

RCEA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, 23 October 2018
5:00 p.m. EDT
M-50 Auditorium
Ottawa, Ontario

J. Van Den Bergh, moderator: called the meeting to order.

C. Fraser introduced the head table: Cathie Fraser, President; Marvin Zaluski, 1st Vice President; Bernard Holbrook, Treasurer; Michelle Lévesque, 2nd Vice President; and Joan Van Den Bergh, Negotiator/Labour Relations Officer, RCEA office staff: Laurette Ernst, Office Manager; Shelagh Till, Dues and Insurance Coordinator.

1. Rules of Meeting – J. Van Den Bergh

J. Van Den Bergh reminded those in attendance that no calls or video users have been screened to restrict this meeting to members only. Please be aware that anyone is able to be on the conference call or web-link online. In cases where questions are more of a personal issue, please direct your question to the RCEA office at another time. The panel is happy to answer any other types of questions. For the recording of the minutes, please state your name, location and research centre or program. The meeting will follow Robert's Rules of Order.

Please reserve any questions for the Question and Answer session.

2. Agenda of Annual General Meeting – 23 October 2018

MOTION: “To accept the agenda of the Annual General Meeting of October 23, 2018.”

Moved by J. Gallant, HHT, Halifax. Seconded by R. Tom, HHT, Montreal.

Carried.

3. Minutes of Annual General meeting – 24 October 2017

J. Van Den Bergh proposed the following motion:

MOTION: “To accept the minutes the Annual General Meeting of October 24, 2017.”

Moved by C. Pelletier, HHT, Ottawa. Seconded by F. Toll, EME, Ottawa.

Carried.

4. President's Report – C. Fraser

The RCEA has 2 huge resources, RCEA staff and stewards; both of which work tirelessly on your behalf. First, your RCEA office staff of 4 people keep your union functioning and second, your union Stewards are the link between the union and the membership. I would like to thank and acknowledge all the Stewards who have represented their members and some of whom have retired or stepped down from the union this year:

Jim Beasley
Vaughn Benson
Jacques-André Doucet
Mark Lowery
Steve Lussier
Geoff Melnychuk
Bobby Peter
Sandra Robertson
Jack Saini
Amal Zerhloul.

I would also like to welcome new Stewards who have joined your union this year:

Kevin Bricault
Jason Fahlman
Shannon Thompson
Andrea Todd
Dough Walsh
Ralph Webber.

I would like to recognize 2 long-term Stewards who will be retiring this year: Roseanne Tom from Montreal and Floyd Toll from Ottawa. Thank you for your years of dedicated service to the RCEA.

Members can find all of their Steward information and all RCEA contact information on the RCEA website.

Stewards are always required in all of the Research Centers, Buildings, Regions, and IRAP. Members can contact the RCEA office or find a nomination form online. Any member interested needs to be nominated by 2 other RCEA members in good standing to become a Steward. After your appointment, a new Steward will receive a handbook and training from the office. Steward meetings take place at the RCEA office or via a provided conference call. These meetings take place 4-5 times a year, usually at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

The RCEA financial audit was conducted by Ottawa accounting firm McCay-Duff this year. The in-house audit was completed on August 16, 2018. As anticipated, the new office location that we moved to in late August 2017 has reduced the overall costs. The RCEA Treasurer, Bernard Holbrook, will detail financial items in Agenda Item #5.

The dreaded Phoenix federal pay system has also impacted the RCEA office. Problems for the RCEA are in the form of union dues. Since 2016, the RCEA has had difficulty with the correct

reconciliation of dues for members who are on various types of leave, have changed groups or classifications, who may be in acting positions, or who have been hired or left NRC. The auditors, the employer (NRC), and Treasury Board are all aware of these problems, and your RCEA dues Coordinator, Shelagh Till, has kept exemplary records and details of all of these issues. Just like most Phoenix issues, we are confident that they will be corrected eventually.

