

FEBRUARY
2026

THE MEMBERS' voice



THE NEWSLETTER OF LOCAL 15, VANCOUVER MUNICIPAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY WORKERS



The Vancouver Public Library (VPL) has a great collection of resources, about local and Canadian contributions and legacies of Black Canadians and their communities both past and present. Other upcoming Black History Month events include:



- February 20th – Ebony Roots Concert at the Roundhouse Community Arts & Recreation Centre in Vancouver
- February 22nd – Black Artistry Night – BAN at iDance Mt. Pleasant in Vancouver
- February 26th – String of Legacy - Kora Sounds & Ancestral Rhythms at the York Theatre in Vancouver.

Scan the QR code for more local info!

CUPE BC STATEMENT

International Decade for People of African Descent

In 2013, the United Nations declared 2015 to 2024 the International Decade for People of African Descent with the theme: “People of African descent: recognition, justice and development.” The Decade called on us to acknowledge, celebrate and emphasize the important contributions people of African descent make in our workplaces, union, and society.



It is also a call to the international community to promote sustainable and concrete ways to fight discrimination. This discrimination includes and is not limited to high rates of police violence, racial profiling, mass imprisonment, and structural racial discrimination in education, health, housing, and employment.

The Decade acknowledged that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected. This call for action is needed to ensure full inclusion in society.

We are far from achieving this and a second Decade has been adopted by the UN from January 2025 to December 2034. This next Decade has a theme of consideration, justice, and development. This is an opportunity for us as union and community members to continue supporting people of African descent in their struggles for recognition, justice, and development.

We can do this by reading the recommendations made by the UN, having conversations about how the goals of the Decade are reflected in the lives of our members and organizing spaces where we discuss ways to dismantle anti-Black racism in our union, workplaces, and communities.

FEBRUARY 2026 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The February General Membership meeting will be held via Zoom.

Date: February 25, 2026

Time: 5:30 p.m.

You will be sent an invitation by email if the union office has a personal email address on file for you. Details will also be posted at www.cupe15.org. If you do not receive emails from the union office and would like to attend this meeting, please call us at 604-879-4671 or email us at email@cupel5.org to update your information. The agenda and other related documents will be posted at cupel5.org on or before 12:00 noon on February 25, 2026. There will be a draw at the end of the meeting and three lucky winners will receive a gift card (retailers TBA at the time of the draw). Child and dependant care reimbursement is available as per eligibility requirements in CUPE Local 15 Bylaw Section 31.

Important Note – Virtual General Membership Meeting Invitations

After registering for the Virtual General Membership meeting, please do not share your link with fellow members. If they did not receive the invitation and would like to attend, please ask them to contact the union office and provide us with their contact information directly. Once this is done, an invitation will be sent to them and they can register to receive their own link. This is important to facilitate accurate attendance records.

UNDER DISCUSSION:

- Financial Statement
- Election of Delegates to CUPE Metro District Council
- Election of Delegates to the Vancouver and District Labour Council
- Notices of Motion – See page 4-5
- Committee and Staff Reports

WE ACKNOWLEDGE...

We live, work and play on the unceded land of the Coast Salish peoples—Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam) Nations.

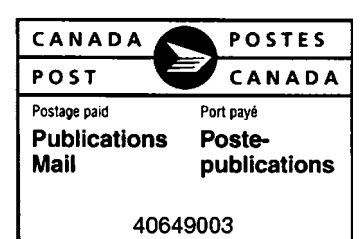
Mission and Vision Statements

Mission Statement – Serving our members' interests by advancing and defending their rights and the rights of all workers.

Vision Statement – A union founded on respect and advocacy that instills pride and a sense of belonging for the benefit of all.

**Return undeliverable
Canadian addresses to:**

**CUPE Local 15
545 W. 10th Ave.
Vancouver, BC
V5Z 1K9**



President's Report



SANTINO SCARDILLO,
ACTING PRESIDENT

by *Santino Scardillo, Acting President*

Continuing the Work Across All Sectors

In our last Members' Voice, we shared updates on bargaining pressures, workforce

impacts, and the uncertainty many members are facing across the sectors. Since then, your CUPE Local 15 leadership has continued working to protect jobs, improve outcomes, and ensure employers are held accountable.

Strong Member Turnout and Open Discussion

The strong turnout at our most recent General Membership Meeting, held at the Italian Cultural Centre on January 28, 2026, reflects the seriousness of the issues facing our local.

