



Report

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S ISSUES VIDEOCONFERENCE

October 19–20, 2020

The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) is a family of 11 Component and 3 affiliate unions. Taken together, we are one of the largest unions in Canada. Most of our 390,000 members work to deliver public services of every kind to the citizens of their home provinces. We also have a large and growing number of members who work for private businesses.

Larry Brown, President

Bert Blundon, Secretary-Treasurer

**Advisory Committee on Women's Issues (ACWI)
Videoconference
October 19 – 20, 2020**



PARTICIPANTS

NAPE/NUPGE	Arlene Sedlickas
PEI UPSE/NUPGE	Dina DesRoches
NBU/NUPGE	Lisa Watters
NSGEU/NUPGE	Sandra Mullen
OPSEU/NUPGE	Susanne Fairweather
MGEU/NUPGE	Stephanie Swain
SGEU/NUPGE	Lynne Guicke
HSAA/NUPGE	Faika Satterthwaite
HSABC/NUPGE	Mandi Ayers
BCGEU/NUPGE	Joanna Lord
NUPGE	Larry Brown, President Brenda Hildahl, National Coordinator, Research Nadia Ibrahim, National Representative Sandra Megeney, Administrative Representative
REGRETS	NBU/NUPGE Sylvia Melanson

Introductions and Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Brenda Hildahl. She welcomed participants and introductions were made.

She recognized that, while participants of this videoconference are in different locations, she was currently on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg people, which is now home to many First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Adoption of Agenda

The committee was asked to review the agenda. Faika Satterthwaite moved and Joanna Lord seconded that the agenda be adopted—**Carried**.

Adoption of the Report of the June 3, 2020, Videoconference

The committee was asked to review the June 3, 2020, report. There were no errors or omissions. Faika Satterthwaite moved and Lynne Guicke seconded that the report be adopted—**Carried**.

National Report

Larry Brown, President, provided the national report. He began with noting that the spike in the number of cases of COVID-19 in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick indicate that the second wave has begun. This is alarming, as workers are reporting being exhausted and strained from the first wave. Staff shortages are increasing as well. An increasing number of workers in the long-term care sector are quitting their jobs due to exhaustion, stress, and mental health issues.

In the spring, NUPGE campaigned to move long-term care under the *Canada Health Act* to ensure that there are national standards, public accountability, and secure funding. In the fall Throne Speech, the federal government promised to work with provinces and territories to set new, national standards for long-term care. What the standards will be is unclear. The National Union will continue to apply pressure on the federal government to move long-term care under the *Canada Health Act* and to ensure that long-term facilities have adequate staff.

In response to the most recent strong reactions to racism, the National Union has created a Special Committee on Anti-racism. The committee has compiled a list of recommendations for future work by the National Union that were adopted at the October, 2020, National Executive Board.

President Brown then addressed the issue of child care. The National Union has been working for over 3 decades for the creation of a national child care program. He noted that since the beginning of the epidemic, businesses, employers, and front-line workers, and even governments, have been saying that a national child care program has to be in place to ensure an economic recovery and for workers to continue to work, or to return to work. The federal Throne Speech promised to implement a

Canada-wide early learning and child care system. The National Union has created a Special Committee on Child Care. Letters have been sent to the federal government and provincial ministers stressing the need for a national child care program that is affordable, accessible, and provides appropriate wages for workers in this sector. NUPGE has also been working with Child Care Now!, a national child care organization, on their campaign to lobby MPs for the need for a national program.

Brown noted that some provinces are stressing that the federal government must realize a child care program would be under provincial jurisdiction. He noted that it is extremely important that Canadians stress to their provincial governments that they are not speaking for them, and that Canadians want a national program and standards for both child care and long-term care.