The December shutdown agreement between the RCEA, PIPSC, and NRC, was signed in April 2018. A full day on Monday, December 24 is included in this shutdown. It is usually half a day, but this year it will be a full day. Therefore, for members on a 37.5-hour work week, the shutdown hours will total 30 hours. Exception is for those employees who are required to work during the shutdown period because of operational requirements. For members whose regular work week is different, including part time, compressed work schedule, or shift for example, will have their December shutdown hours adjusted accordingly. If you are having any difficulty, or any pushback in scheduling the shutdown hours that you need, please contact the RCEA office.

The new collective agreements have been finalized and I realize that this round of negotiations took longer than anticipated. Numerous factors slowed the process. As we know, the former federal government had attempted to pass damaging legislation that would have gravely affected the membership and their unions. Fighting against these measures delayed the negotiating process, but I am pleased to say that most of these attempts to change the union rights and the benefits that our members have was not realized. The change in government in 2015 also slowed the process of the negotiations. We have another Federal election coming up in 1 year and at this point, I do not know if the next negotiations will be expedited or slowed due to the approaching election in October 2019.

The RCEA has filed Notice to Bargain for all 6 groups, and all updates will be posted on the website. Through the RCEA website, we will be inviting volunteers to join the bargaining committees. As most of the preliminary sessions are via email and conference calls, the volunteers may be from anywhere across Canada. From these committees a bargaining team is formed for final negotiations with the employer.

There are always questions around collective agreements, negotiations and labour relations, so we will give you a chance to ask them in Agenda Item #6 today, with Joan Van Den Bergh, the RCEA Labour Relations specialist and negotiator.

The RCEA encourages NRC to start Local Labour Management Consultation Committees. This forum is very important to bring forth issues that are localized to your Research Centre or Branch. If you are interested in participating on these committees, please contact our office and we will contact NRC.

The RCEA is an active member of several Treasury Board and National Joint Council Committees, including Union Management Relations Committee, Service Wide Occupational Health and Safety Committee, Phoenix Dues Sub Committee, Public Service Policy Management Committee, the Employee Wellness Task Force, and the Relocation Committee.

Mental Health in the workplace is an extremely important member issue for the RCEA. This subject was also an important objective brought forth by employees during the NRC Dialogue. This has been on the RCEA radar for quite some time. The RCEA and NRC, working in

cooperation with the Service Wide Occupational Health and Safety (SWOHS) Committee, have an initiative to support mental health in the workplace. The RCEA and NRC will collaborate to bring this initiative into the workplace as soon as possible. This will entail another survey in the new year. I know another survey will discourage some, but I encourage you to participate. This will give us a baseline of where and what the issues are at NRC and how to help employees and improve working conditions.

The most recent ratification package and voting was sent out through the NRC interoffice mail and Canada Post. It has been debated and discussed over many years, and has been decided that going forward, for ease of use and for monetary and time issues, the RCEA will be moving to an on-line/digital voting format. For this voting process, we will be requiring home and personal emails. The RCEA would not and cannot use NRC email addresses for union-only issues. Voting for the RCEA includes office elections, collective agreement ratifications, constitution voting, or voting of any kind will now only be through an online format. In order to ensure that you are included and your voice is heard, it is imperative to update your information with the RCEA. Please complete the Member Information Change form on the RCEA website to ensure your contact details are up to date.

Only members for whom we have personal/home emails will be sent voting links and, therefore, be able to vote.

I would like to take a minute to acknowledge all of the Stewards who devote their time to represent you, and your RCEA Management Committee who help guide me with the administration of your union office. Thank you, Joan Van Den Bergh, for moderating today. Most of you know Joan through negotiations and labour relations, but some may not know the other office staff; Laurette and Shelagh. With only three staff, they all do a tremendous amount of work. I would like to thank them for their unending dedication and service to the membership.

Thank you, to the entire membership for your commitment to your union and to those who joined us here today and online.

It is my honour and privilege to represent you and the Association.

Thank you,

5. Treasurer's and Auditor's Reports – B. Holbrook

The RCEA switched auditors from Deloitte to a local firm, McCay-Duff this past August. The transition went quite smoothly.

The financial statements being presented today are for the fiscal year July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. The RCEA's financial audit was performed by McCay-Duff this past August.

The RCEA is pleased to quote the auditor's opinion "*...the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the RCEA as at June 30th, 2018, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not for profit organizations.*"

This audit report was presented and approved at the Executive Committee meeting on September 12, 2018. A copy of this report is available, upon request, by contacting the RCEA office. Today I present an overview of the financial operations, revenue, expenses and the net assets balance.

