

Recording Secretary Report 2020

Dear Members of CUPE 2081:

It is a very unusual time to be writing report to the membership and I wish we were all together in a meeting where we would have the opportunity to present these reports in person. It seems like it has been way too long since we have had the opportunity to meet and enjoy each other's comradery. Additionally, the difficult situations now being faced by some members as a result of COVID-19 is distressing and heartbreaking. It is difficult to be a union officer at a time when layoffs are occurring and worse yet seeing people you know, and have worked with, get those unwanted notices.

Fortunately, all of our members benefit from having bargaining unit wide seniority and have other choices and rights provided by the collective agreement. Workforce reductions are a very difficult experience for members, but the CA provides for a fair process and some limited security in these dark and unpleasant times. It is during periods like this, that the importance and strength which comes from being a member of a union and having a collective agreement is more self-evident than ever.

As your Recording Secretary, my primary responsibility is to take minutes of the meetings so that there is an impartial record of decisions made by both the executive and the membership. Well that may not seem to be the most interesting job on a union executive, the recording secretary is actually one of the four positions that a local is required to have by the CUPE Constitution and in addition to taking minutes, the Recording Secretary occasionally have to certify that decisions have been made and countersign documents with the President. The position is even responsible for dealing with complaints under the CUPE disciplinary procedures and while I am fortunate to have never had to deal with disciplinary issues it is important to have those sorts of processes in labour unions.

In addition to serving as the Recording Secretary I have been pleased to have had the opportunity to assist a few members as a steward over the last year and believe that this basic and important element of member-based service is a keystone for any union. I would encourage more members to become stewards and help to provide support to their co-workers as it is helpful to the members and can be a great and enriching opportunity to serve. I have also been a delegate to the Vancouver Island District Council this year and enjoy attending the meetings of that council and learning from other locals and witnessing the benefits of that collective CUPE strength. As a VIDC delegate this has also been an unusual year! Heading to the February meeting in Nanaimo I was blocked just North of Duncan as a result of a major flood. While a few weeks ago, and due to Covid-19, I had the opportunity to attend and make a report at the first ever VIDC ZOOM Membership Meeting/elections. Having been in far too many

video meetings over the last months, I am pleased to report that I found the VIDC meeting to be one of the best organised well conducted 3+ hour meetings I have participated in. The meeting was also attended by several leaders of CUPE BC and it was disheartening to hear about the significant loss of CUPE members due to layoffs across the province.

What Camosun is going through now is unrepresented in modern times and unfortunately may of the factors that are causing stress to our membership are beyond our immediate control, That being said, I know with our collective resolve that we will be stronger and more unified when we emerge from this crisis and that in these difficult times we need to stand up even more for the rights of workers and other vulnerable people.

I respectfully submit my annual report in solidarity;

Michel Turcotte
Recording Secretary