

February 3, 2019

Bargaining Update to Vancouver Art Gallery Employees

As we move through this bargaining process, the Gallery Committee has listened to your representatives and the concerns expressed. The Gallery Committee believes that its current proposal is a fair and reasonable agreement for both its employees and the organization moving forward.

Please know that the Gallery appreciates all the work and effort put in by all employees, and recognizes the stress that this process has created among its team members including the Gallery Committee and the Union Committee. It has been a long process, and everyone has worked hard to ensure an equitable package that considers the future vision of the Gallery, its employees, members, visitors, and donors. We believe in due process, fact-based decision-making and the power of respectful negotiation, and that this proposal ensures a sustainable future for all of us.

What remains are two issues - the “red circling” of the Nine Day Fortnight schedule and the Wages:

Nine Day Fortnight:

The Gallery Committee has proposed to “red circle” the Nine Day Fortnight. This would keep Nine Day Fortnight schedules intact for current employees on that schedule (17% of the Gallery staff), but moving forward, all full-time employees hired after ratification would be scheduled either on the Five Day Work Week or on the flexible schedule.

The reason for this proposal is that the Nine Day Fortnight schedule restricts effective operations and has a financial impact on the Gallery.

Wages:

The Gallery Committee heard that retroactive pay to the beginning of the new Collective Agreement is very important to employees, and has reviewed its original proposal with this in mind.

As you know, the Gallery is an independent not for profit organization and has been transparent about the financial risks inherent in our operations. The newly proposed offer considers various factors including ensuring that employees are fairly paid as well as making sure that the Gallery’s operations are managed in a sustainable manner.

The current offer is based on a 3-year period beginning July 1, 2017 and ending June 30, 2020 and is based on the fiscal year, year by year as follows:

- **Effective July 1, 2017:** **One & one half percent (1.50%)**
- **Effective July 1, 2018:** **One & one half percent (1.50%)**
- **Effective July 1, 2019:** **One & three quarters percent (1.75%)**

This means that 4.75% will be realised by July 1, 2019. We believe this is a fair and sustainable offer, and is consistent with the BC Bargaining database of ratified agreements thus far. This is compared to the Union Committee’s proposal of 5.5% over the same period.

We would also like to share a few positive additions that the Gallery has put forward in this proposal:

- **Sick Leave Benefits:** Based on the response to the initial proposal, the Gallery Committee has agreed to maintain the original benefits of 20 days at 100% pay.
- **Overtime Pay** as it relates to the flexible work schedule team members would be increased from time and one half to double time after 10 hours rather than after 18 hours as in the current Collective Agreement.
- **Maternity and Parental leave and Domestic Violence and/or Sexual Abuse:** We have agreed to the Union's requests regarding Maternity and Parental leave, and to additional language to support employees that may be facing situations of Domestic Violence and/or Sexual Abuse.
- **Shift Differential:** We have agreed to increase shift differential premiums and to additional pay for First Aid Attendants.
- There is also an agreement to a letter of understanding which converts some casual staff to part-time employees after a reasonable period of time.

The Gallery Committee has been fair and respectful in responding to concerns and has attempted to find creative, fiscally responsible solutions to meet the needs of its employees, as well as support the long-term sustainability of the Gallery.

Of course if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your Union Committee.

Respectfully,

Vancouver Art Gallery Management Bargaining Committee