



Health Admin Professionals Fighting for a Fair Deal (PG 4)



Nurses Ratify Contract (PG 6)



Labour Day 2023 (PG 12)

THE NO-ON STAND

A PUBLICATION OF THE N.S. GOVERNMENT & GENERAL EMPLOYEES UNION

SUMMER 2023

Dear members,

Summer is a time for people to rejuvenate, spend time with friends and family and enjoy all the activities that summer has to offer. This summer also brought a series of challenges to many families including devastating wildfires, flooding and the continuing pressure of inflation on everyday cost of living expenses.

The union is working hard with employers across the province to find ways to increase wages, protect existing benefits and improve working conditions. As interest rates continue to rise and inflation impacts prices many people, working good jobs, find themselves falling behind or just able to keep their head above water. These challenges emphasize the importance of unions in the lives of working people.

The NSGEU continues to advocate for its members. Together we have had some success; nurses have concluded their new collective agreement; we are working with our partners within the Council of Health Care Unions to advance the goals of our administrative professionals and health care workers. We've advocated on behalf of Corrections Officers, 8-1-1 staff, Case Aides, and those members who work in our education system.

I was pleased to have the opportunity, along with 1st Vice President Hugh Gillis, to travel and visit many of you where you work. It's always exciting to get to see, firsthand, the positive impact you have in delivering programs and services to Nova Scotians.

Our work is far from complete, in fact this could be one of our most important years. Wages are not keeping up with the cost of living. Inflation is a real challenge and is putting unfair pressure on people who were forced to take no or minimal wage increases during the previous McNeil government. This put many working people at a disadvantage when interest rates started to climb and inflation pushed prices up.

This summer Nova Scotians again witnessed, as they did throughout the COVID pandemic, just how important public workers are in times of need. Our members were part of the wildfire response, they were on the ground to help repair the damage caused by the

flooding. Public sector workers are an easy target for governments to claw back and cut when things are going well. But when Nova Scotians need a strong, reliable and professional response to an emergency or challenge it's the public service that rises to the occasion.



When I talk to members there is always a consistent message. We love our jobs. We aren't looking for special treatment we just want to be paid a fair wage that allows us to do our jobs safely, take care of our family and pay the bills. That doesn't seem like an unreasonable request.

I can assure you that your staff here at NSGEU is energized and ready for the work ahead. With your support and trust, the union is ready to work together to achieve our shared goals. Fair wages, safe

work environment and to protect the benefits we have worked so hard to earn.

Together, the union is ready to work hard on your behalf and support you the way you continue to support Nova Scotians.

In solidarity,

Sandra Mullen

Sandra Mullen

President, NSGEU

Hugh Gillis, 1st Vice-President, NSGEU.

Hugh is assisting President Mullen and working directly with local executives to strengthen the NSGEU from one end of the province to the other.

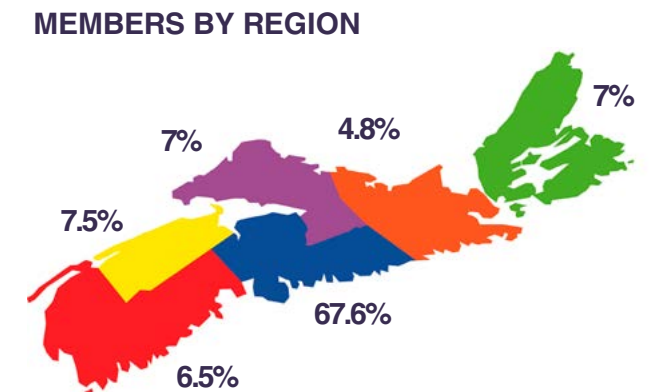
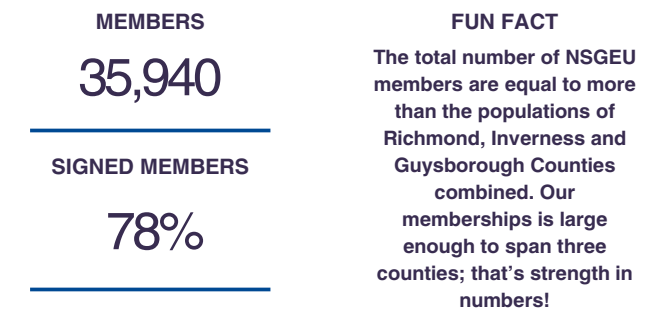
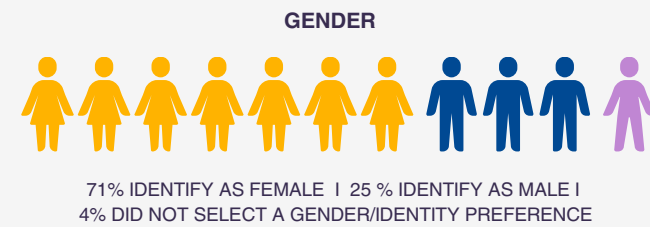
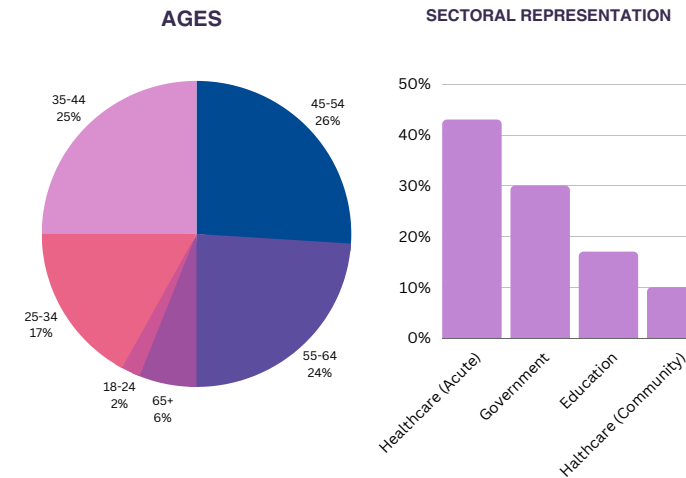
He would like to thank the membership for all their cooperation and he is looking forward to continuing to work together in 2023.