Describing it as a pandemic within the pandemic, President Brown then addressed the issue of domestic violence. He noted that the pandemic has increased economic stress, the overuse of alcohol, and people being locked into isolation. These factors and more have resulted in a serious increase in domestic abuse. Canada's response to domestic abuse has been lacking compared to other countries. To highlight this fact, the National Union has released a publication that looks at other countries' responses to the issue. The publication includes a list of recommendations. The National Union will be writing to the Prime Minister, provincial premiers, and ministers, highlighting the report, the recommendations, and the need for Canada to respond immediately with supports for women and children escaping domestic violence.

In some provinces, there are more people dying from overdoses than from COVID-19. The issue of mental health and addictions has been exacerbated by the pandemic. The limited resources available to help people fighting addictions has been further reduced by the restrictions involved in fighting the spread of COVID-19. In response to this issue, and to help fight this crisis, the National Union will be holding a special meeting on the subject in the near future.

A critical issue is the attack on the Canadian health care system by the Kenney government in Alberta. A bill introduced by the government will allow for wide-scale privatization of health care within the province. At their recent convention, the Alberta government passed a resolution to establish a for-profit alternative to public health care. Another bill in the province is a direct attack on unions: bill 32 requires unionized workers to decide if they will support their union on its political spending. It also opens the door to right-to-work legislation—in fact, the party passed a resolution at their recent convention to move forward with right-to-work legislation. *Right-to-work* means that unionized members can decline to pay dues but the union must still represent them. The Manitoba government is also hinting at making some of these moves regarding privatization and attacking how unions operate.

Component Reports

The Component reports are contained in the Appendix of this report. The Component reports were shared electronically with the committee prior to the meeting. Committee members spoke about their respective Component reports. The discussion highlighted many common challenges across provinces. Domestic violence has increased since the onset of COVID-19. Child care continues to be a major issue across the country, with many child care centres operating at half capacity.

As the second wave of the pandemic begins, there are major concerns about long-term care facilities, as there are continued staff shortages, and workers are reporting major fatigue and stress from the first wave.

CLC Harassment and Violence at Work in Canada Survey

The CLC, in partnership with the Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children at Western University, and the University of Toronto, has launched a survey on workers' experiences of harassment and violence at work. This follows the success of the national survey on the impacts of domestic violence on workers and the workplace. This survey is intended to shed light on, and develop mechanisms for, workers exposed to harassment and violence at work.

The survey is directed to unionized and non-unionized workers, 18 years or older, of every gender, whether or not they have experienced or witnessed workplace violence or harassment. It will be open for approximately 6 months.

The National Union will be promoting the survey and encouraging our members and all Canadians to complete the survey. A story will be posted on the NUPGE website, which will include links to social media shareables and template emails.

65th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, March 2021

The 65th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW65) will be held over a 2-week period in March 2021, in New York. At this point, it is not clear whether the session will take place in person, or digitally (or as a combination of these).

The priority theme for UNCSW65 is "Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls." The review theme is "Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development" (agreed conclusions of the 60th session).

The CLC is an accredited organization for this Commission and normally has been allocated 20 representatives. The CLC has extended an invitation to the National Union to be part of its delegation.

The Rohingya Crisis

Razia Sultana (founder of the Rohingya Women Welfare Society) coauthored an article in *iPolitics* in August about how the Rohingya need Canada's support more than ever. 4 points were highlighted in the article, including that Canada filed its own case against Burma at the International Court of Justice.

Just a few days after this article was published, Canada announced that it will, along with the Netherlands, intervene in *The Gambia v Myanmar* case at the International Court of Justice. The Gambia filed a case against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice in November 2019, alleging that the atrocities committed against the Rohingya constitute genocide. The court's initial ruling in January ordered Myanmar to take urgent measures to protect its Rohingya population.

At the June 2019 NUPGE Convention, a resolution was passed regarding the crisis in Rohingya. Part of the resolution called on NUPGE to provide support to the Rohingya Women Welfare Society (RWWS) for the work being done in the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, to help Rohingya girls and women who have been victimized by violence in Myanmar. In response to this resolution, the National Executive Board approved a financial contribution to the RWWS of \$20,000 per year for 3 years. The first of the 3 contributions have gone to RWWS.

