

JANUARY
2025

THE MEMBERS' VOICE



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

ATTENTION CITY ET AL MEMBERS (CITY, PARKS, RAY-CAM, BRITANNIA) Bargaining Survey is open for your input!

Happy New Year! We hope your year has started off well.

Your bargaining committee has finished creating the members' bargaining survey for you to fill out, and many of you will have received the survey postcard in the mail. Please scan the QR Code on the card to fill it in. We need your input! Please encourage your coworkers to complete the survey as well, but please do not forward the link or share it on any social media, in order to protect the integrity of the survey.

If you have not received the survey directly from CUPE Local 15, please contact the union office at email@cupe15.org or 604-879-4671.

The survey closes on January 31, 2025.

It is important that you take this time respond to the survey. The committee uses this information to help set bargaining priorities to bring forward to the employer on your behalf.

Should you want to provide more information, or have other bargaining concerns, you can contact the bargaining committee at bargaining2025@gmail.com. Please note that this email address is checked intermittently.



Your City et al Bargaining Committee

Starla Bayley, Parks – Chair
Ava Choy, City – Vice-Chair
Henry Lee, Parks – Executive Liaison
Lorraine Evans, Britannia
Shelley Bach, Ray-Cam
Mike Shaul, City

Steve Anderson, Parks
Jessie Mann, Parks – Alternate
Henry Williams, Parks – Alternate
Warren Williams, President
Steve Salsman, Staff Representative

JANUARY 2025 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The General Membership Meeting will be held on January 22, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom

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@cupe15.org to update your information. There will be a draw at the end of the meeting and three lucky winners will receive a gift card (retailers TBA at the meeting). Child and dependant care reimbursement is available as per eligibility requirements in CUPE Local 15 Bylaw Section 31.

Article B.10.1(c) of the CUPE National Constitution allows Honourary Members to attend membership meetings with voice, but no vote. If you are an Honourary Member and would like to attend, please email the office on the day of, or the day prior to the meeting.

UNDER DISCUSSION:

- Election of Delegates to the CUPE BC Convention
- BC Labour Heritage Centre Sponsorship Renewal
- Publishing Executive Attendance at Executive Board Meetings
- Security Enhanced Website
- Financial Statement
- Committee and Staff Reports

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.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE...

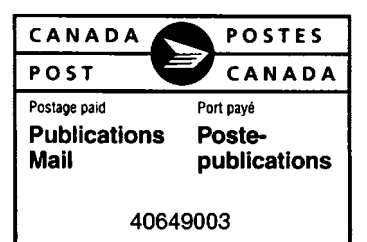
We live, work and play on the unceded land of the Coast Salish peoples—Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam) Nations.

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



Protect Canada's Natural Resources

by Warren Williams, President



WARREN WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

Dear members,
Happy New Year CUPE 15 Members! I hope you all had a great break with friends and family and are looking forward to the year ahead.

There has been something that has been

nagging at me for quite some time, but as others have written about it, I haven't felt the need to until now. However, with President-elect Donald Trump's baiting of all Canadians

with his recent social media posts referring to our Prime Minister as a Governor, and Canada as the 51st state, I feel the need to say something. History has shown that the USA covets our lands, hence Trump's comments. Does 1812 ring a bell?

It is, and always will be about natural resources, it is, and continues to be the reason for colonization.

Fresh water is the greatest natural resource on the planet and we, as Canadians, are blessed with an abundance of it. Water means life as we know it. No water, no nothing, essentially another red planet - no life, no nothing. We must protect this blessing and stop selling it off for profit. You cannot eat money, or use it to grow the food we consume every day. Water is a precious resource that must be protected by all of us.

Politicians need to be reminded that water is our lifeline to the future, that it is not for sale, and that it cannot be taken from us by bullies and the ignorant who covet it.

I am concerned about the future of our country, and what kind of future we will leave for those who come after us. Our natural resources are a sacred responsibility that will build our future, and if we use them wisely they will continue to build a future for those who come after us.