If you have any questions, you can contact Hugh at:

hgillis@nsgeu.ca



YOUR UNION AT A GLANCE



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NSGEU TWEETS

@LisaLachanceMLA

Happy #LabourDay from the beautiful #AnnapolisValley! Thanks to the Annapolis Valley Labour Council for a fun and inspiring celebration. Next time I will come prepared for the dunk tank!

@redeyradio

Worth listening ICYMI: Canada's voluntary blood supply is under threat. Dr. Michèle Brill-Edwards on paid plasma for profit, and why we must fight against it now. <https://bitly.ws/UbPj>

@ReprtrPatHealey

@NSGEU says the Burnside jail is "critically understaffed." #Halifax #NovaScotia #Dartmouth

CONNECT WITH US!

We want to hear from our members. If you have thoughts on this issue of The Stand, or ongoing union issues, send us your feedback! You can email us at inquiry@nsgeu.ca or connect with us:

facebook.com/NSGEU

@NSGEU

THE STAND

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Fighting For a Fair Deal For Health Admin

In October 2021, the Houston government campaigned and won on their promise to fix health care. Almost two years later, they have invested a lot of resources in more prestigious, high-paid positions, such as doctors, but sadly, many other important members of the health care team are being ignored.

The NSGEU represents administrative professionals working at Nova Scotia Health and the IWK Health Centre who are being ignored and disrespected by their employer and this government. These workers are among the lowest paid in Canada, with some making as little as \$20 per hour, and they are just as integral to keeping our health care system functioning as those who deliver direct patient care.

There are thousands of administrative professionals (notably, around 85 per cent of whom are women) working in hospitals and in community care roles throughout this province. They act as the first point of contact with patients; manage registrations; control the switchboard and communications; ensure test labels are accurate; assign beds; share lab results with clinical staff; book appointments, transfers and admissions; keep operating rooms stocked with supplies; manage payroll; and much more. They are in every corner of every department of our health care system, but in the words of one member, "government treats us like we are nothing."

Because sadly, when you compare their salaries to those of admin working in hospitals in neighbouring

provinces, our workers are making up to 14 per cent less. It's just not fair, especially when you consider the rate of inflation we are all facing right now. More and more, these workers report needing to take on a second job to try and pay their rising rents and afford food.

Hospital administrative staff reject tentative agreement, but strike may be weeks away



Union official says pay is still a sticking point

CBC News · Posted: Jun 26, 2023 7:07 PM ADT | Last Updated: June 26



Sandra Mullen is president of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union. (NSGEU)

"These jobs used to be sought-after, good jobs that you could raise a family on," said NSGEU President Sandra Mullen, "Thanks to the past Liberal government's legacy of wage restraint, and this government's refusal to listen to the frontline workers, there are regularly more than 100 administrative job postings between NSH and IWK. They are simply no longer competitive with other employers, and we are losing skilled professionals."

Earlier this year, these workers decided they had had enough. They voted to reject a final offer that would have kept their wages below what their counterparts are earning in places like New Brunswick, and they gave their unions the mandate to authorize a strike if a reasonable agreement could not be reached.

The employers have made the situation worse by intentionally prolonging this round of bargaining, most recently delaying the process of establishing an essential services agreement – a cumbersome process that was another legacy of the McNeil government, via Bill 1, the Health Authorities Act.

Despite the critical role these admin workers play within

our health care system, they have been repeatedly ignored and disrespected by both their own employer and government. When Administrative Professionals' Day rolled around this spring, senior management at Nova Scotia Health completely forgot, and sent an apologetic belated thank you message to these workers the following day.

It is unacceptable to treat our administrative professionals like an afterthought. These hardworking women and men are integral parts of our health care system, and it's time that we treat them as such. Government just signed contracts with nurses that made them leading in Atlantic Canada, and they should be doing the same for administrative professionals. It's the right thing to do. These workers have been waiting for three years for their contract: government and employers must return to the table, prepared to negotiate a fair agreement this fall. ■

N.S. hospital administrative staff deliver strong strike vote

SaltWire Network | Posted: June 26, 2023, 4:24 p.m. | Updated: June 26, 2023, 4:24 p.m. | 3 Min Read



About 5,000 health-care administrative staff who work in Nova Scotia's 43 hospitals registered a strong strike vote after rejecting a tentative deal in April. - File

Nova Scotia Healthcare administrators vote in favour of strike

By Joe Thomson

Jun 26, 2023 14:27 PM

Nova Scotia's healthcare system may soon come under even more strain. The unions representing over 5,000 healthcare administration workers have voted in favour of a strike.

Sandra Mullen is the president of the NSGEU, one of three unions representing the workers, along with Unifor and CUPE. She said there is still work to be done before a strike takes place.

"Before we can even call a strike date, we have to negotiate an essential service plan," said Mullen.



Michael Havens / cc

Nurses Ratify New Contract

In the height of the summer, thousands of nurses in Nova Scotia voted to ratify a new, five-year collective agreement. This long-awaited agreement includes historic improvements in wages, premiums, occupational health & safety provisions, and new language designed to help establish better work-life balance for the nursing profession.