In October 2020, Razia provided an update via a [video](#) on the situation in the Rohingya camps. She began by thanking the National Union for its financial support. The funds will be used to help with communication within the communities and to give support to women in the camps, as well as to women's organizations. The Rohingya are being persecuted everyday within and outside of the camps. The camp that Razia is working in, located in Bangladesh, is the largest refugee camp in the world.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, a shortage of food was a major concern. Since the lockdown in the camps, food supplies are even more limited. There has been an increase in domestic violence as well as gender-based violence. There is extreme difficulty in maintaining social distancing. Grassroot organizations such as the RWWS are providing information on COVID-19 safety and on domestic violence.

The pandemic crisis has enabled the Burma government to raise millions in humanitarian aid. This has emboldened the government to continue the genocide against the Rohingya. Razia noted that Canada, with its feminist foreign policy, needs to play a role in ensuring that victims of sexual and gender-based violence receive the justice they deserve. Canada has to find ways to support local organizations that dare to speak to power, as it is these women's movements that are at the forefront of the Burma human rights and democracy movement.

Razia concluded by stating that if we are to fight discrimination and injustice against women, we must start from self, and then from home. If a woman cannot be safe in her own house, how can we expect her to feel safe anywhere.

Razia provided 4 key items that the Canadian government should take action on to assist the Rohingya:

- Address at the International Criminal Court the use of state-sponsored sexual violence as central to genocide.
- Conduct a review of all its trade relationships with Burma. Burma is currently offered preferential trade treatment by Canada.
- Conduct a review of current economic sanctions against individuals to include the head of the Burmese military.
- Provide not only humanitarian relief but financial support for local women's organizations that are at the forefront of Burma's human rights and democracy movement.

Domestic Violence at Work

In September, NUPGE released a report entitled *Domestic Violence and the Workplace: How Non-Canadian Jurisdictions Have Implemented Workplace Protections for Victims of Violence*.

National Representative Nadia Ibrahim provided an overview of the report, which compares different countries' workplace protections for victims of domestic abuse. The report aims to identify existing issues and gaps internationally, as well as best practices that might help to inform advocacy in the Canadian context.

One of the key measures to assist victims in escaping violence is domestic violence leave. The report provides a comprehensive analysis of different arrangements in a variety of countries, with a breakdown by specific characteristics, including whether the leave is paid or unpaid, and the eligibility requirements, such as the length of time the worker has been employed in order to qualify. Also noted in the report is the issue of workers being unaware that protections even exist.

The report confirms what advocates in Canada have said, that domestic violence leave should be paid leave, should be accessible to all workers, and should be dedicated to situations of domestic violence.

The report also looks at some other types of protections:

- access to flexible working arrangements;
- anti-discrimination laws that prohibit employment discrimination against victims of domestic violence;
- workplace gender-equality plans that governments can mandate;
- collective bargaining and how negotiating specific clauses on domestic violence might help to provide some of these different protections, whether or not they are included in laws.

The report concludes with a list of 8 recommendations:

1. Support a National Action Plan to end domestic violence.
2. Legislate job-protected leave for workers experiencing domestic violence. Leave must be paid and dedicated to situations of domestic violence (i.e., not tied to sick leave or other types of leave).
 - a. Consider expanding DV leave according to best practices internationally (e.g., Italy's DV leave program that is based on parental leave principles).
3. Along with leave, implement comprehensive workplace protections for workers experiencing domestic violence, including non-discrimination provisions, flexible work arrangements, and workplace gender-equality plans.
4. Include specific reference to domestic violence within occupational health and safety legislation, as is the case in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador.
5. Support collective agreement language on domestic violence and the workplace.
6. Ensure appropriate funding and resources for shelters and transition houses, as well as for mental health services, legal aid, affordable housing, income supports, child care, and other community-based supports, to stop the cycle of violence.
7. Support prevention:
 - a. Mandate and fund educational programs and resources (in schools, institutions, and workplaces, etc.)
 - b. Fund resources aimed at perpetrators of violence to address root causes (e.g., mental health services) and prevent further harm.
8. Support the ratification of the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), and implement the recommendations.

