NEWS & VIEWS

#118 – 2419 Bellevue Avenue
West Vancouver, B.C. V7V 4T4
Phone: 604.925.7447 Fax: 604.926.7059 Email: info@wvmea.com

WEST VANCOUVER MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION

Volume 35● No. 1 **February 2017**

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT



Hello again to all of our members and a Happy New Year!

I hope everyone is having a good start in 2017, and are off on the right foot. It certainly has been a very difficult and challenging time, not only for driving and commuting to and from work, but also for walking and hiking around our district. So many people have commented that they have either slipped or taken a fall this winter. Motor vehicle accidents seem to be at an all-time high on the North Shore as people continually drive well in excess of posted speed limits even in winter road conditions. Please allow additional time especially in the mornings and the inside slow lane is always a much more enjoyable ride! Just smile and turn up the tunes.

Another thing I have noticed this past year and early days in the New Year, is the increasing number of our members who have graciously decided to retire. These colleagues and co-workers some of whom you may have worked with from anywhere from a couple of years to 10-30 plus years. The baby boomers from the 50'sand 60's are definitely moving on to the next chapter in their lives. I anticipate these numbers to grow in the not too distant future.

That reminds me to encourage everyone to sign up for the pension seminars that are offered several times throughout the year. These are highly informative and address not only those approaching retirement, but also anyone who pays into the plan and would like guidance or direction on how to best plan for and build a solid foundation for themselves and family in distant years.

Update on bargaining, Bruce, Phil, Sandra and the respective shop stewards have been continuing with the process at the table and they will update when they have relevant and pertinent information to share with our members.

continued on Page 2

FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER



Well I hope you've all had a restful holiday and welcome back!

School District Retirement
When employees begin discussions about retiring we advise they contact their union office in advance of any resignation or declaration. We can help with information about timely notice, when to approach the Municipal Pension Plan group and issues around gratuity, Vacation and Sick Leave banks.

Professional Development Days
Considerable effort is put forward by the District and Pro D committee(s) to organize programs that are beneficial to as many departments as possible. It is always difficult to find fresh and meaningful instruction that is still relevant to this industry's work. Be aware that both the District and your committees rely on feedback after the Pro D as well need your ideas in advance of the Pro D as a way to bring meaningful programs and keep them interesting. If there is a lack of feedback or employee suggestions programs will be decided without your input. Also keep in mind that employees are required to attend scheduled Pro D functions unless they have requested a leave of absence from their immediate supervisor or have received approval not to attend.

continued on Page 2

②	2017 Scholarships Available
③	Notice of Annual General Meeting
④	2017 Handy Financial Planning Facts

FROM THE PRESIDENT *continued from Page 1*

Our AGM is fast approaching and will be held on April 3rd 2017 details will follow. As this will be the second year of a two year term for your executive, we will not be seeking any elections at this point in time.

Details will also follow for our up and coming 2017 scholarships for Academics, Trades and Visual Arts.

In closing I would just like to relay to our members the tremendous response that our WVMEA office has received in regards to the thermal mugs and pins that were distributed in recognition of the 75 year anniversary of our West Vancouver Municipal Employees Association.

This was a joint effort shared by our own office team, our Executive, Shop Stewards, Administrative Assistant and various other volunteers who all contributed both time and assistance.

It's great to know that this gesture was truly so well accepted and appreciated for this milestone that we are all very proud of. Thank you so very much to all of you that helped to make this happen.

Clive Mynott, President



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The door prize winners from the February General Membership meeting were Heather Kulbida (School Board) and Dave Watt (Municipality). At this meeting there were also four "surprise" $25 Save-on Foods Gift Card door prizes won by: Kelly Bailey (Library), Kristina Schultze (Municipality), Brian McGuinness (Library) and Jennifer Hinkelman (Municipality). Congratulations everyone!



2017 SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Just a reminder that once again the WVMEA is offering three scholarships. This year, we have increased the amount to $2,000 for each scholarship:

1. The *WVMEA Academic Scholarship*;
2. The *Roy Hunter Memorial Scholarship for the Visual Arts*; and
3. The *WVMEA Trades Scholarship*.

Please go to our website (wvmea.com) to learn more, or call Sandra at the WVMEA office to obtain an application package. **Deadline for applications is August 10, 2017**

FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER *continued from Page 1*

Change to the waiting period for Employment Insurance

As of January 1st 2017, the waiting period will be reduced from two weeks to one week for all EI programs, including disability benefits. The duration of ***EI Sick*** benefits was previously 17 weeks, which included a two-week waiting period plus 15 weeks of benefit payments. As of January 1st, 2017, the total ***EI Sick*** benefit period will be 16 weeks which now includes a one-week waiting period and 15 weeks of paid benefits. Regular EI benefits range from 14 weeks to maximum of 45 weeks coverage and the maximum benefit paid is capped at $543.00 per week.