"I am proud to say that a number of significant language and workload improvements were achieved during this round of negotiations, thanks to the advocacy and dedication of our bargaining committee members, and the new interest-based bargaining process that we participated in with the employer," said NSGEU President Sandra Mullen.

Represented by the NSGEU, NSNU, CUPE and Unifor, who bargain together as part of the Nova Scotia Council of Nursing Unions, 87.5 per cent of members voted in favour of the new agreement.

The deal sees Nurse Practitioners receive a 21 per cent increase in salary by the end of the contract, while Registered Nurses will see raises ranging from 15 to 21 per cent, and Licensed Practical Nurses will see their

wages increase 12 to 17 per cent. These increases make our NPs the highest paid in Canada, while RNs and LPNs will be the highest paid in the Atlantic provinces.

Other highlights of the contract include increases in shift premiums and new incentives, such as extra per-hour payments for those who supervise student nurses and those who are reassigned during a shift. Nurses who decide against taking time off during peak vacation periods are eligible for a \$1,000 bonus, and those called in when they are on vacation will be paid triple their hourly rate.

There's also new language designed to limit overtime by capping the number of consecutive hours of work at 16 hours and reducing

the frequency of 24-hour shifts, and ensuring shifts are properly staffed. Within six months of the contract being signed, employers are expected to provide a profile of all units and the current number of nurses working on each shift as an agreed upon starting point. Then, the employers and union will develop a framework that determines the appropriate number of nurses for each unit across the province.

But the road to the agreement was not an easy one, as bargaining efforts had been delayed and complicated

Nova Scotia acute care employers reach tentative agreement with nursing unions

Atlantic Briefs Desk | Posted: July 21, 2023, 5:47 p.m. | Updated: July 21, 2023, 5:21 p.m. | 1 Min Read



The Nova Scotia Council of Nursing Unions and health-care employers in the province have come to terms on a deal which will affect more than 10,000 nurses across the province. Stock image

by the pandemic. Representatives from the unions, the IWK Health Centre, Nova Scotia Health, and the Department of Health and Wellness were finally able to start bargaining in January 2023. They decided to engage in a new type of bargaining – Interest-Based Negotiations (IBN) in an effort to address the many challenges nurses had been reporting in the sector. IBN places the focus of discussions on shared issues and interests. This allows for an in-depth examination of root causes with an emphasis on generating solutions that both sides have ownership over. The overall process is more collaborative and ensures decision-makers from all sides are involved along the way.

The parties engaged in IBN for 27 days, followed by two days of traditional bargaining. In the end, a Conciliator assisted in finally helping to reach agreement on the outstanding issues at the table, and the tentative agreement was brought to the members for a vote in late July.

The end result is a contract that offers a competitive wage package, which will hopefully help retain nurses and recruit nurses from outside the province, as it includes language designed to address many of the challenges nurses confronted during the pandemic and continue to face today, including heavy workloads.

The 10,000 Licensed Practical Nurses, Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners represented by the Council had been without a contract since October 31st, 2020. Their new collective agreement will expire October 31st, 2025. ■

Nov. 1, 2020	1.5%
Nov. 1, 2021	1.5%
Nov. 1, 2022	3.0%
Oct. 31, 2023	0.5%
Nov. 1, 2023*	\$1.05* classification adjustment
Nov. 1, 2023	2 step additions totaling 5.06%**
Nov. 1, 2023	3%
Nov. 1, 2024	2%

*applies to all RN classifications

**applies to RNs and LPNs

% increase 2020-2025	
LPN	12 – 17% *
RN	15 – 21% **
NP	21%

*Excludes 12% reclassification adjustment from June 2020.

**Includes 8% reclassification adjustment from September 2021.

Nurses Vote to Accept New Agreement



JULY 27, 2023

SHARE  

Nurses represented by four unions in Nova Scotia have voted in favour of a five-year contract that will see historic improvements in wages, premiums, occupational health and safety, and work-life balance.

Voting on the agreement took place from July 21st until noon today. Approximately 87.5 per cent of those who voted cast ballots in favour of the new agreement that was reached during Conciliation.

Aside from a competitive wage package that should help retain nurses and potentially recruit nurses from outside Nova Scotia, this agreement addresses many of the challenges nurses confronted during the pandemic and continue to face today, including working short-staffed.

Case Aides Earn Important Classification Update

In 2017 Case Aides were downgraded from classification TE 18 to TE 10 without consultation or justification. The union, with support of Case Aide leaders, began the process to fight back against the employer.

It was an exhausting process lasting six years.

In that time the union and local leaders worked through a grievance, an appeal, and had to fight through many delays and stalling from the employer.

In June 2023 Case Aides appeared before a Tribunal and were able to detail the work they do every day to support vulnerable children and families. Case Aides are there to nurture, teach and protect children from one end of the province to the other.

After hearing testimony and evidence, the employer finally agreed to the title of Counsellor and restored their TE 18 pay scale.

Since that time the union and employer have been working together to finalize the agreement, including details on the timing of the pay grade and any potential retro pay.

It is hoped to have a signed agreement in place this fall.

This was an important fight for NSGEU Case Aides and it was successful in large part to members like Cheryl Cromwell, Lorelei Coombs, Tracey Penticost, Keri Duffney, Angela Gero, Holly Martin, Teri LeBlanc, Lisa Norman, Samantha Glavin, and the late Danielle Brauen. ■



Political Update

Barbeques and photo ops are traditionally how Nova Scotia's political leaders spend their summers. This summer tradition was only interrupted for the Preston by-election which was called to replace Liberal MLA Angela Simmonds who resigned and has since accepted a position, as Senior Advisor, Diversity, Equity, at Halifax law firm McInnes Cooper.