The National Union is in the process of sending the report to the provincial premiers. The covering letter will include the list of recommendations. Committee members expressed an interest in the National Union creating a template letter for Components to send to the premiers.

The committee discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the issue of domestic violence. In some provinces, women's shelters are at full capacity or in crisis, while in other provinces there has been a decrease in the number of women seeking shelter. This variance also occurs in the use of crisis lines. In a number of provinces, the intensity of gender-based violence has increased.

A discussion was held regarding collective bargaining language pertaining to domestic violence. Some Components have negotiated language into a few collective agreements, or are developing pattern language for use in future bargaining. It was also stressed that it is important that members are aware of existing language and where to find it.

The federal Domestic Violence at Work partnership has launched new tools to assist workplaces in the federal sector. The tools include a risk-screening tool, a policy builder, and an organizational readiness assessment to evaluate how prepared a workplace is to respond to domestic violence and demonstrate support for workers. The website also contains foundational online domestic violence training. The tools are available at <https://www.dvatwork.ca/>.

Child Care

During the pandemic, child care was an issue that emerged immediately amongst members. Further, it is poised to be a continued concern as we enter the second wave of the pandemic and a deepening recession. NUPGE has renewed its efforts to advocate for a national child care strategy. The National Union formed a Special Committee on Child Care, chaired by Stephanie Smith, President of the BCGEU. The committee met for the first time in July. Committee members discussed the child care situations in their provinces. There was a shared sense that there is a lot of political and public recognition of the need for a robust child care system as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following this meeting, President Brown sent a letter to the federal Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development, underlining the great need for a universally accessible, publicly funded, not-for-profit child care system in Canada that fairly compensates its workforce and also expands unionization. Templates based on this letter were developed for use by Components to write to the federal minister, as well as their provincial premiers.

The Special Committee on Child Care met again in October to discuss the need for continued advocacy at the federal level. The committee explored the possibility of creating a petition and developing campaign materials to share on social media. A number of National Union members are participating in a virtual lobby of MPs being held in October that has been organized by Child Care Now!

It was noted that the Newfoundland and Labrador government just approved a \$25-per-day child care program in the province.

Other Business

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee on Women's Issues will be held virtually. Possible dates, for example in late January or early February 2021, will be circulated to the committee. It was requested that the issue of a gendered perspective on the economic recovery (she-covey) be added to the agenda of this meeting.

The Global Unions are planning a Global Day of Action for Care on October 29. The day of action will highlight the urgent need for adequate investment in equitable and quality public health care and care systems.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1 pm.

Follow-Ups

- Circulate information on the CLC Harassment and Violence at Work in Canada Survey.
- Circulate the link to Razia Sultana's video.
- Circulate the document sent by Razia Sultana regarding actions that Canada should take.
- Circulate information regarding the Global Day of Action.
- Create a template letter about domestic violence for Components to send to their respective premiers.
- Circulate the recommendations from the Special Committee on Anti-racism.
- Compile samples of collective bargaining language on domestic violence.
- If a national child care petition is created, NUPGE will circulate the petition to Components.

APPENDIX

Component Reports



NAPE/NUPGE

Sister Arlene Sedlickas reported.

NUPGE Advisory Committee on Women's Issues NAPE Component Report October 19, 2020

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NAPE'S WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Since the last advisory committee meeting, NAPE's Provincial Women's Committee has been very active in a virtual world.

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 Pandemic occurred and shuttered all events. As mentioned in a previous report, NAPE's Women's Committee had organized their annual Women's Conference for May 2020. The provincial conference was to be on Respectful Workplaces/Cultural Diversity. It has since been suspended pending health advisories. The women's committee is now looking at ways to deliver education through a series of virtual town hall events

On September 18 a virtual "Take Back the Night" event took place instead of the usual in person walk. The Women's committee joined other community groups online to acknowledge the importance of this event.

