

MINUTES  
of the  
Atlantic Regional Council Meeting  
April 6-7, 2024

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am on April 6, with Chris Di Liberatore in the chair and the following members in attendance:

Director for Non-Treasury Board members NL, Natasha Mercer  
Director for Non-Treasury Board Maritimes, Brian Oldford  
Director for NL, Leanne Moss  
Director for NL, Mark Power  
Director for NS, Ellen Cross  
Director for NS and Alternate REVP, Denise Reynolds  
Director for PEI, Heather Ford  
Director for PEI, Kim Asling-Ings  
Director for NB, Darren Smith  
Director for Young Workers, Ryan Smith  
Director for Francophone members, Caroline Morais Gregan  
Director for Women Maritimes, Jackie Ellis  
Director for Members with Disabilities, Gerry Finnigan  
Director for Racially Visible Members, Farid Tourkmani  
Director for Indigenous Members, Angela Decker  
Director for DCL's, Jonathan Cox  
Director for 2SLGBTQIA+, Sarah Bolger

Council Regrets:

Director for Women NL, Gail Budgell  
Director for NB, Darlene Bembridge

Guests & Observers:

Sharon DeSousa, PSAC National Vice President  
Danny Cavanaugh, President of the NSFL  
Krista Williams, Client Services Manager with Managed Health Care Services Inc.  
Alisha Campbell, National President - UNE  
Charlene Arsenault, CEIU National Voice President for PEI & NB



Debbie Morris, CEIU National Vice President for NL & NS  
Jan Pennington, AGR Regional VP East (NL & NS)  
Dorothy McRae, AGR Regional VP West (NB & PEI)  
Rae McCleave, UHEW, Regional VP for NB & NS (fisheries and oceans)  
Jody LaPierre, UVAE RVP head office Charlottetown

### **Indigenous Opening**

Chris invited Angela Decker to introduce the knowledge keeper, Geri LeBlanc for the indigenous opening.

Geri Musqua LeBlanc is a mother, grandmother and great grandmother. She is a residential school survivor. She is traditionally known as Red Eagle Woman.

### **Harassment Statement**

The PSAC statement on harassment was read aloud. Holmann Richard was identified as the anti-harassment coordinator and phone number was provided.

### **Scent Free**

Chris reminded everyone that all PSAC events are smoke free and scent free. You can access the full policy on the PSAC website.

### **Hours of Session**

Saturday, April 6 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 7 9:00 a.m. - Noon

m/s Gerry Finnigan and Brian Oldford

That the hours of session be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED

### **Moment of Silence**

A moment was given to remember our Brothers, Sisters and friends who have passed away since our last meeting. The following names were read into the record:

Rheal LaCroix UTE 90006



Marc Andre Guinard GSU 60009

Margaret Underhill USJE 60001

David Clow DCL 90140

Léa Roche UVAE 90001

Beth Smith-Cooper UVAE 90001

## **Adoption of Agenda**

Agenda presented

- I. PSAC statement on harassment
- II. PSAC scent free policy
- III. Hours of session
- IV. Moment of silence
- V. Adoption of agenda
- VI. Welcome and introductions
- VII. REVP update
- VIII. Regional coordinator's update
- IX. Adoption of council committee reports
- X. Adoption of REVP and directors' reports
- XI. Meeting of the next regional council
- XII. Action Network
- XIII. Upcoming events (i.e. day of mourning, pride, labour day)
- XIV. PSAC communication (*Brian Oldford*)
- XV. REVP calendar (*Brian Oldford*)
- XVI. Other

m/s Chris Di Liberatore and Jonathan Cox

That the agenda be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED



## **REVP Welcome**

Chris welcomes everyone and requests a quick round of introductions, including our observers in the back of the room and invites PSAC National Executive Vice-President, Sharon DeSousa to address the room. Chris provided a brief introduction and a very warm welcome to Sharon.