The summer byelection was won by PC candidate Twila Grosse, with the NDP finishing second and the Liberals a close third. The result is significant as the Liberal Party had represented Preston for two decades. The question for all political parties is; was the result an endorsement of the work Tim Houston is doing to fix health care? Or was it a rebuke of Liberal leader Zach Churchill, and his leadership since taking over the party from Iain Rankin?

Political campaigns are won and lost over which party controls the narrative of the election. What is the election is about, otherwise known as the 'ballot question.' In 2021 Tim Houston made the election about the state of health care and his promise to fix it. The election became all about fixing health care. That highlighted the Liberals failure on that issue and the NDP offered no solutions of their own. This was a political advantage for the Conservatives and was

a significant factor in their election win. The political party that controls the ballot question usually wins.

As families return to their daily routine after the summer the political question will be which party can earn control of the political narrative? What is the main issue facing families and what party or leader

can earn their trust that they offer the solution to their problem. Housing, affordability, health care, these are the three top issues on the minds of Nova Scotians. Who has the most credible solutions for these problems and who can point blame for these problems on the government. That party will be the main competition in the next election.

In the meantime, the government will continue to show progress on improving health care, show they are working to address the housing shortage

and stabilize the economy. There are still two outstanding contracts to be bargained this year, one for administrative professionals and one for the health care bargaining unit. How will a government elected to fix health care deal with these two important groups? Time will tell the tale. ■

PC candidate Twila Grosse wins Preston byelection



PCs take riding near Halifax held by Liberals for two decades

Michael Gorman · CBC News · Posted: Aug 08, 2023 9:37 PM ADT | Last Updated: August 8



PC Party candidate Twila Grosse will be the new MLA for Preston. (Michael Gorman/CBC)

Twila Grosse of the PC Party will be the next MLA for Preston, taking a riding held by the Nova Scotia Liberal Party for the past 20 years.

Burnside Jail Critically Understaffed Putting Workers at Risk

The staffing levels in corrections facilities across the province has been an ongoing issue for some time. However, the staffing levels at the Burnside jail have reached a crisis level.

NSGEU First Vice President Hugh Gillis reported that staff have indicated it's the worst staffing crisis they've seen since the jail opened over two decades ago.

There were times this summer when there were only two Correctional Officers (COs) on duty on the North and West Living units. There is supposed to be a minimum of five COs on each shift. Many staff are off work after being assaulted on the job, and the resulting understaffing has led to increasingly problematic and violent behaviour from offenders, who are frustrated due to extended lockdowns. This has created increased tension in the jail and lead to more contraband finding its way into the facility as there is less time for staff to conduct proper searches. This has led to an unsafe work environment.

These staff shortages mean that some staff are required

to stay on-duty beyond their regular 12-hour shifts and forced to work additional hours.

Part of the problem is the government's recruitment strategy has been a failure. Their sole-source training contract has not delivered results and does not adequately prepare new recruits for the realities of

the work environment. This has led to the unacceptable situation of COs with six months' experience in the jail being expected to train new recruits, while senior staff are leaving the profession altogether.

The staff and union have taken their concerns about the safety of the facility public. The union has done a number of media interviews this summer

putting the focus on the need to keep COs safe in the workplace. The staff continue to do the best they can to keep the facility operating while also looking after their well being and those inside the facility.

More frontline staff and managers are needed on the ground, inside the jail, to help with operational requirements. This means that the senior correctional

management team who work off-site must give managers and staff at the facility the resources and authority they need to recruit, retain staff, and run a safe facility.

The union continues to work with the senior correctional management team to find a positive way forward. However, tension within the facility continues to rise, and without some immediate action both inmates and staff will be at increased risk and it is likely more staff will leave their jobs putting creating even more challenges. ■

Staff shortage at N.S. jail at 'crisis' level, union says



Guards, inmates at risk in Central Nova Scotia Correctional Centre, says spokesperson



Blair Rhodes · CBC News · Posted: Aug 14, 2023 5:25 PM ADT | Last Updated: August 14

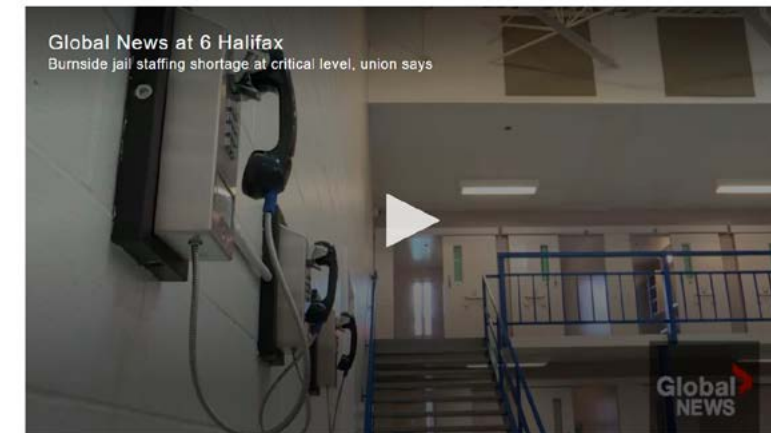


Hugh Gillis, the first vice-president of the Nova Scotia Government Employees Union, said there aren't enough employees on duty at the Burnside jail to run it properly. (Andrew Vaughan/The Canadian Press)

'Breaking point:' Staffing at Halifax-area jail the worst in its history, union says



By Alex Cooke · Global News
Posted August 14, 2023 4:34 pm · Updated August 14, 2023 6:23 pm



WATCH: The union representing correctional officers at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility is sounding the alarm that the facility is dangerously understaffed. As Megan King reports, the staffing crisis has meant extended lockdown for inmates - increasing tension and leading to assaults. - Aug 14, 2023

Staff Crunch Puts Guards' Lives At Risk: Union

August 15, 2023
Paul Bacon

Burnside jail staffing levels are so low, guards' lives are at risk, their union said Monday.-



Burnside jail (Contributed)

"Staffing levels have never been worse since the jail opened," Hugh Gillis, first VP of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union, said in an interview.