In light of COVID-19, this year the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) hosted a livestreaming Virtual Vigil of the Sisters in Spirit on October 4, at 2pm. The webcast was streamed from their Facebook page. One of the other ways suggested to show support for this event was to light a candle in your home window that evening. As a show of support some of the Women's Committee participated this way.

Especially evident throughout COVID-19 was the need for affordable childcare. On September 30, during the recent NL Budget release, a key leadership race promise from Premier Andrew Furey of \$25-a-day daycare, became a reality. This budget included \$3 million for the program for the first three months of 2021, which would subsidize 8,000 spaces in regulated child-care homes and centres. The overall

cost of the program is \$12 million annually. While it is a good first step, much more is needed for Newfoundland and Labrador's uneven child-care system.

UPDATES FROM NAPE- GENERAL

Staffing Issues Creating Unsafe and Potentially Dangerous Conditions at Long-Term Care Homes

On September 15, 2020 the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public Employees (NAPE) sounded the alarm on staffing issues in the province's Long-Term Care Homes following numerous disturbing reports about unsafe and untenable working conditions from members. Constant staffing issues, inability to access leave, forced overtime, and working short have caused significant stress and strain on our members.

NAPE Board of Directors Approves New Scholarship

A new scholarship was added to the existing 22 scholarships awarded to children of Nape members. This was the inaugural year for the Paul Foley Memorial Scholarship. This \$1000 scholarship was setup and is funded entirely by the Foley family in memory of a dedicated family man and trade unionist.

PEI UPSE/NUPGE

Sister Dina DesRoches reported:

PEI UPSE Report to the NUPGE Advisory Committee on Women's Issues for meeting October 19 and 20, 2020

Women's Committee:

Our women's committee was planning for a women's conference to be held in the fall of 2020, however, with COVID-19 this was postponed. We have not had any in person meetings, however, have communicated by email. We are sharing information about events/news items that pertain to women's issues. We also organized and presented donations to our 6 food banks in Prince Edward Island in the amount of 500 each to be used to end period poverty. This was done in September when families would have had extra expenses for back to school.



The Take Back the Night March was held in Charlottetown on September 18, 2020. Approximately 150 people marched - I am in the picture below .



There were speakers on violence against Indigenous women and girls, drumming and other speakers both before the walk and after we reached our destination. One of the speakers said we were walking:

“Not only to raise awareness, but to really let survivors know that they're supported, that they're heard and that they're believed. And what they've experienced wasn't their fault. It's never their fault," said Rachael Crowder, executive director of the Rape and Sexual Assault Centre and the organizer of the march. “

UPSE:

We have not been having in person educational sessions due to COVID 19. According to our President, we are reviewing our educationals to bring them up to date, and doing some brainstorming on introducing some new courses.

UPSE donated \$5000 to the Food Banks in PEI.

We had an all day UPSE Board of Directors meeting on July 27, 2020 (physically distanced). As our annual convention was canceled due to COVID-19 and we normally have a meeting the morning of the start of convention, we will have to schedule another Board of Directors meeting for November in order to review the auditor's report and financial statements.

UPSE staff and President have worked with the Public Service Commission on many issues that were prompted by COVID- 19. Employees were surveyed earlier this summer and 71% wanted to remain working from home. UPSE had our lawyer review the telework policy as well as some of our members had concerns and we have passed them on to the employer.

UPSE has ordered a limited number of masks and will be distributing them to our membership and it will be an opportunity to have membership cards signed and Introduce ourselves as Local Directors.



Bargaining:

The PEI Union of Public Sector Employees is delighted to welcome Instructors at the Atlantic Tourism and Hospitality Institute Inc. (ATHI) to our membership. Subsequent to applying to the PEI Labour Relations Board, a vote was held, with 86 percent of instructional personnel supporting unionization. Consequently, the Board issued an Order dated May 11, 2020 certifying PEI UPSE to act as the bargaining agent for this new bargaining unit. ATHI is affiliated with Holland College and provides training to students in fields such as tourism, recreation, business, hospitality and culinary arts.