A dedicated session was held to walk City and Parks members through:

- Section 54 notices
- Voluntary buyouts and payout options
- Layoffs and bumping rights
- Mitigation measures and next steps

This session gave members the opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns, and receive clear, direct answers.

CUPE Local 15 extends our sincere thanks to Staff Representatives Steve Salsman and Joy Tullos, who were present to represent and

address the membership, provide clarity, and ensure members understand their rights and options during a difficult period.

Section 54 Notices and Workforce Reductions

As previously reported, the issuance of Section 54 notices signaled the potential elimination of approximately 230 positions, triggering displacement, bumping, and uncertainty for members and their families.

Since that time:

- CUPE Local 15 has continued to challenge the process and timing of the employer's decisions.
- We have raised concerns related to Section 11 and bad-faith conduct, particularly where decisions appeared to be made after bargaining and ratification.
- We remain engaged in monitoring employer actions to ensure compliance with the collective agreement and labour law.

This work is ongoing and remains a priority for your union.

Bargaining and Employer Accountability in the City et al Sector

Bargaining concluded earlier in the year, with ratification occurring in September. However, shortly after, members were informed that layoffs were forthcoming—information that had not been disclosed during negotiations.

CUPE Local 15 has been clear:

- Employers must bargain honestly and transparently.

- Members deserve full disclosure when decisions impact job security.
- Post-ratification restructuring raises serious concerns that cannot be ignored

We continue to pursue all available avenues to hold the employer accountable.

Voluntary Buyouts and Improved Outcomes

As discussed at the January membership meeting, the union pushed back on the employer's initial voluntary buyout proposal. Through continued advocacy and negotiations, we were able to secure a stronger buyout package than originally offered.

While buyouts are never the preferred solution, ensuring members have improved options and protections remains critical.

Emily Carr University

Members at Emily Carr University continue to face challenges related to enrolment pressures and workforce stability. CUPE Local 15 remains actively involved in supporting members, enforcing the collective agreement, and responding to employer-driven changes.

Staying Engaged

The strength of CUPE Local 15 comes from informed, engaged members. Strong turnout at membership meetings and active participation help ensure that decisions are made with members' voices front and centre.

We will continue to provide updates as developments unfold and remain committed to transparency, accountability, and solidarity across all sectors.

Secretary-Treasurer's Message

by *Cynthia Schadt, Interim Secretary-Treasurer*



CYNTHIA SCHAT
INTERIM
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Thank You Dan and Rachna, National Representatives

I had the pleasure of meeting Dan in person at the end of September 2025 but he has been assigned to CUPE Local 15 for a lot longer. Dan has been a source of knowledge for all of us here at CUPE Local 15,

and has motivated many of us to strive to be better labour advocates. He also encouraged us to think through a situation before acting. Dan, may your transfer be smooth, and may you continue to achieve great things in your career.

Rachna has been guiding the Health Sector since May 2025 and has been also been

transferred recently. Rachna, we wish you much success in your future.

Welcome Russell Green and Greg Melnechuk

CUPE Local 15 welcomes Russell Green and Greg Melnechuk to our Local. We look forward to your vast knowledge regarding labour advocacy.

Temporary Staff Representative I Posting

Many have shown interest in the Temporary Staff Representative I vacancy, and interviews will be underway soon.

Black History Month

February is Black History Month. There are some great documentaries to watch, such as:

- Black Life: Untold Stories
- For the Culture with Amanda Parris
- Love, Leymo

Turn to page one for a qr code to more info. Hopefully you were able to check out some other events:

- Black Futures, Ananse Tales: Diasporic Storytelling in Motion which took place

on February 5th at 6393 NW Marine Dr. Vancouver

- Black Brilliance in BC, which took place on February 6th at Surrey City Hall
- Infidels Jazz Presents: Africa!, which took place on February 7th at Fox Cabaret in Vancouver

Family Day is February 16, 2026.

If you are reading the Members' Voice online you may still have time to check out some fun free Family Day activities. (Remember—the Members' Voice is posted on our website sooner than you receive it in your mailbox.)

- Langley City Family Day Events at Timms Community Centre: February 16th from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Free admission on the Steveston Tram from February 13th to 16th
- Fun at Coal Harbour Community Centre on February 16th
- Richmond Family Day Celebrations on Family Day Weekend

VSB JOB SHARE OPPORTUNITY

- SSA looking for a job share partner for two days a week at Collingwood Neighbourhood School starting September 2026.