Bargaining Update

We have received numerous requests from Casual and Permanent employees with proposals asking for reasonable improvements to their working conditions. Of these we see a common theme and repeats of proposal requests from 4 years ago, and years before that, which the employer has denied negotiation after negotiation.

This year the WVMEA will be asking members to think long and hard about how much longer they are prepared to settle for the status quo. At each negotiation session, employees are hampered from achieving contract improvements for the sole and ***unchanging rationale*** that it is simply not in the budget. If the employer's response is the same every four years it is evident little to no effort has been made to ensure funding is enhanced and in place. I believe this ***unchanging rationale*** speaks volumes to how much West Vancouver's District Council and the many WV employers care about the needs of loyal, dedicated and hard-working employees. It is known that the population of West Vancouver is shrinking and WV workers are looking to other districts shopping for cheaper homes, shorter commutes and more attractive working conditions. The District's announcement to create more rental space in WV to attract workers and young families is simply a short sighted act of the community; there is no long term benefit in this scenario suggesting workers or young families rent.

Recent numbers show some exempt and senior management have done very well year to year with their own increases and benefits.

WVMEA is seeing more discontent expressed over these inequities as well as more members coming forward sharing with us their difficulties keeping up with the cost of living in a district that refuses to keep pace with rising costs. Both the WVMEA and your Negotiating Committee have forwarded your proposals and have vocalized your concerns across the bargaining table. First impressions are not to expect much from the employer this round of bargaining unless workers are prepared to be strong in their demands.

Bruce Scott, Business Manager

FROM THE BUSINESS AGENT



Hello to all of our WVMEA members! I trust that all of you have heard about the retroactive pay that any of you who worked hours in 2016 should have received. It was paid out on the last pay cheque of December 2016. Please ensure that the amount you received is accurate and also that your current rate of pay has increased by 1.5% from your 2016 pay rate. Also if you know of anyone who worked for the District, Library or Police Civilian units in 2016, and is no longer here, then please advise them to contact payroll at the Municipal Hall.

Hand in hand with this increase is the fact that we are currently involved in Collective Bargaining with three of our Employer groups – the District, the Library and the Police Civilian units. We have met with the Employer over the course of six days since November and we have two more future dates scheduled. This is a very important round of Collective Bargaining for the Association as we are addressing serious areas in your Collective Agreements that relate to job security, as well as benefit and pension coverage, for our members. It is in these times that solidarity amongst our membership is critical. We need to show the Employer that we are unified and unwavering in our attempts to achieve our goals this round. In the coming months we will be providing you with updates on our progress, as well as involving you in discussions on how to best display your support. We thank you for your continuing participation in this process.

Over the past few months I'm sure you are aware of all of the extreme weather conditions we have experienced. In particular, the dramatic amounts of snow that have led to a lot of our Municipal staff putting in excessive hours keeping communities clear and safe for the residents of this District. Due to the large number of overtime hours worked, the Employer has agreed to let outside staff who have accrued overtime and then banked this overtime, to extend the deadline for taking it in time. As such, all time in excess of five days each must be taken as time off by November 30th 2017 or it will be paid out by the second pay period of December 2017. This is a six-month extension from the current overtime banks pay-out deadline of the last pay period in May. I know that the Employer is grateful for all of your hard work over these months, and we at the WVMEA are grateful for this extension.

Finally, on a more positive and celebratory note, one of our long-time members, and a former President of the Executive Board of the WVMEA, Judy Shaughnessy, has retired from her role at the WVPD. We wish Judy all the best in her retirement and thank her for her many contributions to this Association.

Phil Bargen, Business Agent

WVMEA'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year's AGM is set for **Monday, April 3, 2017** in the cafeteria at West Van Secondary School (1750 Mathers Avenue, West Vancouver) at 5:15 p.m. Each member will be receiving a *Notice of Meeting* at their home address that will provide complete details. If you do not receive this information by March 27, please give Sandra a call at the Association Office. She will confirm your address and forward you the package immediately.