UPSE is currently negotiating or in preparation to begin negotiating a total of eight contracts. They are:

Health PEI
Garden Home
City of Charlottetown
Community Connections
Grain Elevators
Strait Crossing Ltd.
Atlantic Tourism and Hospitality Institute
Holland College Faculty

On October 14, 2020, UPSE and Tremploy signed a new three year collective agreement with a 100% ratification vote in support of the new contract. Karen Jackson, UPSE President, thanked the bargaining team for their dedication and hard work in negotiating a fair wage and benefit package for the membership.

PEI Government:

We continue to have a minority Conservative government with Dennis King as Premier. The House and committees have been at work and with the extra work the pandemic has caused, there seems to have been a more cooperative approach between the parties. The next sitting of the Legislature will be November 12, 2020. There continue to be challenges to space at custody facilities, mental health and addiction wait lists, over 14, 000 people on a Provincial Patient Registry for a family physician and other problems that have been longstanding. As with any crisis, the vulnerable in our communities are more impacted.

As of July 1, 2020, PEI employers have to comply with new workplace harassment regulations. UPSE provided feedback to WCB through the stakeholder consultation process regarding the new Regulations.

The major concern for government is the economy as it is with all governments. Tourism is one of the main occupations and it has been severely impacted by the pandemic's travel restrictions. An area that created work for PEI residents over the past 6 months is road construction and bridge replacement which the federal and provincial governments have funded. There is a very noticeable improvement in the condition of PEI roads.

PEI is doing well in limiting cases of the coronavirus (mainly because we are an Island and can more easily restrict entry) and we are closely following the cases in our neighboring Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

NSGEU/NUPGE

Sister Sandra Mullen reported:



Women's Issues Committee – Component Report
Fall 2020 October 19-20

Greetings on Behalf of the NSGEU

Post our last meeting, our Province opened fully for business and we have a bubble with the Atlantic provinces, so far so good. Our schools and universities are open, lots of post-secondary are doing online learning as well as in person. Our current cases sit at 6.

Our union office opened to staff in mid-June and we are now hosting meetings in house being mindful of social distancing and PH protocols. We hosted our first Board of Directors meeting on Sept 30-Oct 1. Our Conference center can seat 42. I was wonderful to see folks in person. We did host our Leadership Symposium for 140 members on Zoom with a seminar style again. This was very successful and members truly appreciated the information.

Womens Committee

The Courage to Lead- Helping Shape a Better Future.
Sept 17 2020

NSGEU- Womens Issues Committee hosted a Zoom Seminar on September 17, 2020 as NS Municipal Elections were happening Oct 17 2020. Many of our members were running for their respective Councils and we felt it was a perfect opportunity to have a panel discussion with the members and give an opportunity for the women running to have conversation, questions and answers etc on Women's Issues that will be faced by local governments on She-Covery, She-Session post COVID. We had Vicky Smallman make a small presentation on those matters and then prepared questions were sent to the individual panelist to speak on. We had over 300 register for the event, held in a seminar style where only the panelist were visible on the screen. The event was very successful and will likely be a format we use again. (Happy to report that as of the Municipal Elections held on Oct 17, 3 of the 5 panelists were elected. As well as many other members throughout the province.)

Our Women's committee will be meeting in person Nov 20 and we are looking forward to plan more events for 2021.

Child Care issues -

NSGEU does not currently represent any Daycare workers but we do represent ECE that work in Pre-Primary programs that operate in the schools, However, we represent 30000 members, 75 % of which are women and many of them dealing with the issues of lack of access to childcare. I am NSGEU representative on the National Union round table on Child Care. We are presently set to lobby local government MPs on this matter. I will be meeting with the president of the Federation of labour, October 23, 2020

Our Shelters throughout the province are full and at capacity and while there are a few beds available, shelters are full.