"The recruitment strategy put forward by the (provincial) Department of Justice has failed."

Late last week, the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility only had two guards working in each of its North and West living units, when it should have had at least five in each, Gillis said.

"Staffing assaults are on the rise, so, yes, obviously that is the case," he said when asked if guards were in danger.

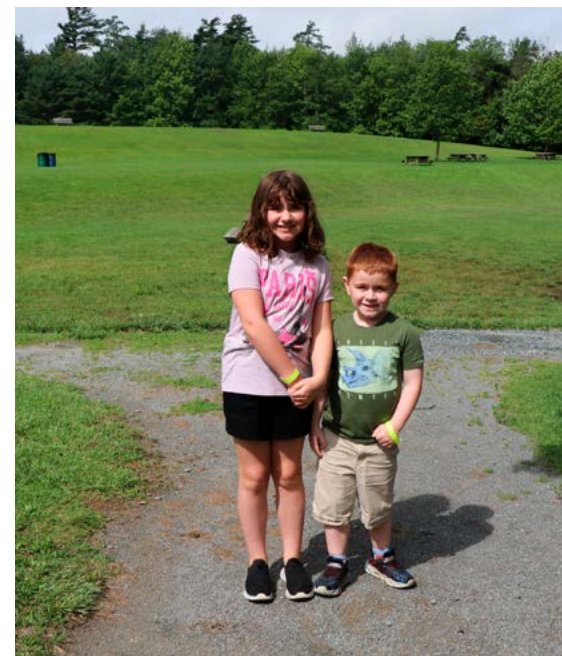
Because of the guard shortage, inmates have been spending extended periods locked in their cells. Their frustrations have boiled over into violence, the union said, along with a raft of habeas corpus applications to the courts.

The applications ask a judge to determine if the inmate's Charter rights have been violated, and provide a remedy, such as ordering more time out of their cells.

Labour Day 2023 Around the Province



NSGEU Family Picnic at Oakfield Provincial Park



President's Summer Tour

This summer NSGEU President Sandra Mullen visited with members across the province. Her tour included stops at Local 112 – Riverview Enhanced Living Society, Local 65 Shelburne Association Supporting Inclusion, Local 40 VON South Shore, Local 1783 Black Loyalist Heritage Society, and Local 6 Natural Resources Firefighters in Middle Musquodoboit. ■



Local 179 Reaches Tentative Agreement



We are pleased to announce the union and the negotiating committee for Local 179 - Saint Mary's University reached a tentative agreement on July 18th. The members accepted the tentative agreement on July 24th with an overwhelming 89% in favor.

This was a lengthy negotiation with the employer, as we were not only negotiating priorities at the table but merging two collective agreements into one. We want to thank the negotiating committee and the employer's bargaining committee for a respectful round of negotiations.

Pictured above: Lead Negotiator Dustin Rioux, NSGEU President Sandra Mullen, Shannon Rhode, Dawn Delaney, Ian Mayfield (back), Liliane Bassil, and ERO Karen Grandy. ■

Member Profile: DNR Fire Fighter Tanya Pelerine

Tanya Pelerine began working with the Department of Natural Resources in 2018 after attending Acadia University for Biology. After graduation she started working in the Wildfire division in Kentville.

"I got to do some really exciting things like fly in a helicopter above Cape Breton," says Pelerine. "I fell in love with the work and was told a path forward would be to get a job in a camping park, join the union, and work my way up from there. Which is what I did."

Tanya then began working at a wildlife park, and eventually decided to further her education by attending Flemming College in Ontario to become a Forestry Technician.

"Becoming a Forestry Tech was the perfect integration of everything I had done to date. Including working with wildlife, fighting wildfires,

working in camping parks, working with Crown Lands, and outreach and education – which I really love to do."

Then in the spring of 2023 after only working on one previous wildfire Tanya was dispatched work both wildfires in the South Shore and Halifax.

"I was on the line for three days then went to Tantallon where I worked with the heavy equipment line to help build the fire break," says Pelerine.

The fire break would stop the fire from spreading into other areas or communities. Tanya's role was to guide the heavy equipment operators through the woods and

try to get ahead of the fire and stop its spread.

"Those first days on the line was only my second fire experience."

Tanya recalls her second day when the wind and conditions worsened making it tough to try and contain the fire.

"The second day was very windy so we did have to retreat from the woods. There were a few areas that we had to call in the helicopters to put out fires from the air. Those first few days were a little scary. We had to defend a lot of houses those first days, then the heavy equipment took over."

"With a wildfire you want to surround it with hose, that's when you can call it contained. But even then, we were defending homes while inside the contained area. We were fighting fires within the larger fire. It took a long time to make sure everything

was out."

Tanya has not allowed herself to spend much time thinking about the impact of that fire on the many families and businesses that lost everything.

A slight emotion built up as she spoke about the outcomes people faced when the fire was out.