A notice was sent out last September looking for volunteers to fill two Trustee positions. Two members have offered to step into the role – Peter Marton (Municipal) and Ian Moody (School District). Along with the current Trustee Blaine Barden, the three Trustees meet twice a year (booked off from work, and lunch is provided!) to review the business of the Association and prepare a report for presentation at the AGM.

We thank Peter and Ian for volunteering to fill these positions on behalf of the members.

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

If you have moved recently or are planning to move, *please forward your new address to us* at:



Moving ?

#118 - 2419 Bellevue Avenue
West Vancouver, B.C. V7V 4T4
[**or** fax it to us at 604-926-7059, **or** email us at info@wvmea.com]

Name: _____

New Address: _____

City: _____P.C: _____

Home/Cell Phone #: _____

Effective Date: _____

Place of Work: _____

Signature: _____

Your assistance in keeping us "up to date" is much appreciated.

2017 HANDY FINANCIAL PLANNING FACTS

Basic Old Age Security Pension (maximum) $578.53
(January to March 2017 – reviewed quarterly)

Old Age Security 15% clawback commences with an income above $74,789. The full OAS pension is eliminated when a pensioner's net income hits $119,615.

Guaranteed Income Supplement
(maximums - adjusted quarterly)
- Single $864.09
- Spouse of Non-pensioner $864.09
- Spouse of Pensioner $520.17
- Spouse of Allowance Recipient..... $520.17

Spouse's Allowance (SPA) (maximums)
- Regular $1,098.70
- Survivor $1,309.67

Canada Pension Plan (maximums)
- CPP contribution employer & employee $2,564.10
- Retirement Pension at age 65 (avg $629.33) ... $1,114.17
- Disability Benefit (avg $926.63) $1,313.66
- Survivor's Benefit (under age 65) $604.32
- Survivor's Benefit (age 65 and over)..... $668.50
- Children of Deceased or Disabled Contributor's Benefit $241.02
- Combined Pensions:
  - Survivor/Retirement (retired at age 65)..... $1,114.17
  - Survivor/Disability..... $1,313.66
- Death Benefit (maximum lump sum)..... $2,500.00

Yearly Maximum Pensionable Earning (YMPE) for Year 2017 ..... $55,300.00

Registered Retirement Savings Plans
Maximum annual deduction limit is $26,010, less Pension Adjustments for benefits from Registered Pension Plans. Based on 2016 earnings and pension benefits, plus any unused contribution room from previous years.

Tax-Free Savings Account
The 2017 TFSA limit is $5,500.00

Basic personal tax exemption $11,635.00

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

DID YOU KNOW?
Dispensing fees for prescriptions vary in pharmacies across the Lower Mainland. Here's the costs in some of the major stores:

Costco $4.49
Loblaws - $9.99
London Drugs - $10.00
Safeway - $10.00
Save-on-Foods - $10.00
Shoppers Drug Mart - $10.60
Walmart - $10.00

WELCOME TO NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS

We'd like to welcome the following people to our Association:
Christopher Bennett, Karen Chhabra, Michelle Dickie, Steven Dove, Sanam Ganjian, Kristine Goepel, Kayla Hamer-Jackson, Diana Hernandez, Martina Iring, Heather Keith, Wesley Kilpatrick, Kyle McCallum, Amy Myo, Andrew Pyett, Siegfried Quante, Maryam Bana Ramazan, Patrick Rea, Susan Redmond, Sanam Parvaneh Roboubi, Connie Russell, Kristin Sederholm, Elaine Skehan, Aaron Sze, Ioana Tatar, Graeme Thicke, Shirin Yadegari

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

BABY CONGRATULATIONS TO …



This information has been deleted due to electronic privacy issues. Our hard copies contain this information, and are available throughout our work sites.

PENSION NEWS

The new Winter/Spring Pension Seminar schedule has been published and should be posted at all worksites. *Making the Most of your Pension* (2 hours) is aimed at mid-career plan members while *Approaching Retirement* (1½ hours) provides information for members within five years of retirement. There is an easy-to-use online registration system available – go to the Pension Plan's website at mpp.pensionsbc.ca for more information and to register. The presentation materials are also available on-line at this site to better prepare you for the seminar.

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

REMINDER: COSTCO MEMBERSHIP

Members are reminded that the Association has purchased a "business membership" to Costco which provides for a "transferable" card that may be borrowed from the Association (for *cash*-only purchases — no cheques, and photo i.d. may be required.) If you are interested in borrowing this card, please give Sandra a call (604-925-7447) to make arrangements.

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

WWW.WVMEA.COM

Check out current bulletins, newsletters, Collective Agreements and hot links on the Association's website.