NSGEU – produced a detailed report on the matters that were witnessed at the Long-term Care facility that was hardest hit in our province, Northwood Center where there were the majority of deaths due to COVID in our province and government called an inquiry.

Many of our Healthcare sector are returning to the Bargaining table and we are able to do so in person, Government sector moves on to start bargaining in 2021.

At present none of our members have lost jobs due to covid but we are cautious going forward. We have been approached by many to organize and we have been working along at that, we have picked up a few in LTC and group homes.

Our Premier has announced his retirement and the leadership race is underway. We will not miss this premier. (That is an understatement.)

NBU/NUPGE

Sister Sylvia Melanson reported:

New Brunswick Union Women's Committee Report National Advisory Committee on Women's Issues Meeting May 31st, 2020

NBU Women's Committee

Women's Committee / NBU 2020 Biennial Convention

NBU Women's Committee has not met in person or by Zoom since February 2020.

Decision was taken to cancel NBU 2020 Biennial Convention in person meeting due to COVID-19 and group gathering restrictions. Biennial Convention will take place as a virtual Zoom meeting October 30th & 31st. A Zoom test run for delegates to ensure smooth connection & meeting process will be held October 21st. Gift draws will be made throughout the Zoom Biennial Convention making the virtual meeting a more fun and positive experience as well as highlighting NBU's 50th anniversary. 150. per diem will be paid to all delegates who actively participate in the full Zoom meeting as required & this will be monitored by NBU staff.

Negotiations/Bargaining

All contract negotiations were put on hold due to Covid-19 however following the September 14th provincial election contract bargaining has recommenced.

Administrative Assistants and Clerical & Regulatory Component met February 2020 prior to March NB COVID-19 outbreak to review & prioritize member survey responses in preparation for bargaining. Their contract has been expired since March 31st, 2019. Following the provincial election, the bargaining team meet with the employer for 1st round of negotiations on September 29th-October 1st, 2020. Next scheduled bargaining dates are for November 17th-19th.

Loch Lomand Villa Nursing Home financially reached an agreement. Contract expired 4yrs ago and they just recently signed a 6yr contract. Got a better deal than most other contracts within the government but members of that group are still very underpaid.

Other groups still in negotiating are Resource Services, PSPS, APSEA and 3 nursing homes. We continue to follow the process but our Premier has often made comments which anticipate a challenge with monetary items being negotiated.

Grievances/Hearings/Arbitrations

All occurring via Zoom.

Covid-19

All provincial government called back to work approximately mid May. NB closing borders and allowing very restrictive entry to our province was a major help to contain the spread or further outbreaks of the virus. By July the Atlantic bubble was put in place loosening up some of the restrictions. NB had been doing very well until October 7th when outbreak occurred within a Special Care Home within Zone 1 (Moncton and surrounding areas) and further outbreak in northern NB (Campbellton and surrounding areas) in Zone 5; both zones were ordered back to orange phase and reintroducing previously lifted restrictions with the hope to get a hold on the outbreak and further spreading of the virus. Province recently enforced mask to be worn in all public places and continues to stress the importance of abiding with all restriction directives, social distancing, hand washing, mask wearing, etc.

Pay Equity

Participated on Pay Equity Coalition Annual Convention in June & meeting in September both via. Coalition discussed changes in business & fund-raising campaign due to COVID-19.

Other

Hospital workers, frontline and essential staff have been working under difficult and stressful conditions, equipment issues, burnout. Businesses continue to struggle with shutdowns, restrictions, many may not financially survive the pandemic.

MGEU/NUPGE

Sister Stephanie Swain reported:

NUPGE Advisory Committee on Women's Issues
MGEU Component Report
October 19 - 20, 2020

Due to the current pandemic, the MGEU Women's Conference was postponed to November. Unfortunately, at a recent MGEU Board meeting, a decision was made to cancel the conference altogether. The MGEU Women's Committee worked on the idea of a one-day town hall style event for the members who had been selected to attend the conference, and a telephone town hall was proposed to the Board, but the motion did not pass.