If you are interested, please contact Tanya at yaya@vcn.bc.ca or leave a voicemail at (604) 876-3688.

DECISIONS

BY THE MEMBERS

At the General Membership meeting on January 28, 2026, the members in attendance made the following decisions:

- To elect three additional delegates to attend the 2026 CUPE BC Convention.
- To receive the Financial Statement ending November 30, 2025.
- To observe a moment of silence for Tamara Guner, a member from Civic Theatres who passed away unexpectedly on January 21, 2026.

BY THE EXECUTIVE

At their Executive and Society Board meetings on January 20, 2026 and the Special Executive meeting on January 27, 2026, the following decisions were made:

- To receive the Financial Statements ending October 31, 2025 and November 30, 2025.
- To appoint Sheri Nielsen to backfill for K. Currie's Staff Representative assignment for the duration of her leave.
- To appoint Mike Dumler as the Returning Officer for the 2026 Executive Board elections.
- To recommend defeat of a Notice of Motion to amend Section 23 of the Bylaws as proposed by a member. See Notices of Motion on page 4
- To recommend a Notice of Motion to amend Section 23 of the Bylaws as proposed by the Policy/Bylaw Working Group. See Notices of Motion on page 4
- To recommend defeat of a Notice of Motion regarding Member Engagement as proposed by a member. See Notices of Motion on page 4
- To recommend a Notice of Motion regarding Member Engagement as proposed by the Policy/Bylaw Working Group. See Notices of Motion on page 5
- To recommend a Notice of Motion to amend Bylaws Section 28 - Preparation of Annual Budgets. See Notices of Motion on Page 5.
- To uphold the Staff Representative decision regarding an employer settlement offer in the City Sector. Note: The following Executive members requested their vote be published: Aaron Cook voted in favour, Bernie Dionne and Starla Bayley were opposed, and Vanessa Mani abstained (did not vote).
- To begin Executive and General Membership meetings with the Acknowledgement Statement - International Decade for People of African Descent. See page 1.
- To donate \$1,000 and send a Letter of Support to CUPE Local 1281-33 members who have been on strike since October 2025.
- To donate \$500 to The Landing Youth Centre.
- To purchase a table of ten at the International Women's Day Dinner Event for a total cost of \$900.
- To appoint Anna Bondartchouk and Mark Somo to be part of the Survey Working Group of up to four people.
- To schedule the Think Tank for the last week in May.
- To appoint Amanda Leung as an alternate on the VSB OH&S Committee.
- To appoint Courtney Gillen as an alternate on the Museums' OH&S Committee.
- To appoint Winnie Kuitenbrouwer as an alternate on the Langara Students' Union OH&S Committee.

GOOD AND WELFARE POLICY 10.4.1

Remembrances, Condolences, and Congratulations

Please call the union office at 604-879-4671 and let us know about a co-worker who is eligible as per the policy below, and we will send flowers or a fruit basket on behalf of CUPE Local 15.

- 10.4. Remembrances, Condolences, and Congratulations
- 10.4.1 Upon the office being notified of the following occurrences, the Society shall provide either flowers or a fruit basket, or make a donation to a specified charity, at a total cost of up to \$100.
- i) Death of a member or retired member
 - ii) Serious illness or injury of a member where absence exceeds two weeks
 - iii) Death of an immediate family member, including spouse, child, parent, or sibling
 - iv) Birth or adoption of a child
- 10.4.2 Upon the office being notified of the death of a member's extended family member, the Society shall send a card of condolence.



Election of Delegates to the CUPE BC Convention

As per the CUPE Local 15 Bylaws, the Table Officers (President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer) are granted automatic delegate status. The following additional delegates were elected at the January 2026 General Membership meeting to represent CUPE Local 15 at the CUPE BC Convention in Victoria from April 29, 2026 – May 2, 2026:

- Ravina Lal – City Sector
- Susanna Ruhle – City Sector
- Vanessa Mani – K-12 Sector
- Kandy Xu – K-12 Sector
- Starla Bayley – Parks Sector
- Bernie Dionne – Parks Sector
- Edith Hole – Health Sector
- Nagia Naseri – Health Sector
- Sophie Bennett – College/University Sector
- Anna Bondartchouk – Cultural Sector
- Steve Anderson – At Large
- Bobby Clark – At Large
- Mark Somo – At Large
- Tahmineh Yazdanyar – At Large



Notices of Motion

1. Proposed Bylaw Amendment – Policies

The Executive recommends defeat of the following motion:

Note: The Executive is recommending an alternative motion which is included in the Recommendation from the Executive (below).