In the face of increasing pressure to put water up for sale and privatize water services, learn what you can do as a community activist to help protect our shared water resources. Information is available on the Council of Canadians' website at canadians.org.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

by Debbie Mohabir, Secretary-Treasurer



DEBBIE MOHABIR
SECRETARY-TREASURER

The Importance of Union Solidarity

As we begin a new year, I felt it was timely to remind everyone of the importance of union solidarity, and that everyone has a role to play as a union member. Union

solidarity is the bedrock of a strong and effective labour movement. It is the collective strength and unity of workers that enables negotiating better wages, working conditions, and benefits. Here are some key points highlighting the importance of union solidarity:

1. Collective Bargaining Power

Union solidarity amplifies the collective bargaining power of workers. When workers stand together, the union can negotiate more effectively with employers. This unity ensures that the demands of the workforce are taken seriously, and that fair agreements are reached.

2. Protection of Workers' Rights

Solidarity among union members is crucial for the protection of workers' rights. It ensures that any violations of labour laws or unfair treatment are addressed promptly and effectively. A united workforce can hold employers accountable and ensure that workers are treated with respect and dignity.

3. Improved Working Conditions

Through solidarity, unions can advocate for better working conditions. This includes ensuring safe workplaces, reasonable working hours, and adequate breaks. When workers are united, they can push for changes that improve their overall well-being and job satisfaction.

4. Economic Security

Union solidarity contributes to the economic security of workers. By negotiating for fair wages and benefits, unions help ensure that workers can support themselves and their families. This economic stability is essential for the overall health and prosperity of communities.

5. Social and Political Influence

A united labour movement has significant social and political influence. Unions can advocate for policies that benefit all workers, such as healthcare, education, and social security. Solidarity enables unions to mobilize members and campaign for legislative changes that protect and enhance workers' rights.

6. Support During Strikes and Disputes

During strikes and labour disputes, solidarity is essential. It ensures that workers have the support they need to withstand financial and emotional pressures. A united front can also attract public empathy and support, increasing the chances of a successful resolution.

Children's Winter Event a success!

This is the second year that the union has offered tickets to the PNE Children's Winter Fair and it was once again a success. Families came to the Hastings Community Centre to pick up their tickets, received some special cookies and hot chocolate, and then made their way to the festivities. The weather this year was cold, but thankfully dry.

A very big thank you to our members at Hastings Community Centre for making sure we had everything we needed. Also, thank you to our Executive Board members, K-12 Sector Representative Cynthia Schadt, Parks Sector Representative Henry Lee, and Trustee Vanessa Mani for volunteering your time to make this a successful event.



Debbie, Henry, Cynthia, Vanessa



Link to her Vancouver Foundation page for more information



Thank You, CUPE 15!

Many heartfelt thanks to the Executive members who supported the motion to donate to the Saoirse Sankey Memorial Fund via Vancouver Foundation.

Saoirse was a member of CUPE Local 15 while working as a lifeguard and swim instructor at the Britannia Pool. She grew up at Britannia Pool; learning to swim, attending swim club, and then working as a lifeguard and swim instructor. There is a lavender tile in the deep end of Britannia Pool to remember her.

Saoirse would have been touched to be remembered in this way by her union. Our family cannot thank you enough for your thoughtful generosity.

Vancouver Foundation advisors refer to the fund as “the little fund that could” as to date it has been funded largely through friends and family. Welcome to the community.

In gratitude,
Teresa and Freyja Sankey

Election of Delegates to the CUPE BC Convention

The 2025 CUPE BC Convention will be held at the Westin Bayshore Hotel in Vancouver, commencing at **7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 30, 2025 continuing through until 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 3, 2025.**

Delegate elections will be held at the Virtual General Membership Meeting on January 22, 2025. In order to be eligible to stand as a CUPE Local 15 delegate, a member must have attended a minimum of 50% of the General Membership meetings in the last 12 months.

Call for Interest

Alternate OH&S Representatives for the Union OH&S Committee

The Union OH&S Committee has vacant Alternate OH&S positions in the Health Sector, Cultural Sector, and Langara College.

If you are interested, please email Henry Lee at trendfitness@yahoo.com for more information.

NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING IS JAN. 22, 5:30pm via Zoom.