The financial operations this year carry an excess of revenue over expenses of \$162,000.

This is important because in previous years we ran into some issues where our expenses were greater than our revenues and that is clearly unsustainable. In 2013, for example, we had losses of about \$58,000 and in 2014 we had \$130,000 that we were spending that was greater than what our revenue was. There were some heavy discussions on that, there was an increase in dues and now we are back in the black and that is where we need to be to be a healthy organization. We need to be healthy because we cannot rely on NRC paying us on a regular basis. You've heard about problems with Phoenix, we've had bumps with dues, so it's good that we are healthy and in a good cash position moving forward.

Revenue:

Revenues have increased year over year by 0.5% compared to the last fiscal year. That is not a lot, but because our condition right now is in the black, we have sufficient revenue to cover expenses. Because the RCEA was financially on the positive side, and because of potential Phoenix data entry problems with the implementation of a dues increase the Executive Committee voted to not increase dues in 2018.

We have discussed a bit about Phoenix. NRC is aware of the issue, so is PSPC, and the RCEA is cooperating in absolutely every way with any of the Phoenix issues that we have. Because of our financial situation, we do not expect that Phoenix will significantly impact the operations of our office.

Expenses:

General and office expenses have decreased by 0.7%, year over year. The main reasons for that is because of the office move to the Canotek address from the Stone House and that we did not have the legal fees that we were expecting to have this year. Those are the 2 things that helped bring it down. The largest expense that went up was wages, and that is pretty typical for an organization such as ours.

Legal expenses, I will expand a little bit more on. That includes grievances, labour relations, and workplace safety insurance board cases. We expect those costs to go up in 2018-2019, but it is very hard to predict. For 2017-2018, we expected those costs to increase as we expected some Board challenges during our collective agreement negotiations, but due to the fantastic work of Joan and NRC being relatively cooperative, we were able to get through without going to arbitration, so that kept our legal costs down, although we had budgeted for it, if it was required.

There was some discussion on the RCEA move from the Stone House to 5300 Canotek Road, which took place in the fall of 2017. This reduced our rental costs by about \$32,000, but there are some costs to that move. There had to be some repairs and upgrades to the new office space, so there are some capital expenses that were there and that is spread over multiple years. Right now, we are looking at a savings of about \$26,000 annually after capital costs. The office move was really in the best interest of the members and the Association.

The switch over from auditors; Deloitte to McCay-Duff, brings a savings of about \$8,500 and moving forward from that. However, the way that the costings of these things are done, they are split over different years. So the savings in 2017-2018 show in the auditor's report at \$2,600, but that is because the cost of the Deloitte audit are in the fiscal year that I am reporting on. So, part of that cost is from the previous Deloitte audit and part is from the McCay-Duff audit, because of where the costings break down.

Net Assets Balance:

The net assets opened at about \$993,000 and closed at \$1.1 million. This is an increase of 16% from the previous year. Not all of those funds are available to the Association. Because of the type of non-profit that we are, \$400,000 is internally restricted. That is there to manage capital remains. We cannot touch that amount. The amount of funds that we have in our investments and in operating cash are not quite as good as what the books imply.

Conclusion:

The RCEA will continue with fiscal restraints to minimize the cost to our membership. The next year may see some bargaining groups going into negotiations. If that occurs, we are expecting legal and consultation fees to rise. We have managed to eliminate the past deficits and we are going to continue to work on our expenses to give you the best value that we can, and to save operational costs whenever we can.

J. Van Den Bergh proposed the following motion:

MOTION: "To accept the Treasurer's Report of October 23, 2018."

Moved by A. Todd, ACRD, Saskatoon, Seconded by D. Walsh, KITS, Newfoundland.

Carried.