- MOTION:** It was moved by Guilherme Rosales to amend Bylaw Section 23-Policies as follows: **(Bold text denotes proposed new language.)**
The CUPE Local 15 Executive may create policies to govern day to day operations of the union provided those policies are consistent with the National Constitution and the CUPE Local 15 Bylaws.
- 23.1 Any such policies that would not jeopardize the union’s position at bargaining or are confidential, must be publicly accessible and posted on the CUPE 15 website, readily available for members.**
- 23.2 Any amendments to policies, or new policies created by the executive must be communicated to the membership either at a General Membership meeting, or in a Members’ Voice, or as a special notice via email or another communication method determined to have the broadest reach to keep the membership informed.**

Rationale from the Mover

In order to increase transparency and accountability within our local in terms of its governance; and in order be in better alignment with better democratic practices as seen at other CUPE locals, other organizations and level of governments where any and all policy manuals are publicly accessible via online/digital means (any municipality in Canada almost; CUPE BC; CUPE 1004, CUPE 374, CUPE 2348, CUPE 1260; etc.).

Recommendation from the Executive

- MOTION:** The Executive recommends amending Section 23 of the Bylaws by adding new Article 23.1 as follows: **(Bold text denotes new language.)**
The CUPE Local 15 Executive may create policies to govern day-to-day operations of the union provided those policies are consistent with the CUPE National Constitution and the CUPE Local 15 Bylaws.
- 23.1 Copies of the Policy and Procedures Manual will be available for members to pick up at the union office, upon verification of membership.**

Executive Explanation

The CUPE Local 15 Bylaws is the governance document of the Local, and it is already posted on the website. Policies are internal operating documents, and non-members have no right to internal documents of the union. While the Policy Manual should not be accessible on the website, it should be available to members. It is already provided to Executive members as part of their orientation, and hard copies are now available at the reception counter for members to pick up at the union office. Although copies of the manual have been available for pick-up in the past, it has not been consistent and this bylaw amendment would enshrine the practice. Finally, all new and amended policies are (and always have been) fully reported in the Members’ Voice.

2. Proposed New Bylaw – Member Engagement

The Executive recommends defeat of the following motion:

Note: The Executive is recommending an alternative motion which is included in the Recommendation from the Executive (next page).

- MOTION:** It was moved by Guilherme Rosales to create a new bylaw entitled Membership Engagement as follows:
- 32.1** In accordance with Section 2 of this bylaw, and to meaningfully advance the democratic rights of this membership upholding the principles of accountability and transparency in governance, the executive will provide a yearly or bi-yearly engagement plan for the membership to review as a report and vote on, allowing for amendments, outlining how:
- a) the local membership will be engaged throughout the year;
 - b) a clear vision and definition of what successful engagement looks like with targets and metrics to assess success of the said engagement plan;
 - c) a clear outline of engagement activities linked to objectives, strategies or tactics, or educational campaigns;
 - d) at minimum two opportunities embedded in the plan polling members for their general best times throughout the week or weekend to meet for any special meetings (e.g. bargaining proposals or review) outside of the general membership meeting and other already planned events or activities; and to publish these results in the Members’ Voice twice a year;
 - e) a proposed allocated funding envelope for said engagement, as a basic idea for members to understand what financial resources there are to conduct said engagement.
- 32.2** The Executive shall establish and maintain an engagement committee, where operationally feasible, made up of no less than five CUPE Local 15 members to advise the Executive on the formation of the engagement plan, and other engagement efforts with their primary objective being to advance and bolster section two of this bylaw, by:
- a) engaging broadly with members of CUPE Local 15 through this committee and other forms, to increase involvement in union activities, labour movement activism, educational campaigns, community building events, and all other union efforts;
 - b) providing an opportunity for any of the membership to be on the committee through open nominations at one general membership meeting per year or when a term concludes for any given reason;
 - c) ultimate decision of membership shall reside with the Executive for a maximum of two-year terms;
 - d) Terms of Reference for this committee shall be developed by the committee, and in liaison with at least one Executive member and approved by the Executive.

continued next page

Notices of Motion, continued

Rationale from the Mover

We are currently living in a time where authoritarianism is on the rise and democracy is being threatened and challenged;

In these times it is imperative that our Local reaffirm, and implement clear plans to meaningfully, substantially and significantly advance our democratic trade union rights, especially within our union;

Currently our bylaws have no guidance or clear path forward on how members should be engaged or by what form;

There are clear international practices, plans and ways to engage that are structured, evidence-based and take an equity lens for organizations and actors conducting and implementing engagement plans such as the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2);

Some CUPE 15 members in the planning and policy-based teams across City departments are certified IAP2 facilitators; and

As part of any good engagement there should be a clear engagement plan that outlines engagement activities, conducts analysis to determine the methods used and how information will be used, along with how success is defined and what the goals and objectives are for the engagement.

