

Hello Peachland Mayor and Councillors,

This message is coming to you from the Bargaining Committee for the employees at the District of Peachland. As you are aware, the Collective Agreement between CUPE 608 and the District expired June 30, 2024, and the Bargaining Committee has been working towards a new collective agreement with Management since June. On October 24, negotiations came to a pause with the presentation of a Final Vote Offer presented by Management to the Committee. This pause by Management, in an attempt to bypass the Union, has slowed down our negotiations by 6 weeks.

We feel it is important that you are aware of the facts that were presented to Management during our discussions. These facts were obtained through research by our Bargaining Committee and our National CUPE team. Our intention is to ensure you know both sides to this bargaining process so that you can provide unbiased support to both Management and your employees.

One focal point of our negotiations surrounds wage rates and some concessions. Data on recently ratified collective agreement wage rates offered to local municipalities in the region are set out in the table below. This research sets a comparative benchmark of what other local, similar sized communities within 3 different CUPE locals have recently agreed to.

The table below shows a breakdown of the annual wage rates compared to what management has presented in their Final Offer to Peachland staff, which is highlighted in red.

Local	2023	2024	2025	2026
Penticton	2.00%	8.00%	4.00%	3.25%
Kelowna	2.25%	8.00%	4.00%	
Osoyoos	2.00%	8.00%	4.00%	3.25%
Oliver	2.25%	8.00%	4.00%	3.00%
Vernon	2.00%	7.00%	3.00%	3.00%
Coldstream	2.00%	8.00%	4.00%	3.00%
Peachland	2.00%	4.00%	3.00%	3.00%

Note: We recently have been made aware that the RDCO were able to complete their bargaining process in 3 days, and to do this before the agreement even expired. Their final wage rates are also in line with the 8% trend. We also understand that Vernon received additional benefits in exchange for reducing a bit on wage over the three year term.

Management's offer for Peachland is significantly below all of these municipalities. The last collective agreement spanned an unfortunate economic time due to the Covid pandemic. CUPE tracked the inflation through this time and determined that our wages are down 10.69% because of this and to counter this, wages need to come up substantially. This is not the fault of staff or management, but it is a reality. Employees who work for Peachland face the same mounting costs as workers in other parts of the Okanagan. If the wage rates offered in the collective agreement are not on par with what other municipalities in the region believe is fair, our staff will fall significantly behind in the coming years.

Attached to this email is a chart that shows position wages for recently signed contracts. Pre-COVID contracts should not be used as they contain dated information and are not relevant for negotiations today. As you can see, some Peachland positions are still substantially below what is being offered in the Okanagan for similar positions. Keep in mind that market wage adjustments for certain positions are different from annual wage rate increases which apply to all staff, and are not required as part of collective bargaining. To attract and retain quality employees, these should be reviewed and updated frequently. However, as Management has identified certain positions are still in need of market adjustments, doing them with the collective agreement is an efficient decision.

The bargaining committee is working with management to find solutions to operational concerns and we feel we were making progress. However, accepting concessions on previously bargained items with nothing of equal value in return, introduction of contract language, and lack of basic inflationary increases to wage rates, among other things, is difficult to agree to and can have lasting years of negative consequences and relationships.

The recent Final Offer presented to members has us questioning how Peachland Management thinks this will be an agreement that will attract and retain quality workers to provide the services our residents depend on going forward. The competition in this region for municipal staff is too great to offer less than what neighbouring communities are offering.

We are simply asking for a fair agreement that is comparative to other regional municipalities. Without equality, Peachland will not attract and retain quality staff. There is no incentive for an employee to stay, nor is there an attraction for new staff to apply for future positions.

If you have any questions please feel free to reach out.
Thank you for your time!