Sharon introduced the budget to the National Convention. A few points made:

- We couldn't ignore inflation and have to acknowledge the 2023 national strike. For which we spent over 60 million on.
- We must prepare ourselves for the potential election of a conservative gov't. Conservatives are not a friend of unions and workers. They have cut public services, and it will impact us. We won't only be fighting for jobs we will fight to exist as a union.

Sharon provided an overview of the budget to the PSAC National 2024 Convention.

- The budget planning began in November 2023 with the AEC and a draft was approved and was then went to standing finance committee and as well to the NBoD for discussion in December 2023.
- A pre-convention finance committee was held in February 2024. Some of the highlights are as follows:
  1. We were looking for a no dues increase. PSAC is a healthy financial organization and because of that it is projecting a deficit of 4.1 million. That's ok we want to make sure our members have that service. Past years operation service can cover this loss.
  2. Strike fund has 12.5 million as a positive balance. We want to maintain contribution but replenish strike fund without increasing dues to members. \$1.50 per member per month, from operation fund to strike fund. By



transferring that money by end of 2027, it would add 12.8 million to that fund - goal being 25 million in strike fund by end of 2027.

3. Certain areas of regional activities haven't been increased in a long time and as such some of these increases in the budget are:
  - Regional Council Budget Increase by 33%
  - Regional Area Councils increased by 11.1 %
  - Doubled the budget for Regional Campaigns, which will increase to \$100k annually.

This budget belongs to the floor of convention, and they will determine if it meets the needs of the membership. The work has been done at every single level.

Question asked:

What does the 2 million dollars for resolutions mean?

Question answered:

Resolution that comes to convention and contains an action (either a campaign or a one-time event in a cycle). If it is within 1 cycle it is called a one-time cost. Any leftover resolutions that is not approved from floor goes to the NBoD, however, the board cannot approve anything that carries on a life - only ones that have a one time cycle.

## **REVP Update**

### Bargaining and Mobilization

#### FB Group

PSAC/CIU members who work at Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) will be conducting a strike vote across the country starting next week on Wednesday April 10.



After almost two years of negotiations, PSAC declared impasse in bargaining in September 2023 after CBSA refused to budge on key issues like wages in line with other law enforcement agencies, better job security, access to telework, and protections from contracting out.

While strike votes are underway, PSAC and CBSA are proceeding to Public Interest Commission (PIC) hearings April 10 and 22 with the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board.

Following the PIC hearings, the commission will release its non-binding recommendations to reach an agreement. If members vote in favour of a strike mandate, PSAC will be in a legal strike position seven days after the board releases its report.

Workers at CBSA are also still waiting for the government to make good on a pledge to provide CBSA law enforcement personnel with the same retirement benefits - 25 and out -as other law enforcement and public safety workers.

## **NPF**

In Ontario and Quebec, over 500 workers, PSAC/UNDE members, have been on strike for more than 70 days, fighting for fair wages.

After renewed NPF negotiations broke off, Ian Poulter, CEO of the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS), which employs Staff of the Non-Public Funds (NPF), sent an email to employees panning the union.

In the email, Poulter said "PSAC-UNDE was unwilling to accept what we offered." He feels that his offer of a 12 per cent increase over three years is sufficient because it's more than what the Program and Administrative Services group (PA group) in the core public service accepted, which was 12 per cent over four years.

What he failed to mention is the drastic difference in wages between these two groups. With an average annual salary of \$43,300, NPF members are making



substantially less than PA group members earning \$71,600 per year on average. A 12 per cent increase goes a lot further when you're already making more money. But NPF workers are some of the lowest paid in the public service, so these are clearly very different circumstances.

CFMWS continues to claim, "there are no additional funds for wage increases beyond what has been offered," yet they're opting to instead invest their resources in replacement workers and private security officers to keep watch over our members on the picket line.

They're spending money to keep workers on strike rather than negotiating a fair deal.

This employer has shown a complete disregard for the well-being and dignity of our members, and their stubbornness not only prolongs the strike, but deepens the financial strain on our members.

We have no choice but to keep ramping up our actions to bring attention to this injustice. We'll continue to take our message to the Minister of National Defence and other decision-makers in Parliament until they intervene to bring NPF back to the table with a new mandate to reach a fair contract.

