



**Canadian Union of
Public Employees**

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Vice-President Equity:
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Bargaining Units:

Bridgepoint Hospital
- 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*

DELIVERED BY E-MAIL AND REGULAR MAIL

May 27, 2014

Deputy Mayor Norm Kelly, Chair
And Members of the Executive Committee
Clerk's Office
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Deputy Mayor Kelly and Members of the Executive Committee:

RE: EX42.6 – Vacancies and Staff Actions (Ward All)

CUPE Local 79 has been keeping a watchful eye on the number of staff vacancies that have been filled so far in 2014. Although there has been some progress, the City is not doing enough to honour their budget commitment to fill vacancies and reduce the number of gapped positions.

A year ago there were over 2,500 vacant positions and the Service Level Reviews in September 2013 clearly showed the impact this had in every Division. City Council has taken a keen interest in monitoring the number of vacancies and the 2014 Operating Budget debate revealed how Divisions and programs have struggled to put their complement of staff in place while facing restrictive flat-lined budgets.

As of March 31, 2014 the vacancy rate stands at 3.6%. It remains to be seen if the city will reach its "projected year-end vacancy rate, after gapping, of 0.3%".

The City is still trying to catch up on hiring after years of cuts, hiring slowdowns and freezes. The budget cuts and high number of unfilled positions in Human Resources added to the problem. Also, by failing to adopt the 2014 budget recommendation to proceed with an Employee Engagement Survey, Human Resources lost a valuable tool to assist in recruitment and retention.

There are other factors that also play a significant role in filling vacancies. Although understaffed Divisions are 'aggressively recruiting' to fill long-time vacant positions, they are also looking to contract out work because they no longer have the in-house expertise – a very contradictory and short-sighted response to unfilled positions.

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Another part of the problem here is with training opportunities. Earlier this year, at the Audit Committee, it became clear that City Divisions were not using (underspending) their training budgets. The heavy-handed Budget mandate to keep Division budgets at 0% increase over last year has pressured Divisions to find ways to come in on target with their annual budgets. Training has become a casualty of this squeeze. Adding to this is the reality that because so many front-line jobs are vacant, staff cannot afford time away from their duties to take advantage of training opportunities. Short-staffing and heavy workloads stand in the way of upgrading skills and learning up-to-date technologies.

Until the full complement of staff needed by Divisions and programs is in place, there will continue to be issues of excessive workloads and stress in the City's workforce.

Since 2013, the City has made hiring a priority but there are huge challenges ahead with "two projected all-employee retirement waves with the first commencing in 2015 and the second, higher wave commencing in 2018. The projected cumulative effect of these retirements is that there will be 6,622 vacancies from retirement exits alone in the next five to seven years" (*EX42.6, page 15*).

The Report before the Executive Committee today notes that as at March 31, 2014 there are 3,060.8 vacant positions. The City will need all of its human resource expertise and workforce planning to ensure that these positions are filled by the end of the year and to ensure human resources are in place to maintain a highly skilled public service.

We will continue to monitor the hiring of much-needed front-line staff. CUPE Local 79 believes in a robust, excellent public service for the residents of Toronto.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Maguire", written in a cursive style.

Tim Maguire
President