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What is the GVRD? And What Does it Mean for Your Bargaining?

The GVRD's Role in the Lower Mainland

- Deliver essential utility services like drinking water, sewage treatment, recycling and garbage disposal that are most economical and effective to provide on a regional basis.
- Protect and enhance the quality of life in our region by managing and planning growth and development, as well as protecting air quality and green spaces.

FUNDING/OPERATION: GVRD membership fees are based on property assessments within each municipality/district. Voting strength of each municipality/district is based on population, meaning Surrey may take over as the largest voting block if their population overtakes Vancouver's in the near future.

The GVRD's Role in Bargaining

- As a committee of the GVRD, the Labour Relations Bureau represents municipal employers who choose to use the GVRD for negotiations. Currently employers of 30 CUPE locals are using GVRD services.
- The Labour Relations Department of the GVRD provides staff, research and resources to municipal employers for their bargaining and human resources needs.
- For most CUPE locals, this means that a GVRD negotiator is the spokesperson for the employer at your table.

The GVRD Bargaining Climate, Historically

- For almost 4 decades municipal employers have been using the GVRD bargaining structure and services. Various employers have at times bargained independently from the GVRD structure.
- Similarly, over this time CUPE locals have at times combined their bargaining efforts either in response to employer regional bargaining structures or to pursue regional bargaining goals.

- B2000 (Bargaining 2000) was one of the more concerted efforts for CUPE locals to negotiate as a group. It included a central bargaining committee that negotiated on behalf of all cooperating locals. The central committee made recommendations to the greater caucus of locals, allowing locals to then make their own final decisions.
- Following the B2000 round, many locals returned to independent bargaining with satisfactory results:
 - they were able to follow a wage pattern established by locals that concluded an early deal;
 - settlements reflected common wage, term and benefit language;
 - meaningful focus on local issues.

Employer Motivations to use GVRD Bargaining Services

Several strategic advantages can come from employers bargaining regionally:

- collective agenda setting;
- reduced municipal bargaining and human resources costs;
- less accessibility and responsiveness to employee groups;
- “buck passing” capacity;
- reducing employee groups’ access to information;
- increased ability to erode benefits.

Advantages for CUPE Locals to Bargain Regionally

Similarly, there can be several advantages to locals bargaining regionally:

- setting consistent demands;
- stronger cohesion to back up demands;
- matching employers’ bargaining structure to avoid diluting locals’ cohesion;
- exploring regionally applicable items;
- expanding isolated bargaining successes from previous contracts to other locals ;
- as insurance companies merge and reduce competition in pricing and services, pooled locals can have greater bargaining leverage for getting meaningful benefits as employers can group together with the same carrier for lower costs.

How Employers Can Leave the GVRD Bargaining structure

Employers can detach from GVRD bargaining by notifying them in writing, giving 2 years’ notice.

- If the end of the notice period falls during negotiations, the effective day will be after that round of bargaining concludes.
- Locals wishing to encourage their employer to leave joint, regional bargaining can explore whether their employer can accomplish bargaining tasks on their own for less money than their GVRD bargaining fees, and with more internal control and less submission to GVRD collective priorities.