In the Atlantic region, we have NPF workers who are watching closely as this strike unfolds for their colleagues. Each base has its own separate contract.

Chris asked that everyone show their support and provided placards to hand out to write a message on and will take a group picture and send out to the mobilization team in Ontario and Quebec, as well as post on our social media pages.

### **IMP Gander**

PSAC/UNDE members working for IMP in Gander had an arbitration meeting last week.

The employer had offered 4.7%/3%/2.25%, which is less than what other groups have settled for and does nothing to address the looming recruitment problems that they



have. By the end of the hearing, they offered a market adjustment worth \$3/hour (~10%) for the life of the agreement. Even after this, we have heard that the arbitrator signaled that the employer will still have work to do to meet us with a fair agreement.

PSAC and UNDE have launched a campaign to support members at IMP Gander to address a big issue with the employer – deployment to IMP Comox.

Deployments are common in this bargaining unit and the members acknowledge that. They routinely go with aircraft to ensure that it can continually operate in a search and rescue situation. Typically, the Employer canvasses for volunteers to be deployed and there is virtually never a lack of volunteers. Members generally do not take issue with being deployed, and typically, deployments come with many opportunities to work additional overtime hours. Deployments can vary in length but are typically between two and ten days. The deployments are to support aircraft during search and rescue situations, as a mobile repair party (MRP), or for training. These types of deployments are routine, accepted and non-controversial within the membership.

However, there are severe recruitment and retention issues in Comox, British Columbia. The staffing levels are currently less than 50% of regular capacity. Despite the serious problem with recruitment and retention there, rather than work with the Union to find solutions to this issue, the Employer has forced members from the Gander bargaining unit to uproot their lives and move across the country to temporarily work in Comox.

In return for being sent across the country, away from their families and their regular lives for three weeks to fill in for the understaffing in Comox, employees are offered nothing from the Employer in terms of financial incentives. These members received nothing more than their regular pay for the period of the deployment.

These deployments are obviously a huge disruption to one's life. We have proposed amended language that would limit the length of time and the amount of times that





one can be involuntarily deployed. This limitation would mitigate some of the more difficult aspects of any such involuntary deployment, while still allowing the Employer to have some flexibility. Fundamentally, the Gander employees should not be used to allow the Employer to shirk its responsibility to address recruitment and retention issues in Comox.

As of January 15, 2024, seven employees have been deployed to Comox. Five of those deployments were for three weeks and two deployments were for two weeks. Every single deployment was involuntary. No employee has voluntarily gone on this deployment.

The Employer offers no additional compensation to employees for shipping them across the country and disrupting their lives. Further, the Employer is taking the position that since this is scheduled, they can use the reverse order of seniority to slot in most if not all technicians to one rotation.

More importantly, the Employer has not proposed any financial fixes to the recruitment and retention problems in Comox. They have acknowledged that there is a staffing crisis there. But rather than attempt to fix it, they are causing major upheaval to the lives of employees in Gander. It is not the responsibility of employees in Gander to move temporarily across the country to make up for the fact that the Employer refuses to offer competitive salaries and cannot recruit or retain employees in Comox.

Two members, each with more than fifteen years of experience, resigned their positions with IMP, citing the deployments to Comox as a significant part of their reasons for leaving. The Union is aware that the level of frustration amongst employees is very high and continues to rise. We expect the Employer to lose more employees over this issue if not addressed. Some employees with young children

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have begun to seek accommodations based on family status. Employees were hired with the expectation of some overtime and some travel, but long deployments to Comox away from family and regular life was not what they signed up for.

## **Dalhousie**

Postdoctoral fellows with PSAC DCL 86001 at Dalhousie university voted to ratify their tentative agreement with the university.

After initially rejecting the first offer from the university, and getting a strike mandate, DAL got back to the table with a better offer for our members.

As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, the minimum postdoc salary at DAL will be the highest in the country.

Grant paid workers at Dalhousie are currently in bargaining. They are ramping up mobilization efforts and events to support the team.

