

Yukon Employees' Union
201-2285 2nd Avenue
Whitehorse Yukon
Y1A 1C9

Yukon Employees' Union

May 2023

NEWS



YG Bargaining Bulletin - Strike Vote Ready

When will I get more detailed information?

The next stage in the Conciliation process requires that both sides submit written briefs to the Board Chair. We will provide members with more detailed information about the employer position after the May 12 submission of briefs.

At the membership strike vote meetings, we will discuss all outstanding issues in greater detail. Members will be provided with an information kit prior to conducting the vote. Meeting dates and locations are listed in this newsletter.

What is the Union's Wage Proposal?

Our last proposal for general economic increases remains 4.5%, 3%, 3%. Our position has not changed since we presented this just before Easter in April of 2022.

We have heard people say "YG *must* have agreed to an increase to meet inflation". They have not; in fact it's the exact opposite. As everyone knows, inflation has spiked dramatically since we submitted our proposal in April 22. Apparently, we were asking for too much and the Employer team walked away from Conciliation talks.

YG's offer is unacceptable to the bargaining team. The Employer is doubling down by proposing that going forward, severance will also be frozen. This will result in a further 1.9% reduction in your total compensation

We hope our presentation to the Conciliation Board results in some creative recommendations to help us reach agreement with the government. The Board cannot force a settlement, but their recommendations and the recent Treasury Board settlement may help guide the way to an acceptable path to settlement. We will not know the content of the Board's recommendations until at least the end of May.

What's the big deal with Wellness Yukon?

The government plans to offload government services to an arm's-length health authority. This devolution could mean the migration of entire departments and will most likely include the devolution of staff from all health and social services branches, Yukon hospitals,

community health centres and more. This could affect fewer than five hundred people or it could impact greater than a thousand members – we just don't know. Changes could come as soon as a few months from now or could take a year or more to begin. Again, we just don't know.

We are fighting to protect your benefits, pensions, and working conditions. We're fighting for everyone who will be transferred to the health authority, and we are fighting for members' right to choose whether they stay or go. We are also fighting to keep provisions intact for members who will or choose to remain employed by the Yukon government following a devolution.

Creating a new health authority will not be the quick fix that changes the trend of understaffing and overwork. A new health authority is not a magic bullet that will miraculously result in better services or ensure more successful outcomes.

We are working to build in protections for members before the transfer; we don't intend to wait until after the damage is done.

Are we on strike now?

No, we are not on strike. Members of our bargaining team will visit all Yukon communities, health centres and highway camps in late May and early June to answer member questions, review the Board's report, and take a strike vote. Members will decide if we take strike action. Visit dates and meeting times are listed in this newsletter.

Am I an essential services worker?

Read Vice President Justin Lemphers' newsletter article; he explains how those decisions are made and communicated.

For more information, scan the code here or visit <https://bit.ly/ygbarg22>





PSAC Federal Workers Strike: Solidarity WINS!

In an historic show of national solidarity, over 155,000 members of Canada's public service staged a general strike, the largest of its kind in almost three decades. In every province and territory, members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada's federal ranks marched on picket lines, manned phone banks, and stood strong - united in solidarity.

In a period of wildfire inflation, the workers refused to accept the wages offered by the employer; an offer they knew would result in a net loss in today's financial environment.

After almost two years of bargaining, it took strike action to move the employer. The resultant wage offer and ten-

tative agreement was well above the employer's pre-strike final offer, and satisfied the members' demands.

Taking the decision to remove your labour is difficult. Balancing hope for potential gains and worry over managing on strike pay can be stressful. Uncertainty leads to anxiety and it's easy to question the wisdom of union leaders.

Congratulations to the federal public service, members of PSAC; bold actions lead to measurable gains.

Solidarity!

New, Smaller Locals are Building Strength & Power

PSAC/YEU proudly represents workers belonging to twenty three union Locals across the Yukon, each with their own unique identity, purpose, and goals. Here, we celebrate our two newest groups and recognize a small Local rebuilding its strength and power after a period of dormancy.

Connective, Local Y048 is a group that works to support vulnerable members of the community in various settings, such as the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter, SHARP, and Housing First.

The Local held its first AGM in early May, and elected a Local Executive and Bargaining Team. We look forward to working with this team as they negotiate their first Collective Agreement.

