



CUPE BC 2022 CONVENTION MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE REPORT

In our report, the CUPE BC Municipal Committee wants to share good news as well as challenges with you. Not surprisingly, much of it has to do with COVID-19. We also want to motivate you, because October 15 of this year is Local Government Election Day. Along with our comrades on the Political Action Committee, we hope you'll work hard to find, connect with, support, elect, and hold accountable local politicians who will work with us to build strong communities across BC.

Good news stories continue on the contracting-in front. The collective efforts of locals and CUPE Organizing staff on wall-to-wall organizing continues to bring municipal services and contract workers into our locals. In some areas, such as Chilliwack, the level of cooperation from the employer on these organizing efforts has been surprisingly positive. The other good news story that may have gone under your radar is the level of cooperation and assistance that we've seen across jurisdictions due to extraordinary events. We've acknowledged specific communities below but just like with the onset of the pandemic, the climate-related emergencies of 2021 brought out the collective and community spirit of workers to help others out and it should be acknowledged.

One of the particular COVID-19 challenges that continue for municipal locals is getting auxiliary members back to work, especially in Recreation services. This is even more problematic where recall language has not been extended beyond the collective agreement. Ironically, in other areas, recruitment and retention are as much a problem in the public sector as in the private sector, and staffing levels are having an impact on everyone. The new COVID issue for a lot of municipal locals in 2021 was vaccine mandates. In addition to being completely new terrain for us to operate in, policies varied from one municipality to another and caused friction and division among some members. Members have been put on leave without

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pay and some have had their employment terminated. At the time of preparing this report, one significant arbitration case on the mandates is about to begin.

Related to the upcoming local elections, the effects of COVID responses, and the dramatically increasing cost of living, we are urging everyone to be vigilant against calls by employers for austerity measures. We've already seen in Dawson Creek an attempted smear campaign on the CUPE local, calling for austerity because of the costs of their new collective agreement, while at the same time the city council gets raises. We need to make sure that jobs not performed or filled during the pandemic are not eliminated. We should be out there talking about public service levels and how what we do is at the core of peoples' everyday lives and essential for recovery. We can't let anyone forget the vulnerabilities in services that have been exposed and we'll need to fight hard to maintain and improve the services that we provide. Finally, we want to acknowledge the devastation and additional hardships that municipal workers and other CUPE members faced in the last year due to climate change. Communities were destroyed or significantly disabled by fires, heat and flooding, while others offered assistance and hospitality in response. Let's not forget Lytton, the Regional District of Central Okanagan, Merritt, Kamloops, Vernon, Prince George, Princeton, Lillooet, Hope, Chilliwack, Abbotsford, and others. We're grateful to continue to do this work with you all in our communities across BC.

Respectfully Submitted:

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