6. Collective Bargaining Update – J. Van Den Bergh

Since the last AGM, we have concluded bargaining for all 6 RCEA bargaining units. Collective Agreements have been signed and almost all retroactive pay has been issued. We understand there might still be some retroactive pay owing for members of the OP group and NRC Pay is now trying to catch up on overtime. We know overtime has been delayed while NRC was trying to handle 10 collective agreements and the retroactive pay, but they are still working on overtime from last April. They have not yet touched overtime for January, February, or March 2018, but Cathie Fraser is dealing primarily with the Phoenix and the Pay issues and she is on them constantly to move forward.

As has been said, we have served notice to bargain for all our groups. We are presently reviewing the current agreements and assessing what the issues for the next round might be. We are also considering the possibility of trying to get quicker agreements, by only seeking a wage increase and renewing the rest of the agreement. If the membership is interested in this, this is something we could propose to NRC and see if they are interested. In the Core Public Service, which is the Public Service where Treasury Board is the employer, bargaining has begun for some groups and there seems to be a sense among those Bargaining Agents that the government wants to get

agreements done before the next Federal election. However, as Cathie stated, that is the present situation and we do not know how that is going to proceed. At the same time, I have been told by several negotiators from PIPSC that Treasury Board negotiators do not have their bargaining mandates yet. They are supposed to have them in November for the Core.

With respect to sick leave and wellness, we do not expect to see any changes in the next round. PIPSC has moved ahead and is getting close to a deal on sick leave and wellness, but they do not anticipate that it will be done prior to the next round of bargaining. The PSAC has not made the same kind of progress and all of our collective agreements contain a provision that once PIPSC and PSAC have new deals, these deals will be presented to us and we will choose which one suits us best and that will then go to our members for ratification. We will be able to see what both sides have negotiated. Our original thinking was that there would only be one deal, we could not see that Treasury Board would want to have 2 separate sick leave and wellness plans. It looks like that may be the case now, so we will have to wait and see what is in those and judge which is best for our membership and then it has to be ratified by the membership. If it is not ratified, it does not go in the agreement.

Overall, our sense, based on talking to some of the other unions, is that things seem to be tightening up a bit with the Liberal government. In this last round, NRC's negotiator, every time she wanted to make a proposal or change something, she had to go back to Treasury Board, so they were back to exerting that same kind of control over every word, every thing that was on the table. It seems to be tightening up and this might affect our bargaining going forward but at this point we will just have to wait and see.

Question and Answer Session

R. Tom, HHT, Montreal - About the negotiations, I was just curious how the Postal Workers situation might influence the governments willingness to negotiate.

J. Van Den Bergh – They are a Crown corporation and conduct their own bargaining. I do not know if they require Treasury Board approval and mandates. They are seeking to make profits. They are a profit-making organization. They are under the Canada Labour Code. I do not see that they have much impact, but I do not know.

C. Pelletier, HHT, Ottawa – I have a comment. Right now, I am a Steward for M-54 and Sussex, but we need a Steward for Sussex. It is a lot better to have someone in person at the location. I have been covering it for the last year, so if anyone knows anyone or if anyone wants to be nominated, give the RCEA office a call.

A. Achterecke, ASPM, Ottawa – I am with the Operational Group and we were wondering about the ratification package that was voted on and the agreement was different. Joan, you were aware that, you thought that the HVAC group were getting their terminable allowance as the same time as everyone else, because that was sent in an email to Amy and, all of a sudden, I am out of the loop, and the HVAC guys are on the date of signing.

J. Van Den Bergh – At the bargaining table, we negotiated a terminable allowance for the HVAC members of the OP Group; the Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning group, because we were trying to match what had happened in the Core. In the Core, the PSAC negotiated a terminable

allowance for that occupational subgroup and that was effective date of signing of the collective agreement. At the bargaining table, that is what the agreement was, that it would be effective date of signing.

A. Achterecke, ASPM, Ottawa – No, it wasn't. It was never discussed that it would happen on the date of signing.

J. Van Den Bergh – I have it in my bargaining notes that it was to be effective date of signing. I made a mistake in the ratification package and with what went on the website and I put the wrong date for the effective date of the terminable allowance, I put it as a 2016 date. When you raised it with me, I did not quite recall and I did not go through my bargaining notes, so I raised it with the NRC negotiator, but then I went and looked at what happened in the Core to refresh my memory as it has been a few months, and the Core agreement was date of signing. I went back through my bargaining notes and my bargaining notes said date of signing. I understand there was a meeting with the Management Committee of the RCEA and members of the OP bargaining team were invited to provide their notes that they took at the bargaining table that might be different than mine and, so far, we have not received any notes from anyone on the bargaining team. So, the agreement at the table, from my notes, was effective date of signing. I did make an error. I have apologized for that error. What the members of the HVAC subgroup received, was what was agreed to at the bargaining table.