DECISIONS

BY THE EXECUTIVE

At the Executive and Society Board meetings on November 19 and December 17, 2024, the following decisions were made:

- To recommend the 2025 draft CUPE Local 15 budget, VMECW Society budget, and VMECW Society Capital budget to the members.
- To donate \$100 to the Vancouver Foundation/Saoirse Sankey Memorial Fund.
- To donate \$500 to the Face of Today to support the Holiday Hamper Program.
- To approve eight applications to the CLC Winter School as per the recommendation from the Education Committee.
- To donate \$1,000 toward the purchase of socks and underwear for patrons at the Evelyne Saller Centre.
- To receive the Union and Society Financial Statements ending Sept. 30, 2024 and Oct. 31, 2024.
- To donate \$200 toward prizes at the Emily Carr University members' Christmas party.
- To donate \$400 to the Vancouver Municipal Regional Retirees' Association (VMRRA) Christmas Luncheon.
- To uphold the decision of the Staff Representative regarding an appeal to the Executive Board from a member in the City Sector.
- To delete fourteen outdated non-financial policies and nine outdated financial policies from the CUPE Local 15 Policies and Procedures Manual as per the recommendation from the Policy Manual Working Group and the Finance Committee. (See Page 4 for more info)
- To appoint Lovepreet Sidhu as the Park Ranger a.m. Alternate OH&S Committee Representative.
- To appoint Tommy Ta as the Park Ranger p.m. Alternate OH&S Committee Representative.
- To recommend sponsorship renewal for the BC Labour Heritage Centre Society (see Notice of Motion and explanation on Page 6 of this issue).
- To donate \$1,000 to the Vancouver Maritime Museum's Bridge to Learning Campaign.

BY THE MEMBERS

At the General Membership and General Society meetings on November 27, 2024, the members in attendance made the following decisions.

- To approve the 2025 proposed CUPE Local 15 budget, VMECW Society budget, and VMECW Society Capital budget as presented.
- To receive the CUPE Local 15 and VMECW Society Financial Statements ending Sept. 30, 2024.
- To destroy the ballots from the election of the Langara College Bargaining Committee.

CUPE LOCAL 15 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES Manual Overhaul Project

At the December 17, 2024 Executive and Society Board meetings, the following outdated policies were deleted as per recommendations from the Policy Manual Working Group and the CUPE Local 15 Finance Committee:

- 1. Article 1.1.7 – Associate Members**
Rationale: This language was drafted by the VMREU thirty-five years ago, several years prior to joining CUPE. We now have honorary members, not associate members. The CUPE 15 Bylaws allow for retired members to apply for honorary membership as per Article B.10.1(a) of the National Constitution.
- 2. Article 1.3.5 – Smoking at Membership Meetings**
Rationale: This language is over 35 years old. WorkSafe BC and the Province of BC have long since implemented smoking restrictions and legislation, making it redundant.
- 3. Article 2.2.3 – Recommendations Regarding Arbitrations**
Rationale: This language was implemented prior to the creation of the Grievance Committee and is now redundant. As per the CUPE Local 15 Bylaws, the Grievance Committee has the responsibility and authority to decide whether or not to advance grievances to arbitration, and staff are required to provide a detailed written submission with their recommendation.
- 4. Article 2.3 – Executive Book Off**
Rationale: When this policy was implemented in 1992, the Executive Board met twice a month. The Board has been meeting once a month since 2017. The Secretary-Treasurer has long since had the authority to approve book off because it is logistically impossible to bring each request to the Executive Board for approval, and it is recognized that the Secretary-Treasurer will use their best judgement in evaluating each request.
- 5. Article 3.1.4 – Committee Financial Report**
Rationale - Committee expenses are included in the annual budget and tracked in the monthly financial reports.
- 6. Article 5.10.2(1) – Scheduling Office Staff Vacations and Other Extended Leaves**
Rationale: This language was drafted in 1997 with a view to have the Office Manager and Accounting Coordinator cover each other's duties, but has never been applied. The two positions are vastly different and staff are not qualified or cross-trained to cover for each other. The Accounting Coordinator has a trained assistant who covers leaves, and an Office Assistant acts for the Office Manager when they are away.
- 7. Article 6.4 – Publications Received in the Union Office**
Rationale: This policy was implemented in 1982 when the union had an active library with an Office Assistant assigned to oversee and maintain it. This is no longer the case. Staff now have subscriptions and access to resource material online that was previously kept in the library.
- 8. Article 6.6 – Payment Holdback on Building Expenses (Society)**
Rationale: This policy is 41 years old and has never been implemented. Payment for building services are negotiated as required with suppliers/service providers.
- 9. Article 6.7 – Building Maintenance (Society)**
Rationale: A regular maintenance program was successfully instituted many years ago making this policy redundant. The building manager model was attempted several times, but was not successful. The Office Manager and Accounting Coordinator have been performing this role under the direction and supervision of the President and Secretary-Treasurer for well over a decade.
- 10. Article 6.8 – Smoking in the Building**
Rationale: This language was drafted prior to smoking restrictions and legislation rendering it irrelevant.
- 11. Article 7.2 – Trustee Financial Reports**
Rationale: This policy was written in 1995, but not implemented because the Accounting Coordinator prepares a monthly report that the Secretary-Treasurer presents to the members at the General Membership meetings nine times a year. The Secretary-Treasurer summarizes variances etc. and members are provided with an opportunity to ask questions.
- 12. Article 10.9 – Other Services (Including involvement in low cost/co-op housing for the aged)**
Rationale: While the intention of this 43-year-old policy was well-meaning, it was not implemented because the union (Society) did not and does not have the resources, nor the mandate or expertise to follow through.
- 13. Article 10.10 – Retirement Dinner**
Rationale: This policy was originally written, but not implemented in 1984, and brought back again in 1986, but still not implemented. With such a large membership, the logistics of tracking all members who have retired is impossible, and the cost of such an activity would be significant.
- 14. Article 10.11 – Donations for Sports Activities**
Rationale: A VMREU softball league was formed, but disbanded permanently over 30 years ago. If a similar situation arises, it would be best to consider a new policy.
- 15. Article 11.1 – Delete the CUPE Local 15 Picket Pay Policy**
Rationale: Text noting deletion of a policy does not belong in the Policy Manual because it is not a policy. There is a current policy (7.8 Strike Pay) that addresses strike/picket pay.
- 16. Article 12.4 – Compulsory Retirement**
Rationale: Compulsory retirement was abolished in Canada in 2012 making this language, that was drafted in 1981, irrelevant.
- 17. Article 12.6 – Human Rights Clause**
Rationale: These rights are protected under the Canada Human Rights Act and the BC Human Rights Code.
- 18. Article 13.10 – Pension Equality**
Rationale: This language was drafted in 1983, twelve years prior to joining CUPE. The CUPE BC Regional Office has a Pension Representative in BC, who is directly involved with the Municipal Pension Plan (formerly known as Superannuation) and is a resource for Local 15.
- 19. Article 13.18.4 – Recycling Oil in Vehicles**
Rationale: This language was drafted in 1989 when the VMREU leased a fleet of vehicles for the Field Staff. Staff now provide their own vehicles and are responsible for the maintenance.
- 20. Article 14.5 – Native Land Claims**
Rationale: This policy is almost 39 years old and refers specifically to a dispute that was settled in 1987.
- 21. Article 14.6 – Deregulation and Privatization**
Rationale: This policy was written in 1986 and refers to endorsement and participation in a specific postal union campaign.
- 22. Article 14.7 – Project Literacy**
Rationale: This refers to a specific project endorsement that took place in 1986 and should not be in the policy manual.
- 23. Article 16.1 – Pacific Northwest Labour History Association**
Rationale: The policy was written 43 years ago. This is not an affiliation, and CUPE Local 15 no longer has an ongoing membership. It is not necessary to have a policy because membership in this organization can be renewed at any time if a member puts forward a notice of motion for a vote at a membership meeting.



Slips, Trips, and Falls in the Workplace: Preventative Measures to Reduce the Risk

by Chad Cammer, Materials Handler Shipping/Receiving – Facilities, Emily Carr University of Art & Design and CUPE Local 15 Occupational Health & Safety Committee Member

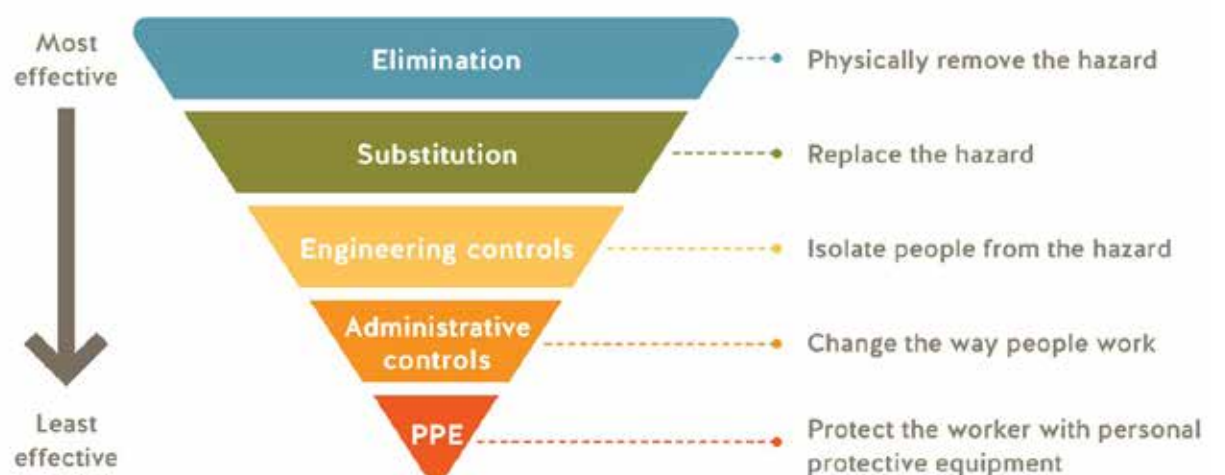
Slips, trips, and fall injuries put workers at risk that could potentially fall victim to minor, moderate, or fatal injuries. Sprains, strains, bruises, concussions, dislocations, and fractures are common examples of injuries sustained because of these hazards.

Slips happen when there is not enough grip or traction between the footwear and the walking surface. This can be a result of water, oil, grease, or dust on the floor. Loose rugs or mats, floors with varying traction, and the wrong footwear can also cause slips.

Trips and falls can happen when workers lose their balance after their feet collide with objects. Common tripping hazards in the workplace include, but are not limited to, uneven flooring, cluttered walkways, uncovered cables, poor lighting, and obstructed views.

According to WorkSafeBC, each year, approximately 20 percent of workplace injuries are related to slips, trips, and falls. Within the span of the past half-decade, 41,000 workers in BC have suffered from these types of injuries. These are the costliest workplace incidents and some of the biggest causes of general productivity loss affecting many sectors of our economy and workplace environments.

Applying applicable and adequate safety measures into the workplace opens an avenue where slips, trips, and falls are preventable. Workplaces that implement slip, trip, and fall prevention controls can have a significant advantage, especially when factors such as costs, lost productivity, and staff replacement are considered.



The employer is responsible for identifying and assessing the hazards in the workplace and implementing risk controls. Understanding the risks and initiating simple alternatives is the first step in reducing workplace injuries. Employers also have the responsibility to work with their employees' Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee to effectively manage these risks related to a variety of factors. Some of these factors may include workplace design, flooring, and cleanliness procedures.

The simplest way of preventing injuries from slips, trips, and falls in the workplace is to develop and implement a risk management plan that uses the established hierarchy of controls to identify and assess controls, and to monitor safety hazards and risks.

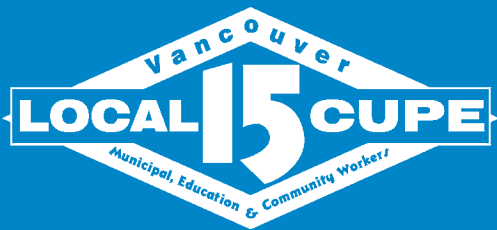
While control measures are listed in order of effectiveness, all four types of controls should be considered. The highest risk should be addressed first. If one cannot eliminate a risk, one would need to implement control measures to minimize the risk. Eliminating the hazard completely is always the first choice. Substitution involves replacing the material or process with a less hazardous one.

If one is not able to eliminate the hazards or substitute safer alternatives, engineering controls is the next best option. This involves isolating people from the hazard by implementing physical changes to the workplace.

Administrative controls involve identifying and implementing safe work procedures so workers can perform their job duties safely. The findings of risk assessments conducted will form the basis of these safe work procedures, changing the way people work. Personal protective equipment (PPE) is another important control measure to protect workers.

Protecting workers from harm requires due diligence. Ways to monitor effectiveness in the workplace include regular safety inspections, clear documentation, supervisory walk-throughs, and joint health and safety committee meetings.

A safe work environment; establishing a safety culture is not only good for business, but more importantly, leads to healthier workers, higher worker morale, and increased productivity.



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
Secretary-Treasurer: Debbie Mohabir
1st Vice President: Santino Scardillo
2nd Vice President: Ravina Lal

Sector Representatives:

City: Aaron Cook, Paul Chohan
College/University: Sophie Bennett, Rose Palozzi
Cultural: Courtney Gillen
Health/HSSCBA: Roxshanna Shankar
Health/HSPBA: Lucia Rincon
Parks: Bernie Dionne, Henry Lee
K-12: Chris Brown, Cynthia Schadt

Trustees:

Seagrín Worster, Sheri Nielsen
Vanessa Mani

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
Vanessa Chow, Office Assistant

Building Service Worker:

Elaine Duan

CUPE National Representative:

Dan Todd



Notices of Motion

1. BC Labour Heritage Centre Sponsorship Renewal

The Executive recommends sponsorship renewal for the BC Labour Heritage Centre Society for 2025 at a cost of \$5,000.

Explanation/Rationale: The BC Labour Heritage Centre Society is a well-respected and credible source for labour history in our region, and is recognized for a wide range of projects and activities that amplify the value of the labour movement throughout our province. This includes preserving, documenting, and promoting the rich history of working people by engaging in partnerships and projects that help define and express the role that work, and workers have played in the evolution of social policy and its impact on the present and future shaping of the province. CUPE Local 15 started our annual sponsorship in 2022.

2. Publish Attendance at Executive Board Meetings in the Members' Voice

Moved by Starla Bayley and seconded by Seagrín Worster to add the following language to the policy manual:

CUPE Local 15 will print the monthly Executive Meeting attendance in the following month's edition of the Members' Voice. The January's Members' Voice will include November and December attendance, and the September's Members' Voice will include June, July, and August attendance.

Explanation/Rationale: Much like how our Municipal, Provincial, and Federal governments provide open and transparent records of attendance, so too should our local Executive. This enables voters to know who is at the table doing the work of the local, and who has been present for decisions being made on our behalf.

Executive Recommendation – After a fulsome discussion, the Executive Board recommends defeat of this motion because the information is already accessible to members should they ask for it.

3. Security Enhanced Website

Moved by Starla Bayley and seconded by Steve Anderson to create a password protected website where members can access information behind the home page regarding Local 15. This will include, but not be limited to bargaining information, education, financial statements, bylaws, and more. After passing the motion, the website will be implemented within three months with individual login information provided to all members.

Explanation/Rationale: With the advanced technology of today's world, we should be able to create a password protected portal for members to access information by appointment, that would otherwise be deemed only for your eyes if you can make it into the office. This would be much like a personal health account, bank account, or student account. Each individual would be provided their own login to be able to access the information of the local.

Executive Recommendation – After a fulsome discussion, the Executive Board unanimously recommends defeat of this motion because it is a lengthy process that requires legal and privacy compliance requirements. Additionally, the local's infrastructure is not built for this type of website. More information on the implications of this motion will be provided at the January 22, 2025 General Membership Meeting.

Lunar New Year of the Snake 2025



Scan the QR code to find out the awesome events planned in Vancouver for the Lunar New Year of the Snake. This beautiful artwork is by Lisa LaRose and a great explanation of the art is on the site, here is an excerpt below:

Snakes, despite their pretty appearances, are often attached to negative connotations.

But in various stories and mythologies, snakes are also guardians.

Their flexible shape allows them to shift on a whim, or twist into an ouroboros, symbolizing the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. Their cool-eyed wisdom tells us to find the balance within this ever-changing world.