The MGEU Women's Committee is feeling a bit knocked down at the moment, and I am definitely interested in learning about the positive work our NUPGE component sisters are doing, in the hopes of finding inspiration for MGEU's committee during this time.

SGEU/NUPGE

Sister Lynne Guicke reported:

NUPGE Advisory Committee on Women's Issues
SGEU Component Report
October 19, 2020

The Women's Committee held a zoom meeting September 30, 2020. The following items were discussed:

Financial report for 2020.

Upcoming AGM's for sectors, most are zoom meetings.

Old Business:

Bread & Roses Awards. A subcommittee will review the submissions. Motion to go forward & celebrate winners virtually. Carried... Share & celebrate the amazing Women & their great work but wait for 2021 convention to present awards.

Women's conference debriefing notes & delegate surveys.

Upcoming events:

2020 Sisters in Spirit Vigils. Muna De Ciman was in attendance representing the Women's Committee. Committee donated 30 battery candles to Regina vigil.

Virtual event in Saskatoon.

Women's Committee budget for 2021

Coordination of calendar of events & commemorative events for Women's Committee.

Motion to set up strategic planning meeting for a 2-day meeting in November at SGEU building. Carried.

Saskatchewan people are anticipating the upcoming provincial election on October 26, 2020.

Many people are saying time for a change in government.

HSAA/NUPGE

Sister Faika Satterthwaite reported:

NUPGE Advisory Committee on Women's Issues

HSAA Component Report, October 19-20, 2020

Greetings to all from HSAA!

The most exciting news from HSAA: We finally started our Women's Committee! History in the making our 1st meeting was held on September 28th, 2020. Here are some highlights was covered for the upcoming committee year:

1. As part of their mandate, committee has decided to focus on three areas
 - i. Childcare/Family care
 - ii. Engagements and leadership
 - iii. Poverty
2. Committee will work to improve acknowledgement and/or involvement in National and International recognition days (e.g. International Women's Day, National Day of Remembrance, Action on Violence Against Women, etc.)
3. Committee will conduct a survey of the membership on women's issues to help gain a greater understanding of which issues are impacting the membership.
4. Committee also brainstormed and prepared items and tasks to accomplish as well as five recommendations for the board's consideration. These will be presented on October 21-23, 2020.

General Updates from HSAA:

1. Last October, HSAA launched a campaign to save Health Care as public.
 - i. Distribution of toques, buttons, pledge cards, window clings and now lawn signs for the membership and the public at large. Our office has been incredibly busy with filling requests.
 - ii. Now, we are exploring and planning to develop a "member to member" campaign to highlight the value of unions.
2. Although we have only one NDP-MP and no Liberals in Alberta, she accepted an invite from "Child Care Now – Let's Get Canada Working again with Childcare" and HSAA President, myself and women's committee member at large participated in a wholesome virtual meeting on October 13th. (Will provide verbal report on this during our meeting next week)
3. HSAA Bargaining Committee received a request from Alberta Health Services (AHS) on October 7th to delay the beginning of bargaining until after March 31st, 2021 which comes with a protection of any HSAA member from layoff until that date. This means that those hundreds of members who were facing imminent job losses will be protected for another 5 months.

4. Lastly, and most sadly, on October 13th the UPC government's Jason Kenny announced that in excess of 11,000 people (highly gendered 1st generation Canadians) will be losing their AHS jobs along with their pension plans which are going from public to private!



NATIONAL UNION OF PUBLIC AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES

- B. C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU)
- Health Sciences Association of British Columbia (HSABC)
- Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA)
- Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union (SGEU)
- Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union (MGEU)
- Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)
- Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers (CUBGW)
- New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees (NBU)
- Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU)
- PEI Union of Public Sector Employees (PEI UPSE)
- Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees (NAPE)

The National Union of Public and General Employees is an affiliate of the Canadian Labour Congress and a member of Public Services International.

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