"People lost homes, pets and their livelihood. But in the moment we just needed to focus on the work and what we had to do. But when you stop and think about it, it does take an emotional toll. I don't really like to think about it, it's pretty emotional."

Tanya was most impressed with the level of professionalism and team work that went into fighting those wildfires.

"It was a great opportunity for me professionally, I gained important experience, and I met a ton of super great people from all over the province and those that came from other places to help. It was a true group effort with HRM Fire, RCMP, Conservation Officers, and the SPCA was involved. We called them the Paw Patrol – it was fantastic."

"I wish it hadn't been as devastating as it was, but we all came together to help that community. I was really happy to be part of it and inspired by everyone I worked with."

Thank you Tanya for all you do. You make the NSGEU proud. ■



DNR Firefighter Tanya Pelerine at the Department of Natural Resources in Middle Musquodoboit.



NSGEU President Sandra Mullen met with DNR members of Local 6 on her President's tour in September.

Nicole Turple Attends the Duke of Edinburgh Commonwealth Study Conference

Nicole Turple works for the Department of Health and Wellness as an Administrative Assistant. Since becoming a member, she has stepped up and been a voice for her local and now for the labour movement, representing NSGEU and our National Union (NUPGE) at the Duke of Edinburgh Commonwealth Study Conference 2023. The STAND did an interview with President Sandra Mullen and Nicole about her experience this year.

President Mullen:

In July of 2022, our national union reached out to us. They were looking ideally for a young active member of our union to put forward as their representative at the Study Conference. Nicole Turple came top of mind.

Nicole had recently served on the Board of Directors, and was the chair of our Young Workers Committee. She was active in her region, active in her local, and recently after changing locals, did all that she could to get her way back to the executive of her new local to help. She was an excellent candidate, has great leadership skills, represents NSGEU well and we were more than proud to nominate her as our candidate for the Study Conference

Nicole Turple:

I was very honoured to have been selected for the Duke of Edinburgh Commonwealth Study Conference 2023. This conference is for emerging leaders between the ages of 20 and 40's across sectors such as government, non-for-profit, business, and unions in the Commonwealth countries.

I wanted to make sure the NSGEU and Canada had a

voice with emerging leaders in business. I wanted to make sure the union was represented and that workers' rights going forward are taken into consideration.

The construct of this conference is that everyone gathers the 300 people in Banff, Alberta. So, for this first part, we were kind of a large group and we had international guest speakers. We then broke off into 15 individual groups, and these groups of 15 to 20 traveled all over the country. My group went to B.C.



In my group there were people that worked with not-for-profits and for government. If we're having a group discussion, some of the folks would wonder why they should consider the needs of the worker if it comes to bottom line - when you're talking business. I was able to offer a labour perspective - that you wouldn't have been successful without the workers that are in your business. So, I think having the union perspective there

showed them how we should think together with a more wholesome view - that everyone works together, not against each other. They told me that they valued my perspective as a union rep.

During the Conference we really bonded together with a lot of mechanical failures. Our bus broke down twice. Our boat broke when river rafting. Some folks had gotten stuck in a crane. So, it was an adventure.

I really enjoyed meeting labour leaders across the country at the opening plenary. Beatrice Bruske, who is the President of the Canadian Labour Congress, was there doing a speech and she was able to field questions from a broad variety of individuals from across the Commonwealth. I got to meet with her and speak about labour things happening in Canada as she's

familiar with the NSGEU. And then while in B.C., we also met with Susanne Skidmore, who is the president of the B.C. Federation of Labour. She was able to have close-knit conversations with our group members about what is happening in B.C. One of the themes we discussed was the importance of building things (change and improvements) through working as a team at a community level.

A lot of the values our diverse group shared were reflected in what we heard from the BC Federation of Labour. Things like engaging community to raise minimum wage, helping with precarious work situations for those working in unprotected roles, and assisting immigrant workers who don't have as many protections.

It was really impactful to see members of my group learning how unions tie in to what we all have in common beliefs. Even though we come from different sectors, we all have a common goal in mind.

My group of 15 people came from 11 countries, and we had such a good time, I felt very lucky. We had very few conflicts because we gave everyone the chance to speak. I formed good friendships with people from the UK, and had interesting conversations with a young woman from Tanzania about their labour laws. Unions aren't common there, but a lot of their structure in government is similar to what we follow as a union (aspects of our collective agreements) - with many differences. We learned from folks in Barbados too and now I have lifelong friendships.

A group of us plan to continue monthly debrief Friday's, as we jokingly call them. Online, across our time zones, we're going to try to find a time that works for

everyone, and we're all planning to meet up in the future.

We were very lucky to be able to bounce ideas off all of these interesting people in such different sectors. For example, one of the gentlemen has a tech background.



Tech can be used in a way to eliminate jobs or go against workers' interests. He said he was grateful to spend a week with me as a union rep and that he wants to learn more about that when he goes back to UK. He is interested in how we can work together going forward. As a union activist, there are many opportunities for us to share ideas about how we would like to help move things forward with community members and other leaders.

If the opportunity comes again, as a current alumnus, I definitely plan to help it be a success. I would suggest to all young workers that they should apply. I had heard from people that it was life changing but I was kind of brushing it off like - it'll

be a cool opportunity to learn but I just can't see being life changing. It is though. Once you're there and you spend 18 days with a group of strangers, you really learn so many life lessons outside of what your current occupation is and how you can be better moving forward.

I'm very grateful to the NSGEU, the staff, and the activists who allowed me to undertake this opportunity on behalf of the union. This was a life changing opportunity. ■

NAIG takes over NSGEU

NSGEU President Sandra Mullen picked up her volunteer kit in July for the 2023 North American Indigenous Games, at our NSGEU headquarters in Dartmouth. The first floor of the NSGEU building was used by NAIG volunteers for the duration of the games. ■



Menstrual May Donations Gathered



Menstrual May donations were gathered and went out for delivery to organizations throughout Nova Scotia. Women's Issues Committee Chair, Andrea Hancock, Executive Liaison, Tammy Gillis, President Sandra Mullen and United Way staff and volunteers Peter Ordinelli and Mike Avery, gathered together donations from this year's Menstrual May campaign and organized them for distribution to organizations in Nova Scotia.

There is a need for donations. Inflation is making life even more difficult and menstrual products are not an option for those with a period.

Since the NSGEU Women's Issues Committee and the United Way began this campaign President Mullen reports that many public buildings are now providing menstrual products in their washrooms.

Thank you to all those who donated and to the Women's Issues Committee for organizing this effort. You can always drop them off at Feed NS to ensure distribution throughout the province. ■

Celebrating 47 Years With NSGEU

In July, Brenda Lawrence, an Emergency Ward Clerk at Queens General Hospital in Liverpool, celebrated 47 years as an NSGEU member.

President Sandra Mullen was on hand to offer congratulations to Brenda, who started her career as a Nurses Aid, then moved into her current position as a Ward Clerk.

Along the way, Brenda's been praised for her ability to work with seniors, socialize with patients, and interact positively with her many colleagues and managers through the years.

In retirement she's looking forward to baking, selling her pickles at the local craft show and knitting. Now, 47 years later she says she loves the job just as much as the day she first walked through the doors.

We wish you all the best in retirement, Brenda! ■



Occupational Council Elections

On August 29th, elections were held for the Municipal Occupational Council. NSGEU President Sandra Mullen and 1st Vice President Hugh Gillis were in attendance. Congrats to newly elected Board member Mike McKenzie, Chairperson and Board alternate Leslie Anderson, and Secretary Sharla Sampson. ■

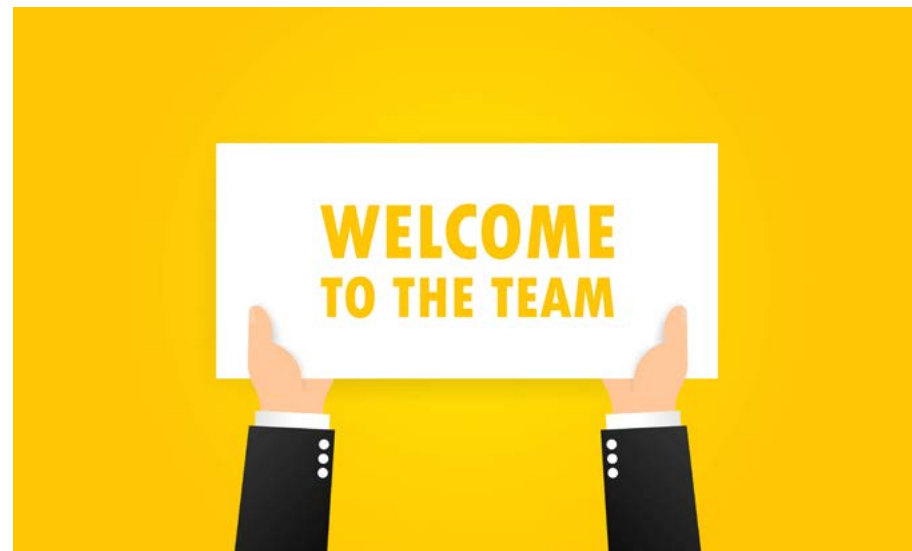


Should I Sign a Union Card?

Who doesn't want to be a member in good standing?

Sending us your membership application form is a great thing to do!

Signing and sending us your NSGEU membership application form is the way you become a member in good standing and the way you fully participate in your union. When we receive and process your application, we will send you back your union card.



- Have direct input into the bargaining priorities of your local by filling out a "bargaining input survey";
- Receive information from your local about meetings and events as well as local bargaining updates when you are in negotiations;
- Attend NSGEU [Education courses](#);
- Attend [Pre-retirement Seminars](#) to learn about retirement planning;
- Get email invitations to union-wide social events such as our Annual Free Family Day Picnic or our Annual Fall Family Fun Day;
- Access to NSGEU's Discount List, which offers savings from stores and services around the province including Marks Work Wearhouse and a variety of hotels and car rental agencies. (For the Discount List, see nsgeu.ca or contact us at 902-424-4063, 1-877-556-7438, or inquiry@nsgeu.ca);
- Access to MHCSI Preferred Pharmacy Provider Program (aka Lawton's Card). (For more information, see nsgeu.ca or contact us at 902-424-4063, 1-877-556-7438, or inquiry@nsgeu.ca);

Applying for membership provides the union with your current up-to-date contact information, including a personal email, if possible. This is important because the information we get from your employer may not be correct and/or it may not be the best way to reach you. A signed and accepted union card application means you are part of the NSGEU community and can participate fully in all the democratic aspects of it.

When you send us your application form and receive your union card it means you are a member in good standing which means you can:

- Participate fully in your local by having the right to vote for your local executive and other representatives like Regional & Occupational Councillors, as well as your health & safety representation, just to name a few;
- Participate in all votes during negotiations including whether to accept or reject a tentative agreement reached by your bargaining committee;

inquiry@nsgeu.ca);

- Apply for NSGEU scholarships, bursaries, or awards for yourself or your dependents;

If you have not yet received your membership package in the mail or if you would like to apply for membership, please contact us (902-424-4063, toll-free 877-556-7438, or inquiry@nsgeu.ca) and an application will be mailed to you with a postage-paid return envelope. Just fill it out, send it in, and you will be mailed your NSGEU membership card. We have a strict privacy policy;

your personal information will not be shared. If you have misplaced your NSGEU membership card, contact us and we'll send you a replacement.

What happens if I don't want to send in my membership application form and get a union card?

When you are hired into a position which is a unionized position and the union has received a signed payroll authorization card for deduction of dues, you are eligible to become a member of the union. Once your dues have been accepted, automatically, you enjoy all the bargaining gains achieved up until the time you were hired and any negotiated gains made in the future as long as you are a member. You have the right to be represented by your union should you encounter any problems with your employer, and you have the right to vote on whether to go on strike or not (if your workplace is under the Trade Union Act). Being part of unionized workplace means you

benefit from these basic things if you are a member in good standing or not. However, without signing a union application form and receiving a union card, our constitution states that you are not a member in good standing and cannot participate fully in union activities. The constitution was created by the membership and is maintained and upheld by the membership with a variety of objectives, including:



"1.3.5. To direct the structure of the Union towards providing participation of the membership so as to ensure that the Union always acts in the best interests of the membership." ■

Unions make a difference in our lives.

Unions fought for many of the benefits workers enjoy today: Sick leave, maternity & paternity leave, vacation, minimum wage, paid breaks, overtime, workplace safety standards and regulations, collective bargaining rights, and much more.

Do you know of a group of non-unionized workers who might be interested in joining the NSGEU? Please contact:

Lori Smith, Organizing Officer

902-456-6531 or 1877-556-7438 or lsmith@nsgeu.ca



NOVA SCOTIA GOVERNMENT AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES UNION 4
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

	2022 Budget \$	2022 Actual \$	2021 Actual \$
	Unaudited		
REVENUES			
Member dues	18,448,240	18,920,705	18,285,839
Other income (loss) (Note 10)	300,000	(1,245,634)	999,667
	<u>18,748,240</u>	<u>17,675,071</u>	<u>19,285,506</u>
EXPENSES			
Wages and benefits	<u>8,268,606</u>	<u>6,609,829</u>	<u>7,186,280</u>
Staff travel	<u>380,000</u>	<u>396,661</u>	<u>342,960</u>
Negotiations and servicing			
Arbitrations and grievances	1,912,500	2,003,189	1,811,221
Negotiations	395,000	402,888	408,629
Classification appeals and arbitrations	5,000	2,143	15,215
Organizing	61,500	85,667	145,536
Education	675,300	612,978	172,570
Communications and research	276,350	257,571	57,796
Health, safety and environment	7,500	3,023	-
Convention	645,000	639,050	4,430
Defense fund	572,618	608,534	17,199
	<u>4,550,768</u>	<u>4,615,043</u>	<u>2,632,596</u>
Administrative and financial			
Rebates to locals	360,000	273,857	218,592
Meetings, provincial committees and councils	747,238	583,334	438,561
General and office	1,376,000	1,277,149	1,251,680
Affiliations	1,330,915	1,261,002	1,102,660
Building	933,860	898,514	1,060,781
Amortization	586,000	575,967	518,593
	<u>5,334,013</u>	<u>4,869,823</u>	<u>4,590,867</u>
Officer off the job			
Wages, benefits and housing	80,578	82,053	-
Travel	15,000	15,900	-
	<u>95,578</u>	<u>97,953</u>	<u>-</u>
Presidential			
Wages, benefits and housing	195,775	206,015	178,462
Travel	15,000	15,597	3,415
	<u>210,775</u>	<u>221,612</u>	<u>181,877</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>18,839,740</u>	<u>16,810,921</u>	<u>14,934,580</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	<u>(91,500)</u>	<u>864,150</u>	<u>4,350,926</u>

NOVA SCOTIA GOVERNMENT AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES UNION 6
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2022

	2022 \$	2021 \$
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	3,094,241	3,132,518
Accounts receivable	1,099,484	1,053,312
Prepays	446,664	402,198
	<u>4,640,389</u>	<u>4,588,028</u>
INVESTMENTS (Note 3)	<u>12,716,072</u>	<u>13,966,414</u>
CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 4)	<u>13,760,204</u>	<u>13,456,809</u>
	<u>31,116,665</u>	<u>32,011,251</u>
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	1,109,918	1,075,088
Current portion of long-term debt	406,923	364,292
	<u>1,516,841</u>	<u>1,439,380</u>
LONG-TERM DEBT (Note 6)	<u>5,783,688</u>	<u>6,883,928</u>
LONG-SERVICE OBLIGATION (Note 7)	<u>2,039,085</u>	<u>1,996,282</u>
POST-RETIREMENT BENEFITS OBLIGATION (Note 8)	<u>2,369,240</u>	<u>3,320,229</u>
	<u>11,708,854</u>	<u>13,639,819</u>
MEMBERS' EQUITY		
INVESTED IN CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 9)	<u>7,569,593</u>	<u>6,208,589</u>
UNRESTRICTED	<u>11,838,218</u>	<u>12,162,843</u>
	<u>19,407,811</u>	<u>18,371,432</u>
	<u>31,116,665</u>	<u>32,011,251</u>
COMMITMENTS (Note 11)		
SIGNIFICANT EVENT (Note 14)		

Approved by the Board

 President

 Secretary-Treasurer

 bakertilly

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Saturday, September 30th, 2023

More details will be posted to nsgeu.ca



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