

CUPE COMMUNIQUE

Canadian Union of Public Employees **CUPE.ca**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Release: City of Melville workers vote 93% in favour of job action

(Melville) With an over 90 percent turnout, workers at the City of Melville have voted overwhelmingly in favour of job action, up to and including a full withdrawal of services. The main sticking point at the bargaining table is a wage increase that will address concerning levels of turnover.

Currently, the City of Melville employs 32 permanent staff who are members of the union. Since 2021, the city has seen 32 full-time permanent staff resign, leaving for other employment. Eighteen of those resignations happened in 2023 alone, and nine in 2024.

“This level of turnover is unsustainable for an employer that provides such a vast and varied range of services,” said Dylan Breland, CUPE staff representative and Melville resident. “Other employers in this region are offering anywhere from two to five dollars more per hour for equal or lesser qualifications, abilities, and skills.”

During the last collective agreement period, wage increases for City of Melville employees were far outstripped by inflation costs over the same period - a 5% wage increase over 4 years compared to a 13.8% in increased costs.

The most recent collective agreement between the City of Melville and CUPE 456 expired on December 31, 2023 and bargaining between the employer and the union has been ongoing since March 2024. The city declared impasse on December 23, 2024. The first mediation session ended quickly when the employer walked backwards from where the parties had been prior to mediation.

“We should be coming together and doing our best to get a deal that works for everyone, but the city opened mediation by offering a worse deal,” said Kevin Schick, president of CUPE 456. “We are hopeful that a deal can be reached at the bargaining table but our members have sent a strong message: We deserve a fair deal, and we are willing to stand together to fight for one.”

The local has an additional bargaining date set with the mediator and the city on February 26. The local is not currently in a legal strike position.

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