



October 20, 2009

Councillor Shelly Carroll, Chair
And Members of the Budget Committee
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Dear Councillor Carroll and Members of the Budget Committee:

RE: 2010 Operating Budget – Water / Solid Waste

Executive Committee:
President:
Ann Dembinski

First Vice-President:
Tim Maguire

Vice-President - Chief Steward:
David Kidd

Vice-President Equity:
Ainsworth Hamilton

Recording Secretary:
Nancy Murphy

Membership Secretary:
Linda Rose

Treasurer:
Lily Chang

Assigned CUPE Representatives:
Derek Lue
Helen Manning
Don Styles
Robin McKenna
Andy Roberts

Bargaining Units:
City of Toronto
Full-Time
City of Toronto
Unit B Part-Time
City of Toronto
Recreation Workers
Part-Time
City of Toronto
Homes for the Aged
Part-Time
Bridgepoint Hospital
Service Units
Bridgepoint Hospital
Nurses and Paramedical
Units
Toronto Community
Housing Corporation

On behalf of CUPE Local 79 members working at the City of Toronto, I would like to comment on the Water/Solid Waste Budget introduced on Monday October 19, 2009.

The members of CUPE Local 79 represent a large and diverse group of professional employees who provide a wide range of much needed services across the City. Our members work in child care, public health, shelters, buildings, water and solid waste, finance, parks and recreation to name a few.

A two-day timeframe from the introduction of these budgets to public hearings/deputation date has made an in-depth analysis very challenging. The entire process from introduction to wrap up is a five day period – why the rush? Surely a budget area as important as water/ and solid waste does not deserve a drive-by budget process. Our members, the millions of Toronto residents and businesses are not well served by this process.

We are concerned about the information that is not available in these budgets. We have the chronic, annual budget dependence on ‘gapping’ as a way to save on labour costs. And finally, we are baffled by the lack of any long-term planning and policy making to position the City of Toronto as a leader with a commitment to excellence in public services.

The Operating Budget for Solid Waste Management Services cites ‘a net decrease of 47.7 approved (vacant) positions’. Further, ‘implementation of several efficiencies will reduce the approved complement by 30.5 positions; delay in the implementation of two diversion initiatives will reduce 7 positions; and 13 positions will be transferred to Municipal Licensing and Standards ...’ CUPE Local 79 would like to view the list of these ‘vacant’ positions that are now deemed unnecessary. A full disclosure of these positions would be appropriate. Are these positions CUPE Local 79, management or CUPE Local 416? How are much needed public services protected and improved with the budget entries? I fail to see how reducing positions and delaying programs to cut down on operating costs will have no impact on services.

**SERVING OUR
MEMBERS
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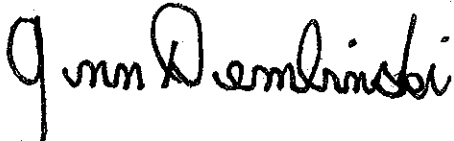
CUPE 79

The 2010 Operating Budget for Toronto Water talks about savings through gapping and cutting training costs. From CUPE 79's perspective, not filling positions or gapping positions continues to be an ineffective strategy for cost savings. It ignores the fact that services provided or needed do not diminish; instead in many areas the needs continue to grow. Unfortunately, the operating budgets do not consider this reality as a problem to the process of balancing a budget. Fewer employees available to provide services might cost less in the short term. However, the resulting stress on employees and related health problems, a diluted service, and delayed response are far more damaging to the City of Toronto. Gapping is not the solution to a balanced budget.

Training being viewed as a 'frill' and expendable as a budgetary cost is totally unacceptable. Where is the long-term planning in this cost cutting measure? Since when is training not vital for occupational health & safety, workers' compensation and emergency preparedness? Surely the City's goal should be a highly trained workforce delivering excellent and timely services to the residents and businesses of Toronto.

CUPE Local 79 would like to have these budget issues addressed.

Yours Truly,



Ann Dembinski
President