



Facilities talks to resume later this week now that public service unions back at table

Negotiations set to restart on October 2 between FBA and HEABC

With collective bargaining talks restarting between striking public service unions and the government today, the Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA) announced its intention to resume negotiations with the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) on Thursday, October 2, for the next Facilities agreement covering over 67,500 members.

“When we suspended talks in early September in support of the BC General Employees’ Union (BCGEU) and the Professional Employees’ Union (PEA) job actions, we were making good progress with health employers,” says Lynn Bueckert, FBA lead negotiator and HEU secretary-business manager. “Now that we are heading back to the table this Thursday, with the August 28 Framework in place, I expect we will accelerate our work to resolve all remaining monetary and non-monetary provisions.”

The Framework, which the FBA secured with the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC) and provincial government in late August, outlines primary elements of a tentative agreement, including general wage increases and other compensation improvements. In addition, the Framework further commits health employers and government to continue restoring wages cut in 2004 by the BC Liberals, as well as improving compensation and benefits for health care workers in long-term care and assisted living.

“Compared to the last round of bargaining for a collective agreement at B.C.’s largest public sector table, these Facilities negotiations are going into overtime,” says Bueckert. “Facilities bargaining began over 18 months ago when HEU locals first submitted 800-plus collective agreement proposals that were then debated by more than 230 delegates at last November’s Facilities bargaining conference.”

“At that same conference, ten HEU members were elected to the FBA bargaining committee to carry out negotiations with health employers, which kicked off last February,” says Bueckert. “And between then and now, your committee – which includes HEU’s officers and staff – has worked tirelessly to get negotiations to where they are today and now it’s time to finish the job.”

Once a tentative agreement is reached, a comprehensive report on the details of the tentative agreement will be presented to all Facilities members to review in detail before a ratification vote is held. The ratification process includes local meetings in the weeks following a tentative agreement.

Bargaining is also once again underway at other public sector tables. From Health Science Professionals to Community Social Services, from the BC K-12 sector to Community Health, several union bargaining associations have resumed or are resuming negotiations with their respective provincial employers.