Queer Yukon Society Local Y019 certified with YEU/PSAC in August 2022. This local works to support and promote the Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (2SLGBTQIA+) community and allies in the Yukon. They are currently bargaining their first collective agreement, and

YEU/PSAC is supporting their first Local Executive nominations and elections.

Skookum Jim Emergency After-Hours Shelter, Local Y044 provides safe emergency shelter and support for youth aged 17-23. After two years of inactivity, the small Local have set May 28 as the date for their AGM as they prepare for upcoming bargaining. Local Executive and shop stewards will be elected at their AGM Solidarity with this small but impactful group of workers.

The work of every Local is important, and almost entirely performed by volunteers. Each group works to advance the initiatives and priorities of its members, resolving workplace issues and serving the community.

We want to recognize the efforts of those who allow their names to stand in Local elections in service and solidarity with their co-workers. The union is its members, and nowhere is that more evident and vital than at the Local level.

NEWS

From the President's Desk Steve Geick



What a spring we've been having. The swans have been and gone, the snow has melted, and I saw someone cutting their grass this weekend.

Do you know what I haven't seen recently? I haven't seen many fair, equitable, and progressive collective agreements negotiated without workers removing their services - without a strike! No one ever truly wants to strike, so why are we seeing so many workers from so many sectors taking strike action right now?

It seems to me that workers have realized the power they hold when they stand together. They've also woken up to the fact that the only way they're likely to make any real gains is by standing shoulder to shoulder against bad leadership, greed and bureaucracy, whatever form it takes. Whether it's government bureaucracy or private sector, corporate bureaucracy designed to benefit shareholders over workers, governments are setting the tone.

I particularly like this quote, posted online in response to the recently resolved National Strike by PSAC Treasury Board members: "Those elected by the people to represent their interests in Ottawa need to take control of the unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats placing the workers in adversarial conflicts, instead of collaborating partners in the operations of our country."

Local context? The YEU/PSAC Bargaining team has been in negotiations with YG for more than a year and a half and in that time, we have seen many of our members struggle through difficult bargaining, offered deals that were less than great. We have ongoing negotiations with the Yukon Hospital Corporation, Yukon Energy and multiple NGOs, all relying on government funding to manage operations and provide services to our most vulnerable citizens.

The Yukon has long been counted among the top five regions in the country for union membership density. And while it appears that unfortunately no one captures that data anymore, we know from our own membership information and that of our union affiliates that the Yukon is still very much a union stronghold. We also know that the Premier and the minister of finance were continually in communication with the federal Libs regarding federal negotiations, as evidenced by

their comments in the Legislative assembly.

As you might imagine, I'm more than a little pissed that the YG team walked away from the bargaining table with YEU at recent conciliation meetings. What infuriates me is that they appear to be waiting for their counterparts in Ottawa to give them directions.

The National strike is over and the members achieved the deal they were looking for. Was it easy? Hell no. Nothing worth fighting for is ever easy, and sometimes you have to work through some pain if you want the gain. Yukon workers have enough grit to hold out for the deal the bargaining team was mandated to fight for.

I know you have questions about the employer's offer, the distance between the two sides, and what a strike might look like. We'll be visiting communities across the Territory in the first week of June and we invite you to bring your questions to local strike vote meetings. If we are united and hold our position, there'll be nothing holding YG workers back!

I have a message for the Premier, a past member of YEU who says he is strongly pro-union: Ranj, you say you're the future of the Yukon? Show some *%#!@% courage. Act like a Premier and give your public service the made-in-Yukon decision they deserve.

Steve Geick, President
Yukon Employees' Union



If you'd like to send us your questions around a potential strike, scan the code at right or visit
<https://bit.ly/StrikeQuestions>





**Justin Lemphers,
Vice President**

Are you an essential services worker?

Strike talk is everywhere in the news these days, and the question we're hearing most often is "am I an essential services worker?" The answer to this question lies in the **Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Act (PSLRA), Section 42(4)**:

"Within any time and in any manner that the board may prescribe, all employees in a bargaining unit who are agreed by the parties or determined by the board pursuant to this section to be designated employees shall be so informed by the board."

Simply put, the legislation states that the Yukon Public Service Labour Relations Board (YPSLRB) is responsible for informing individual employees that they are designated as 'essential services'.

This means that until we have answers and/or direction from the YPSLRB, the only people considered essential services workers are those who have been informed directly by the YPSLRB.

YEU does not decide who is an essential services worker. The PSLRA says that YG brings forward a list of positions and then YEU can challenge any position. The YPSLRB makes the final decision on which positions are designated as essential services. At the time of this writing, this has not happened.

Yukon government (YG) and Yukon Employees' Union (YEU) have a list of essential services positions that was mutually agreed to in 2021. Given the volume of questions we've received, we are formally asking the YPSLRB to clarify: ***Does the 2021 list of essential services designations stand, or does YG need to produce a new list?***

We are also asking the YPSLRB to copy us when they inform designated essential services workers that they are on the list.

If you have questions or concerns about essential services that aren't answered here, please visit bit.ly/StrikeQuestions to submit your question.

Should you change your approved leave if asked?

We are hearing of employers asking members to cancel, modify or re-submit leave requests that have already been approved. While we are hearing this mostly from YG workplaces, it's not exclusive to large employers.

Our message to members: JUST SAY NO!!

Please don't let the employer bully you into cancelling or changing your approved leave!!

If your leave has been authorized, your employer must meet very specific conditions in your Collective Agreement in order to change or cancel your leave. This is the employer's contractual obligation under the Collective Agreement.

If you succumb and agree to cancel, modify or re-submit your leave, you effectively start the entire leave approval process again from scratch. This means you've wiped out the original request, and the employer can easily deny what they previously approved.

This information is of particular importance to Yukon government members who may be asked to cancel, modify or re-submit approved leave because of a potential strike. **JUST SAY NO!**

Justin Lemphers, Vice President
Yukon Employees' Union



Scan this code to read the
Yukon Public Service
Labour Relations Act
or visit
<https://bit.ly/YPSLRA>

Scan this code for to find
your Collective Agreement
or visit
<https://www.yeu.ca/locals>



Observations from a member of the YG Monetary Bargaining Team

Serving as a voice for the hopes and expectations of 4000+ people comes with challenges and consequences.

I was elected to the main YG Bargaining Team in the fall of 2021, ready to take on the challenge of negotiating a contract with the Government of Yukon. While it was an honour to be selected by my peers to fulfill that important role, my decision to accept brought increased visibility in the workplace and the community.

In a community as small as ours, that level of visibility can serve to make us vulnerable. If busting the ego is in your “to-do” list, I’d recommend serving on a bargaining team. If you approach the experience mindfully, fostering a graceful, somewhat detached disposition, exposure to the process itself is sure to be humbling and transformative.

Bargaining through the pandemic and the concurrent collapse of our society’s already tenuous hold on emotional well-being added another layer of nuance. Members’ expressions of disappointment, fear and disdain for the politics at play were passionate, raw and profoundly impactful emotionally for myself and other team members. Many workers have expressed to us their anxiety, grief and anger, feeling they were not recognized or meaningfully supported in their work even before the pandemic, and many felt the employer had failed them through the worst of the crisis.

While COVID has had many impacts, it’s notably fed fatigue, increased division, and reinforced a degree of separation between people. This is evident in the diminished participation at Local meetings and dwindling interest in stepping up to take on volunteer union roles. It’s little surprise that the result is a feeling of frustration at a bargaining process that feels distant and opaque to many.

For more than 18 months, we have been deliberate and mindful in our efforts to provide compassionate responses to our peers, discreetly manage privileged information, juggle our own anxieties about our effectiveness, and simultaneously fight for members. The complexities of this role have required us to tap into an inner resilience that has sometimes felt in short supply.

Serving as a member of the union’s Bargaining Team in this tumultuous time has left a strong and lasting impression on my own sense of where I see myself an effective activist. Any doubts I may have had about the urgency of fighting for worker’s rights have been well and truly sublimated. Being involved has refreshed my own commitment to act deliberately, with kindness and compassion, to advance the principles of the labour movement in solidarity.

If you have the opportunity to serve as a member of your union’s Bargaining Team, I encourage you to face the challenge and commit wholly to the role.

My front-row seat to the disinterested, invalidating, and sometimes repugnantly disaffected tactics of our employer during these ongoing negotiations has served to galvanize my commitment both to the labour movement and to my union peers.

In Solidarity,
Jon Deline, Local Y017
(Jon is currently in a term role at YEU)



Y025 YUKON HOSPITAL WORKERS Prepare for Open Bargaining

As our bargaining team prepares to fight for a strong contract that supports a healthy hospital, we are organizing to support our team for a win!

We know when workers come together, we can do great things! Your participation and support are key to a healthy Yukon. In the upcoming weeks, we will contact members to recruit for our Contract Action Team.

Our 2020 open bargaining plans were interrupted by the pandemic. We have proposed open bargaining for this round, and are awaiting the employer’s response.

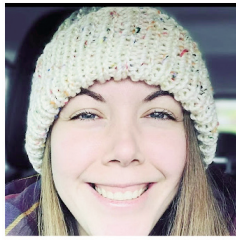
The facility secured for talks June 12th to 16th is small, and not conducive to a larger group. As future sessions are confirmed we will be in contact.

Please watch your inbox for updates. If you haven’t yet subscribed for email updates, please do so at www.yeu.ca/subscribe.

We need healthy hospitals for a healthy Yukon and with your support we can make a difference. We are stronger together! If you are ready to fight for improvements to your working conditions, please contact Barb Fayant, PSAC Regional Representative fayantb@psac-afpc.com

In Solidarity,
your Bargaining Team
YEU/PSAC Local Y025





Thanks to Chelsea Pardy and her whiz team for our colourful and cozy new YEU branded toques.

Hand made
BY YEU members,
FOR YEU members!



Where can you get one?
Pick one up at a YEU training event, or your Local's AGM or Special General Meeting.



Chelsea Pardy is the busy and talented owner of **Bigs Knitted and Crocheted** accessories. She's been an active member of YEU for some time, and was a successful YEU Bursary applicant in 2020. Her compelling bursary addressed the important role of unions in fighting for greater access to paid leave during the pandemic.

As a front-line healthcare worker, Chelsea has first-hand experience working to keep our community safe. Now, she's worked with YEU to keep our union community WARM, as well.

For this project, Chelsea had help from two other small businesses: "Jess and Nana's Knits" (Lisa Nahirniak and Jessica Heliana), and "Hooked on Ewe" (Andrea Logan). We are all YEU members with side hustles! I am very thankful for these individuals "

Our thanks to all involved! Those busy hands have created over 200 colourful and cozy toques, destined for our members. Make sure you attend a union meeting or training session soon to grab yours!

YG Community Meetings & Strike Votes

Final meeting details will be shared by email, on social media and on our website, but this is the rough schedule. These are in-person meetings only and votes can be cast only by members-in-good-standing who attend a meeting. There is no opportunity to vote remotely or by proxy.

Tuesday May 30

Whitehorse: Gold Rush Inn, 3 meetings (TBD)

Monday June 5

Whitehorse: 3 meetings (times TBD)

Wednesday May 31

Carmacks: Rec Centre (time TBD)
Faro: Sportsman's Lounge (time TBD)

Thursday June 1

Ross River: Hope Centre (time TBD)
Tuchitua Camp: (time TBD)
Watson Lake: Community Centre (time TBD)

Friday June 2

Dawson City: Downtown Hotel (time TBD)
Swift River Camp: AM Coffee Break
Teslin: Rec Centre (time TBD)
Haines Junction: Community Centre (time TBD)

Saturday June 3

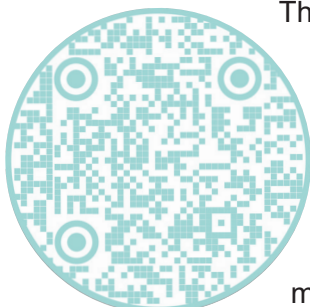
Beaver Creek (time and location TBD)
Destruction Bay (time and location TBD)
Blanchard Camp: AM coffee
Carcross: Fire Hall (time TBD)
Fraser Camp: (time TBD)

Thursday June 1

Old Crow Community Centre (time TBD)

New Member Discount!

Minutes from Vancouver International Airport but far from typical, the Versante Hotel dazzles with vibrant colors, iconic furnishings, and abundant natural light.



The Versante features 100 luxurious guestrooms and suites in five bold designs, each evoking a distinct personality. Most rooms feature floor-to-ceiling windows and spacious spa bathrooms with freestanding soaker tubs and exterior view windows. Complimentary airport transfers by luxury car.

YEU has negotiated an excellent, members-only rate for Yukoners at this extraordinary property. Scan the code at left for more info or visit <https://www.yeu.ca/members>

Versante HOTEL





This NURSE is a MOTHER!

March 2 2023, my bestie and I, with some other LPN mommas got to sit in the gallery of the Legislative Assembly with our bright blue shirts & our babies. If you aren't a nurse in the Yukon government, you're probably not aware of this issue.

At the beginning of this year, Licensed Practical Nurses in YG were awarded a retention bonus (a pretty big chunk of money) as an incentive to keep nurses working for the government. However, nurses on Mat leave this past year have received nothing.

These moms beside me - the ones that worked 12 hour shifts (night shifts included), often short staffed, working OT hours to help out with staffing issues, testing people for Covid WHILE pregnant (when your body is literally working its hardest and you are the most tired making a little human) - do not get this bonus. These moms are at home taking care of their babies full time, now with

LESS income coming in but still planning to return to their jobs, nursing in the community.

Though not all of us could make it to the Legislative Assembly, I hope our presence made some people realize that we are nurses AND mothers too, and we deserve to be recognized. Hopefully we can see some change around here.

Taylor Burgess

NB Nova Scotia implemented a retention bonus scheme this spring, however initial reports indicated that nurses on maternity and parental leave would be ineligible to receive the bonus. The government of NS has since reversed their position, stating the nurses on maternity leave are eligible for the bonus. Yukon nurses deemed ineligible are pursuing a complaint with the Yukon Human Rights Commission. The union fully supports their position and complaint.

YEU Community Laundry Night

Do your Laundry for FREE!
Family Hotel Laundromat, 6pm-9pm
Tuesday April 11, Tuesday May 9, and
Tuesday June 13



Getting to the bottom of the laundry hamper is EXPENSIVE!
Yukon Employees' Union is happy to offer an evening of FREE LAUNDRY at the Family Hotel Laundromat.

You bring your laundry hamper; we'll provide laundry tokens - even laundry soap and dryer sheets if you need them. Enjoy a snack and let the kids enjoy a few quiet activities while you take care of the washing.

Everyone is welcome.



Sponsored by Yukon Employees' Union.
Refreshments provided by
Whitehorse United Church.



YEU Component Leadership



Steve Geick, President



**Justin Lemphers,
Vice President**



**Tony Thomas, Vice
President, Communities**



As an activist, supporting the rights of others is important to you and that doesn't stop when you get to work.

Your advocacy has a place on the job, just as it does out in the world. Your passion for justice can impact your workplace.



Shop Stewards stand up for workers' rights.

You've never shied away from speaking truth to power.

Shop Stewards help restore the balance of power, and union solidarity gives workers a voice.

Learn how to become a worker's rights advocate in your workplace.

Become a Shop Steward.

Visit yeu.ca/stewards or email contact@yeu.ca



YEU STAFF CONTACTS

Jon Deline, Shop Steward Advisor; jdeline@yeu.ca

Roseanne Elias, Intake Advisor/Membership Services; relias@yeu.ca

Adam Fraser, Labour Relations Advisor; afraser@yeu.ca

Beckie Huston, Labour Relations Advisor; bhuston@yeu.ca

Leslie James, Labour Relations Advisor; ljames@yeu.ca

Peter Mackeigan, Executive Director; pmackeigan@yeu.ca

Doris Michael, Communications Officer; dmichael@yeu.ca

Tammy Olsen, Director of Finance and Administration; tolsen@yeu.ca

Lynne Pajot, Education Officer; lpajot@yeu.ca

Delanie Payne, Membership Services Officer; dpayne@yeu.ca

Haley Philipsen, Executive Assistant; hphilipsen@yeu.ca

Keith Smyth, Senior Labour Relations Advisor; ksmyth@yeu.ca

Deborah Turner-Davis, Director of Communications; dturner-davis@yeu.ca

Richard Wagner, Labour Relations Advisor; rwagner@yeu.ca

Yukon Employees' Union, 2285 2nd Ave. Whitehorse YT Y1A 1C9

PH: 867-667-2331 Fax: 867-667-6521 1-888-YEU-2331

contact@yeu.ca www.yeu.ca

Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 5:00 pm