on use of force, workload/caseload levels for Probation Officers.

Occupational stress disorders and injuries continue to debilitate employees, without any supports, on the front line in the Correctional Bargaining Unit.

Absenteeism

In the last round of negotiations, the Employer was successful in achieving Absenteeism Targets for Correctional Officers and Youth Workers. In return, the Union sought and achieved lump sum payment Incentives should Targets be met....and they were, in each year of the contract. The Union sees no reason to continue with Absenteeism Targets, and submits that sick leave provisions for employees in the Correctional Bargaining Unit should be the same as in the previous contracts.

Conclusion

For greater clarity, the Union is open to candid, respectful and meaningful dialogue on all matters on the table, with a commitment to problem-solving and mutually-satisfactory resolution.

Respectfully submitted,

OPSEU Corrections Bargaining Team