## **Eskasoni**

Members at Eskasoni in Nova Scotia are about to vote to ratify their collective agreement! A big congratulations to Jonathan, as the local president and bargaining team member! I know this round of bargaining had been a tough one, but you mobilized the members, and the employer must've seen how much solidarity and support you have from the membership. Would you like to add anything?

## **UPEI**

At the end of January 2024, after seven months since commencing negotiations, our UPEI bargaining team reached a tentative first collective agreement with the University Administration.

The bargaining team unanimously recommends ratification of our new agreement.



If ratified, the settlement will put in place a first collective agreement with new terms and conditions of employment that will provide new protections for our members' including improvements to wages.

### **All Chairs Summit**

Over the weekend of March 16<sup>th</sup>, PSAC Atlantic hosted an All-Chairs Summit in Halifax.

This All-Chairs Summit provided an opportunity for members to collaborate with counterparts from other regional committees and area councils who have shared objectives and visions.

PSAC regional representatives facilitated a day and a half of different workshops to help the chairs collaborate and discuss ideas and best practices, Laura held a social-media workshop, and I chaired a Q+A session for the members.

### **Lobby Kits**

PSAC has rolled out a new anti-scab legislation lobby kit.

In November 2023, Minister of Labour Seamus O'Regan tabled bill C-58, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012. The Act aims to ban the use of replacement workers under the Canada Labour Code (CLC).

The Canada Labour Code covers federally regulated industries and workplaces, including transportation, banking, and telecommunications but not the federal public service.

However, 13,000 PSAC members working at airports, museums, port and pilotage authorities, NAV CANADA, the Mint, Canada Post, and many other employers are covered by the Canada Labour Code. Our members working on First Nations and in many northern communities also fall under the CLC.



The use of replacement workers drags out labour disputes and divides communities by pitting workers against each other. PSAC members experienced this most recently during the Iqaluit Housing Authority strike. IHA workers were on the picket line for over four months while their employer brought in replacement workers to do their jobs instead of sitting down and negotiating with them at the table.

Free and fair collective bargaining - without the threat of replacement workers taking their jobs - is the best way to reach fair agreements and stable workplaces.

If you'd like to lobby on this issue, or if you have ideas of activists who might want to, get in touch with my office! Laura has access to the full lobby kit for everyone, we just need to keep track of which MPs you'd like to lobby beforehand, so that we have clear lobbying plans in the region.

We also have updated Phoenix and Canada life lobby kits! Again, if you'd like access to the full kits online, reach out to us.

### **Federal election**

Leading up to a federal election, PSAC at a national level has started planning for a robust communications effort.

We have hired the Monk institute to create a research package on Pierre Poilievre. This package will be used to inform PSAC members about the history of this potential PM, and the impact that would likely have on them as it relates to the Federal Public Service (either as employees or recipients of those services).

PSAC needs to do as much damage as possible between now and June 2025 to frame him as unelectable amongst our members, and the public. We need to be able to clearly show that Pierre is not a friend to workers.



The scope of the research will be key bills, motions and other measures in Parliament from Poilievre's election in 2004 to current session. They will assemble voting histories for Pierre and senior cons in his leadership team. They will compile promises made, quotes, and videos to help show our membership how a conservative government has in the past let us down, and under Pierre will continue to do so. That is phase one.

Phase two will be to roll out a voter intention survey, to do membership polling. Historically, PSAC has launched a single voter intention survey in the lead up. This time we'd like to have quarterly surveys in 2024 and bi monthly in 2025. We'd also like to have focus groups leading up to an election and campaign period polling.

Comms will also be launching a member-targeted digital campaign leading up to the election.

PSAC does not want to sit by during this election, we know what could happen to the public service under Pierre's government.

### **Regional Conferences**

We have two regional conferences happening in the fall:

1. PSAC Atlantic Regional Young Workers Summit, scheduled to take place at Marble Mountain Inn, Corner Brook, NL, from November 1-3, 2024.
2. PSAC Regional DCL Conference, scheduled to take place at the Holmann Grand Hotel, