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## **Collective Bargaining 2010-01**

January 18, 2010

On January 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, the Contract Committee met for the first time since the formation of the group was determined by a mandate established at the Halifax convention in 2008. Elected representatives from each discipline of FSS/IFSS were very keen to settle into their positions and move forward in the bargaining process. Before digging into the many bargaining demands submitted by our membership, the committee held an education session that thoroughly explained the history of bargaining in our Local, including how and why bargaining strategies and protocols are determined.

No stone was left unturned during these discussions and it quickly became apparent that once again, the members have made excellent choices in their representatives for this committee.

The next topic to tackle, as a new group, was the strategy for 2010 Bargaining as it relates to Classification. The Local planned, intended and communicated that the Classification study was to be completed by May 2009, well prior to the next round of contract talks. This was put into jeopardy when the Company advised the Local of overstaffing in the FSS Bargaining Unit and the introduction of the large cuts to FSS stations and personnel in the recent (now "suspended") Level of Service Review. As membership protection and preservation now became priorities, Classification unfortunately was one of the bigger initiatives that lost some priority.

The Classification process never truly stopped but it did slow down a little. As the focus and priority shifts from avoiding layoffs and surplus members, we once again turn and redouble our efforts with Classification. Progress made at the last Working Group meeting would indicate that Classification will not be completed by April 30. While the sore-thumbing exercise with the JIQs is almost complete, weighing job factors, the work of Watson Wyatt to establish the structure and the appeal process still has to be conducted. The compensation work also has to be factored into the timeline. This is all tentatively scheduled for late Summer, early Fall of 2010. A more accurate time-line will be established at the next Classification meeting, scheduled for January 19-20.

The Contract Committee unanimously agreed these issues have affected and will change our approach to the original bargaining/classification timeline. There are several factors to consider. First, the Local does not control the classification process. We are one of three parties involved in this sensitive and important endeavour and cannot speed up or slow down the process. Nor would we want to, given the importance of this issue and the Local wants to ensure it is done correctly.

Secondly, as the Nav Canada salary wage for 2010 has been established, that is accepted by three other Nav Canada unions, we already know what the wage increase is going to be. The largest group of unionized employees at Nav Canada, of which FSS is not, will establish the 2011 wage increase. The retroactivity language in the collective agreement indicates that we will get the increases in 2011, regardless of when Classification is complete. Therefore, the completion of classification will have no bearing on what general salary increases are determined for that year.

Thirdly, this, in all probability, will be a short contract, no more than two years. Because the amount of the increase for 2010 has been established, and because the largest bargaining unit will set the largest increase possible for 2011, and because the increase will either be applied before classification is complete or after classification is complete, FSS will still get the increase. Therefore, it makes little difference if contract negotiations are complete even if Classification is not.

The end decision determined via consensus is to continue with collective bargaining although Classification is not complete. Each member of the Contract Committee is intimately aware of the expectations of the membership and their reaction to this. We have been waiting a very long time for Classification and expended a tremendous amount of thought and energy on examining all possible scenarios.

Here is the list of the twelve Contract Committee members:

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Every member of the committee is available for consultation and discussion on this or any issues relating to collective bargaining. As all members understand, confidential and sensitive bargaining information will not be published. Every member of the committee however is available for discussion on any and all bargaining topics. We strongly suggest getting in touch with your respective representatives and/or regional VPs for further clarification on our strategy for this round and how we came to this very important conclusion. One of the key goals of the committee is to ensure there are open lines of two-way communication and transparency between the membership and the Bargaining Committee during the bargaining process.

The Bargaining Committee and subsequently the Contract Committee works from your mandate established based on the demands from the members.

The bargaining demands were carefully reviewed. The committee was very impressed with both the amount and diversity of the members' demands. The Internet-based submission methodology works very well, as it has in the past. The only minor problems were when insufficient or no reasoning was provided to explain the intent behind the submission. Each and every demand was discussed thoroughly.

Shortly, the Contract Committee will develop the list of Bargaining Demands and subsequent to that, a list of priorities. Language will then be determined to support the proposed submissions.

Bargaining is tentatively scheduled to begin on February 22, 2010. The Contract Committee will attend this first session with the Employer.

The best and key way to ensure we as a group protect our interests is for concerned members to contact the representative of your choosing directly and get your information without filtering. This was determined as the most efficient way of getting the correct information by the 2008 Convention delegates.

The Contract Committee, ATS Local 2245 CAW