A. Achterecke, ASPM, Ottawa – There is not a member on the bargaining committee that remember anything being discussed that it was as of the date of signing. Why would we agree to at date of signing when the downtown Core...the HVAC group lost 4 months of terminable allowance because their terminable allowance, the rest of the group it happened in August 2014, their increments, their restructuring, but their contract was signed in December. So those HVAC guys lost 4 months of backpay on terminable allowance, while the HVAC group at NRC lost 22 months. So, if you are going to compare us to downtown, let's compare to downtown. It should have been at the time of signing of downtown, not of our collective bargaining agreement.

J. Van Den Bergh – Well, it's never been done that way for anything. Our goal at the bargaining table was to match what the downtown groups received in terms of increases, which we did, and the downtown group it was effective date of signing. Most things in a collective agreement are effective date of signing, unless otherwise specified. All I can say, Al, is in my notes, I have it date of signing. I have spoken with the NRC negotiator, she said it was agreed date of signing. That is now my recollection. The people who got the terminable allowance got it as per the agreement at the bargaining table.

A. Achterecke, ASPM, Ottawa – We are not being represented very well. The OP group are a very disgruntled group. Not only the HVAC group. The whole lot of them now because one thing is voted on and something else is written up. Now they are seeking legal counsel. And if you're going to go by what downtown got, so if we have any problems do we go by PSAC's agreement? Or do we go by the RCEA's agreement?

J. Van Den Bergh – We go by our agreement.

A. Achterecke, ASPM, Ottawa – But your big thing is that's what downtown got.

J. Van Den Bergh – No. You were at the bargaining table. The whole thing was that the PSAC, for their Operational group, got substantial increases for a lot of the trades. Our goal was to match those substantial increases. We did not have our own pay study. We didn't have the data that the PSAC had. We were trying to match so that, accounting for the differences in hours of work, that our members were not paid less than the employees in the Core Public Service. And we achieved that. That was NRC's goal at the bargaining table and it was our goal at the bargaining table. If you have notes that says it was other than what my notes say, please bring them forward.

A. Achterecke, ASPM, Ottawa – I don't have notes.

J. Van Den Bergh – I asked everyone on the bargaining team to take notes.

A. Achterecke, ASPM, Ottawa – Allan Whetter has notes and there is nowhere in there that says anything.

C. Fraser – I have asked for notes from anybody on this team, to bring them forward. I have not received any.

A. Achterecke, ASPM, Ottawa – Well, you know what? You say you have notes and you say you talked to a lawyer. You know what? We have no proof of anything.

J. Van Den Bergh – I would be happy to show you my bargaining notes.

A. Achterecke, ASPM, Ottawa – If you were talking to a lawyer, how come the bargaining committee didn't have that opportunity to sit with the lawyer and have him explain it to us? We are getting stuff second-hand. Right now, we don't believe second-hand.

C. Fraser – Phone us at the office. Come in and speak to us, because this is a long discussion that we can't really do here.

A. Achterecke, ASPM, Ottawa – It is a long discussion.

C. Fraser – Come to the office. Absolutely.

A. Achterecke, ASPM, Ottawa – Why would I ever be a member of a bargaining committee when we get the wool pulled over our eyes? Because that's what happens.

C. Fraser – I'm sorry.

There were no further questions.

Addendum: The RCEA Management Committee met with the OP Chair, as he requested; at that meeting we gave him the RCEA's legal opinion and showed the RCEA bargaining notes. We asked that if he wanted to set up another meeting with the entire OP team, we would be available. Please phone us at the office to set something up.

7 Adjournment

MOTION: “To adjourn the Annual General Meeting.”

Moved by M. Birt, AST, Ottawa. Seconded by R. Tom, HHT, Montreal.

Carried.

Meeting adjourned.