

MEMO

To: Vancouver Public Library Board Membes

From: CUPE Local 391 Bargaining Committee

Date: August 14, 2007

Re: Library Workers Deserve Pay Equity!

CUPE Local 391 has made pay equity a priority in the current round of bargaining with the Vancouver Public Library. Pay equity was identified as the top priority when we did a pre-bargaining survey of our membership. Library workers know they are underpaid and are prepared to do something to fix this.

What is pay equity?

The Canadian Human Rights Commission, in a February 2001 report to Parliament, says:

"Pay equity is a human right. Human rights are about respect for the equality and dignity of all people. They require that we treat others fairly and avoid actions which disadvantage people because of personal characteristics such as their sex, age, colour, disability, or religion.

"When the value of work done mainly by women is not appropriately recognized, the people performing it are not paid and treated equitably. This is a form of sex discrimination. If your income is low because you are in a job performed mostly by women, your fundamental rights to equality and dignity are not being respected. Pay equity is a way of identifying and eliminating such discrimination.

"The principle of non-discrimination in wages is a well-established part of international human rights law, and is enshrined in several human rights instruments to which Canada has been a signatory for decades. The *Convention (No. 100) concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value (Equal Remuneration Convention)*, adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1951 and ratified by Canada in 1972, requires that governments take active measures to achieve equal pay for work of equal value. The *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 1966 and ratified by Canada in 1976, lists equal pay for work of equal value as a fundamental right

and stresses its importance to the achievement of fairness in conditions of work. The Covenant, it is worth noting, is one of the three core universal human rights documents – the other two being the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* – which together comprise the *International Bill of Rights*. The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, adopted by the UN in 1979 and ratified by Canada in 1981, commits signatories to removing employment discrimination against women, in part by ensuring equal pay for work of equal value.”

(source: http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/publications/special_report-en.asp)

Most experts agree that to achieve pay equity, two measures are necessary. First, there must be a gender neutral point weighted job evaluation plan to properly evaluate positions. Second, there must be a comparison of the female wage line to the male wage line to determine the extent of the pay equity problem. Only then can we know the extent of the problem and what steps are necessary to address it.

The original bargaining proposals from CUPE 391 called for these two measures.

In July, 2007, CUPE produced a report on pay equity in lower mainland libraries “Overdue: Pay Equity for Library Workers”. The report is available at: http://cupe.ca/updir/Library_Pay_Equity_July_2007.pdf. A fact sheet is also available at: http://cupe.ca/updir/Library_Pay_Equity_Fact_Sheet_6jul07.pdf

British Columbia is one of the few provinces that does not have pay equity legislation. Despite the lack of legislation, other workers in the public sector have made significant advances. The provincial government has funded pay equity in the public sector, but not in the municipal or library sectors.

Public library workers look at the wages paid for comparable jobs in school, college, and university libraries, and understand there is a big pay equity problem. Workers in these other libraries have received pay equity adjustments and are paid considerably more than public library workers.

Public library workers in Ontario have benefited significantly from pay equity legislation. Librarians at the Toronto Public Library make over \$7 an hour more than librarians at VPL due to pay equity adjustments.

The problem is compounded by the fact that most public library jobs are paid less than comparable municipal positions.

The Burnaby Public Library recognized this in its recent settlement with CUPE Local 23. BPL and the Union agreed to the following:

"The Board and the Union agree to establish a Joint Committee to oversee a review of all library classifications (except the Page classification) in comparison to City of Burnaby classifications. The review will be done using the existing job evaluation procedures and the intent of the parties is to start on the review as soon as possible following ratification of the Memorandum of Agreement and to have the review completed prior to 2007 December 31. Any adjustments to class values will be implemented beginning on 2008 January 01 provided that the implementation cost shall be limited to the equivalent of no more than two percent (2%) of the Library straight-time payroll for the year 2007, and one percent (1%) per year as required on 2009 January 01, 2010 January 01 and 2011 January 01."

In addition, BPL (and the City of Burnaby) and CULE Local 23 agreed to implement a gender neutral point weighted job evaluation (JE) plan in 2008 with wage adjustments limited to 1% of payroll each year.

While this won't achieve full pay equity, it's 2 major steps forward.

Pay equity proposals are also on the bargaining table at the Richmond Public Library, the Coquitlam Public Library, the Surrey Public Library, and the Greater Victoria Public Library.

CUPE Local 391 believes it is time for VPL too to take a major step toward pay equity. We realize we won't be able to achieve pay equity in one round of bargaining. We have modified our position to be similar to the BPL agreement on the JE plan. Our actual amended proposal is:

"The Employer and the Union agree to establish a Joint Committee as soon as possible following the date of ratification to review the new job evaluation plan being developed jointly by the City of Coquitlam and CUPE Local 386 to determine if the new plan is acceptable to the

Employer and the Union. The Joint Committee shall attempt to agree on the new job evaluation plan by 2007 December 31.

"In the event the Joint Committee is not able to agree to the terms of a new job evaluation plan, the matter shall be referred to a mutually agreed single arbitrator who shall determine what the new plan shall be.

"When the new job evaluation plan is implemented, the implementation cost shall be limited to the equivalent of no more than 1% of the Library straight-time payroll per year."

We have chosen the City of Coquitlam JE plan (as did Burnaby) as the model because the plan is near completion, with GVRD and CUPE's participation, and we are confident it can appropriately measure the jobs at VPL.

A similar JE plan was recently implemented at the Port Moody Public Library (and the City of Port Moody). Library jobs increased from \$1 to over \$3 an hour. We believe this is an indication of how library jobs should be paid if they are properly evaluated.

It is time for VPL to end what the Canadian Human Rights Commission calls "a form of sex discrimination". It's not about how much it cost, as we have been told by VPL and the City of Vancouver. (CUPE Local 391's estimate of the cost over the 5 year term of the agreement is about \$912,000 – VPL has already saved about this amount due to the strike). It's about ending discrimination and defending human rights.

We hope you support ending discrimination and defending human rights.