

AU 14.6.1



Canadian Union of Public Employees

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Bargaining Units:

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- Nurses & Paramedical Units
- Service Units

City of Toronto
- Full-Time
- Long-Term Care Homes & Services Part-Time
- Recreation Workers Part-Time
- Unit B Part-Time

Toronto Community Housing Corporation

SERVING OUR MEMBERS SINCE 1942

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February 28, 2014

Mary-Margaret McMahon, Chair and Members of the Audit Committee
c/o Clerks Office
10th Floor, West Tower
City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

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**RE: Audit Committee Report AU14.6
Review of Training, Conference and Related Travel Expenses**

Over the last six months, CUPE Local 79 has brought our concerns about the number of unfilled and gapped positions to the Budget Committee and all the Standing Committees. The 2014 City Budget appears to be committed to filling these long outstanding vacancies. Filling these positions has now become a matter of urgency after years of cuts and hiring freezes have left staffing levels of front-line positions stretched to the limit.

The Staff Follow-up Report on the Impact of Delays in Filling Vacant Positions presented to the Government Management Committee (GM28.8) on February 24, 2014, clearly outlined the impact of gapping and vacancies on service levels and staff morale.

The Auditor General's Report coming before the Audit Committee today states that "Since 2011 City Divisions have spent \$12 million less than budgeted in training funds". One of the Auditor's recommendations is to "Ensure City training and conference budgets align with actual City training needs". This Report also confirms that gapping is having an impact on the City's ability to make long-term investments in its workforce talent.

Hiring should be Job #1 for the City. The City also must ensure that staff are provided with the tools they need, including sufficient training.

The Report goes on to say that "From 2011 to 2013 average training and conference costs were \$3.7 million less than budgeted for each of the three years. As a result, for the past three years the City has over-budgeted a total of approximately \$11 million". This seems contrary to City policies and the direction of City Council.

Divisional training needs have fallen victim to cuts, freezes and zero percent budget targets. Training budgets are underspent because Divisions have had

restrictive budget targets imposed on them and, in part, they are finding money by underspending on training programs and by understaffing.

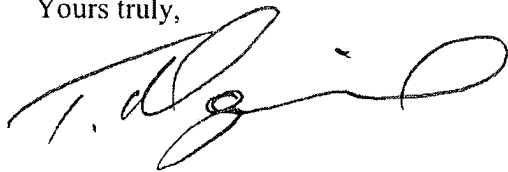
Many CUPE Local 79 members have expressed frustration about training opportunities in the City's workforce. With Divisions having so many vacant positions, employees cannot leave their posts to attend training sessions. The Divisions are too short staffed to allow for the training time that's needed.

During the Service Level Reviews last year, many Divisions cited the reason for the vast number of vacancies was the lack of employees with the skills required to do the job. Encouraging training and upgrading would go a long way to reducing the number of job vacancies the City is looking to fill.

The newly developed Talent Blueprint, Building a Great Toronto Public Service (2014 – 2018), sets out training and building workforce capacity as a priority. All the right supports, resources and policy directions must be in place for the Talent Blueprint to achieve its goals.

Rather than reduce budgets in order to align with underspending on training, as recommended, Divisions should recognize that investing in employee training is part of recruitment. Providing solid training opportunities will help fill vacancies and greatly improve employee retention.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Maguire', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Tim Maguire
President

Cc: Joseph Pennachetti, City Manager