There is clearly a need now more than ever to be more organized and structured in order to conduct greater outreach and engagement with CUPE 15 members to re-energize our union membership, get people more involved and more active in the labour movement, of which historically along with the feminist movement, brought about democracy.

For these reasons and many more, I have made the motion that the CUPE 15 Bylaws add a new section entitled “Membership Engagement” that sets clear parameters for how our union and local executive should plan for, and report out on any and all engagement activities in order to better engage our members so that we can be a more responsive and connected union.

Recommendation from the Executive

MOTION: The Executive recommends creating a Member Engagement Committee, with form and function to be determined by its own Terms of Reference, and that the President shall have the power, as the elected leader of the Local, to appoint such persons from among the membership as he deems appropriate to the task.

Executive Explanation

The substance of the Mover’s proposal constitutes the creation of a new committee. Under the Local’s existing framework, committee creation and design fall within policy and operational authority rather than bylaw codification. Section 3.3 of the Policy Manual already provides for the development of committee terms of reference, and the subject matter contemplated could be accommodated within that process in a more concise, administratively coherent manner. Under standard practice, a committee would be established, draft its own terms of reference, and seek Executive approval.

The proposal also embeds matters that are appropriately treated as policy, budgetary practice, and operational discretion into the constitutional framework. The areas referenced—member engagement strategies, education initiatives, and committee

functions—are already delegated to Executive authority in Sections 11, 23, 26, and 27, with financial oversight governed through Section 28 and the established budget cycle.

The existing bylaws already provide mechanisms governing timelines for election cycles, budgeting, member meetings, and special meeting requisitions under Section 7. The proposal introduces additional procedural obligations without establishing necessity, defensible outcomes, or a demonstrated gap in the current framework.

Finally, the proposed committee structure duplicates existing governance architecture in Section 27 and introduces internal contradictions—mandating the committee’s existence while simultaneously qualifying it as conditional (“where operationally feasible”). The effect would be to create a persistent procedural obligation without yielding new functionality beyond what the current bylaws already authorize.

3. Proposed Bylaw Amendment – Preparation of Annual Budgets

The Executive recommends amending Bylaw 28 Preparation of Annual Budgets as follows: (Strike-Out denotes deleted text and **Bold** denotes new language).

- 28.1 The Finance Committee will prepare a Union, Society, and Capital budget for each fiscal year for recommendation to the Executive Board.
- 28.2 Budgets will include all anticipated expenses for the stated fiscal year.
- 28.3 Members can request a copy of the **approved** budgets.
- 28.4 Budgets will be presented annually to the members for approval at the November General Membership meetings.
- 28.5 **Proposed** amendments to the annual **approved** budgets will be **referred to the Finance Committee for recommendation to the Executive Board** deferred to the next General Membership meeting.

Rationale

This language was reviewed because of questions at the November General Membership meeting. The changes are proposed for clarity, but do not change the current practice. Re: 28.5, “*and deferred to the next General Membership meeting*” is redundant as Notice of Motion is required to amend approved budgets.



Reflections from the CLC Pacific Winter School

by Mark Somo, Shop Steward and Executive Sector Representative, Emily Carr University

I am writing this on a cold winter night from my hotel room at Harrison Hot Springs—also known as Kwáts'á, the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Sts'ailes First Nation.

I want to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to the Sts'ailes people for their warm welcome. My thanks also go to the CLC Pacific Winter School for organizing this

event, the staff at the Harrison Hot Springs Resort for their hospitality, and the CUPE Local 15 Executive Board, Trustees, Representatives, admin staff, and members for granting me the opportunity to attend. Finally, I would like to thank Al Bieksa and Brian Martens for facilitating the Return to Work (Duty to Accommodate) course.

As a steward, I chose this course to equip myself with the tools, strategies, and confidence necessary to better support my coworkers. Al and Brian far exceeded

my expectations; the sessions were intense and educational, yet engaging and fun. This experience was about more than just gaining knowledge and building connections—it was a time for healing both the mind and body.

I highly recommend that every member attend the CLC Pacific Winter School at least once. It is an eye-opening, even life-changing experience.

From the depths of my beating heart, thank you.

PHOTO BY MARK SOMO

Thank you for the opportunity to learn and better support our members

By Don Stevano, CUPE Local 15 Shop Steward



I'd like to sincerely thank CUPE Local 15 and our general membership for the opportunity to attend the Canadian Labour Congress Winter School 2026 this January. Union education like this is only possible because members support

investing in each other, and I'm grateful for the chance to learn, reflect, and bring that knowledge back to our local.

Winter School was a strong reminder that the challenges our members face aren't abstract or theoretical—they're real, personal, and often happen at difficult moments. One area that really stood out for me was return-to-work (RTW) and accommodation. Many members experience RTW after illness, injury, or significant stress, and the process can feel overwhelming, rushed, or unclear without proper support.

The training reinforced that return-to-work is not just an administrative task—it's a labour relations issue and, more importantly, a human one. A successful RTW isn't about speed; it's about safety, sustainability, and dignity. Members need RTW plans that respect medical restrictions, functional abilities, and individual circumstances, rather than one-size-fits-all approaches.

We spent time working through real-life scenarios that many of our members would recognize: modified duties slowly expanding beyond what was agreed to, pressure to

return before someone is ready, or confusion about what accommodation actually means. These discussions highlighted how important it is for the union to stay involved throughout the RTW process—not just at the beginning, but well after a member has returned.

A key takeaway for me was how central communication and fairness are. Members deserve to understand their RTW plans, to have union representation involved, and to

I'm thankful for the practical tools and perspectives shared at Winter School, and I look forward to applying this learning in my role as a shop steward—supporting members through RTW processes, assisting fellow stewards, and helping ensure our collective agreement is respected in both spirit and practice.

Photo: L-R, Mark Somo, Henry Lee, Don Stevano



know that accommodation is a right—not a favour. When RTW processes are handled consistently and respectfully, it benefits everyone and helps prevent problems from escalating later on.

Thank you again to CUPE Local 15 and the membership for supporting union education. It's this shared commitment to learning and solidarity that strengthens our ability to represent one another, especially when members need it most.

CLC Winter School – Labour Arbitration Level 1

by *Starla Bayley, Parks Sector Representative*

I have just returned from a week away at Harrison Hot Springs doing union education with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), specifically Labour Arbitration Level 1. The first question asked might be, how does one get to go away for union education? As always, you can find this information in our bylaws under Section 26 – Education. Some general things to keep in mind when seeking to obtain union education is that it is primarily designed for our shop stewards, but can be allowed for those who have “demonstrated activism” in our local. I put those words in quotes as I believe they can be very subjective and left to interpretation. In addition to the above, for out-of-town courses, members/shop stewards are required to have attended a minimum of two general membership meetings.

When members apply and are selected for union education, the union (with your dues) covers all the costs including any wages lost, meal expenses, accommodations, and travel. The union views this as an investment in our well-being. More members knowing and understanding how to navigate representing our members against the employer strengthens our cause. Union education is pivotal for us to be able to face management head on to ensure we are treated fairly and equitably in the workplace. If while reading this, you are feeling inspired, contact the union office and ask about becoming a shop steward. The more educated stewards we have, the stronger our local is.

Now there is nothing that requires me to report back to the membership regarding my educational experience, but knowing that I get to go because of your dues, I feel it is important for you to know that your money is not being wasted. This weeklong course was all about arbitration, including the learning process involved preparing for a mock trial with actual arbitrators from the Labour Relations Board coming to hear our cases.

Of course, before one gets to arbitration you need to go through all the other steps of your collective agreement’s grievance process, from meeting with your supervisor to grieving and moving through your various steps. In our local the final step prior to having your case taken to arbitration is

our grievance committee. To learn more about this committee and its structure, turn to your bylaws under Section 19. The over-arching items to know include, there should be a table officer (but not the Secretary-Treasurer), one Member at Large or steward (only if the Member at Large is not available) from the sector where the grievance originated and three experienced shop stewards or former stewards, who shall be members selected from a variety of bargaining units. There should be five members to make a quorum. This group of individuals receives a recommendation from the staff representative, is provided an opportunity to ask additional questions, and are then charged with making a decision to either uphold the staff representative recommendation or not. If your grievance does not get forwarded to arbitration, the final step available to you is to appeal the decision to the Executive Board.

Arbitration is definitely more serious, relying largely on precedence (cases that have come before). It is designed much like a mini court without all the extra formalities such as gowns and wigs, or even standing when the arbitrator comes into the room. Arbitrators can be lawyers, but they can also be laypersons who have garnered experience over the years. Decisions are made based on the facts determined by the arbitrator, and legal tests evolved from precedent setting cases.

A particularly important case is Wm. Scott. In this case the employer Wm. Scott & Co, fired an employee from their poultry processing plant for speaking with the media regarding issues that were backing up the poultry plant and causing delays in the work. Management was unhappy with the worker and deemed they had just cause to terminate her employment. Long story short, this case has set the test for employee discipline. There are three questions an arbitrator must ask themselves when considering whether or not the employer has exercised their management rights appropriately.

1. Has the employee given just and reasonable cause for some form of discipline?
2. Was the employer’s decision to dismiss the employee an excessive response

- considering all circumstances and mitigating factors?
3. If the discipline was excessive, what alternative measure should be substituted as just and equitable?

The first question is simple. Did the member do what the employer said they did? Open–Shut. Yes–No. The second question is more interesting, especially the mitigating factors. This is where we look at the member’s record to determine if this a single event or one that has culminated over time. In total there are ten factors to consider to decide if the employer’s response was excessive. Finally, if the discipline was excessive and they did in fact do what the employer stated they did, what is the appropriate discipline?

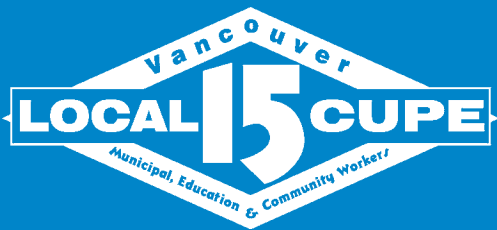
Wm. Scott was just one of the many precedent setting cases we reviewed as part of our preparation for our mock arbitration. We were also shown CanLII (<https://www.canlii.org/>) which is a free, searchable, legal database that shows all kinds of legal cases. Curious about your sector and cases that we have filed and won? You can search that! Much like a library search engine you can insert many different search terms from names of people (such as staff representatives who presented the case) to general topics (discipline, termination, breach of trust) and it will come back with all the cases that have those terms in it.

CanLII is a relatively young database started in 2004, and more and more arbitrators have been submitting their decisions here for publication. If you are curious about other old cases, I learned that the court houses have their own libraries with the older databases and access to old records. You can also look for older cases in university libraries too. It’s pretty cool how much information is available to us if we just take the time to look for it.

In closing, I just want to say thank you. Thank you for allowing me to have this opportunity to learn more about protecting your rights in the workplace. As much as I hope that I don’t have to use it, I am grateful that I have knowledge and knowhow for when I do.

Election of Delegates to CUPE Metropolitan District Council (CUPE Metro) and the Vancouver and District Labour Council (VDLC)

Elections will take place at the **February 25, 2026** General Membership meeting for CUPE Local 15 delegates to CUPE Metro and the VDLC. **CUPE Metro** - There are over 30 CUPE locals affiliated to CUPE Metro, serving in the geographical region within the Lower Mainland of BC. The council provides an opportunity for delegates to come together at meetings to help build solidarity and power in the regional setting. Our very own 2nd VP Henry Lee, serves as Vice President on the CUPE Metro Executive Board. The roles the Council plays are primarily information sharing and advocacy coordinating. Delegates to CUPE Metro are expected to attend the meetings, wherever possible, which are usually held eight times a year on the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. except in June, July, August, and December. For more information please visit their website at metro.cupe.ca. **VDLC** - The VDLC represents 60,000 workers from over 90 affiliated unions. The Council works to advance the rights, common interests, and welfare of working people through political action, education, community service, and active solidarity. VDLC delegates are expected to attend the meetings, whenever possible, which are held at 7:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month except in August and December. For more information please visit their website at vdlc.ca.



CUPE Local 15 welcomes submissions and photos from members.

The Members' Voice is published nine times a year for members of CUPE Local 15 - Vancouver Municipal, Education and Community Workers. The deadline for submissions is 9:00 a.m. on the first Wednesday of each month. All submissions may be edited for brevity and clarity. Signed articles and letters do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of CUPE Local 15.

CUPE Local 15

545 West 10th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1K9
Phone: 604-879-4671
Fax: 604-879-7582
Email: email@cupe15.org
Web: www.cupe15.org

Local 15 is a chartered affiliate of the Canadian Union of Public Employees and is also affiliated with the CUPE British Columbia Division, CUPE Metro District Council, the Vancouver & District Labour Council, and the BC Federation of Labour. CUPE 15 is a member of the Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM).

CUPE Local 15 Executive Board Table Officers:

President: Warren Williams
Interim Secretary-Treasurer: Cynthia Schadt
1st Vice President & Acting President: Santino Scardillo
2nd Vice President: Henry Lee

Sector Representatives

City: Aaron Cook, Susy Mckay
College/University: Sophie Bennett (Langara College)
Mark Somo (Emily Carr University)
Cultural: Anna Bondartchouk
Health/HSSCBA: Edith Hole
Health/HSPBA: Lucia Rincon
Parks: Bernie Dionne, Starla Bayley
K-12: Vanessa Mani, Cynthia Schadt

Trustees:

Steve Anderson, Sheri Nielsen, Ravina Lal

Staff Representatives:

Kathie Currie, John Geppert, Steve Salsman, Gail Johnson, Joy Tullos

Office & Administrative Staff:

Mark Gloumeau, Accounting Coordinator
Nancy Strider, Accounting Assistant
Mei Wu, Accounting Assistant
Tia Tang, Office Manager
Michelle Yim, Office Assistant
Geneviève Dubuc, Office Assistant
Justin Wong, Office Assistant

Building Service Worker:

Elaine Duan

CUPE National Representatives:

Kevin Rose, Russell Green, Greg Melnechuk



Submitted by Peter Greenwell, Evelyne Saller Centre

On Saturday, January 31st, Debbie Jimmy signed out from the Evelyne Saller Centre for the last time after 33 years of service with the City of Vancouver. She was one of the centre's longest-serving employees.

Debbie Jimmy's connection to the Evelyne Saller Centre started in the 1980s. She worked directly with Evelyne Saller and was part of the Centre's early history, before The 44 later became the Evelyne Saller Centre.

Debbie represents a rare continuity between the Centre's origins and its present-day operations. Her first day as a City of Vancouver employee was February 3, 1993, when she began working as an auxiliary staff member. In 1996 she became a regular part-time Activity Leader, a status she maintained continuously until her retirement on January 31, 2026. That's a total of 12,050 days of service, in 33 years of employment with the City.

In addition to her work at The 44/Evelyne Saller Centre, she also supported programs and services at Oppenheimer Park and Carnegie Community Centre. Her friends and colleagues at the Evelyne Saller Centre wish her a happy and well-deserved retirement.

National Representative Leaves Local 15

CUPE Local 15 would like to extend our sincere thanks to Dan for his dedicated service and support as our National Representative.

Dan's leadership, guidance, and commitment to our members made a meaningful impact, particularly during challenging times. His experience and steady presence helped strengthen our local and support our membership every step of the way. We are sincerely grateful for all that he has done for CUPE Local 15, and wish him well in his next assignment. We're going to deeply miss you, Dan.

In solidarity,
Santino Scardillo, Acting President



A Note of Appreciation for Dan, National Representative

On behalf of the administrative staff, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to Dan for his service to Local 15 over the past three years.

Dan brought a wealth of knowledge along with a thoughtful and respectful approach to his work with our local. He was consistently supportive, approachable, and generous with his time, and he treated staff with genuine care and professionalism. He also brightened the office with his warmth and kindness, often spoiling the staff with his homemade baking—his cinnamon buns and cheesecakes will be especially missed.

While we are sad to see him leave Local 15, we are grateful for the time, dedication, and kindness he shared with us. We wish Dan every success in his next assignment and thank him for his commitment to our local.

Tia Tang, Office Manager

Photo: L-R, Tia & Dan

Thanks for Your Support Dan

I am writing this to express how sad I am that Dan has been reassigned from Local 15. Dan has provided not only myself, but the entire local, with support and guidance.

Many of us had to step into brand-new roles due to extended leaves, and Dan supported all of us with his knowledge and expertise. He gave us the tools to succeed in our new roles. I would not have the confidence to thrive in my new position without Dan's support. I want to thank him and let him know that everyone at Local 15 will miss him.

Sheri Nielsen, Temporary Staff Representative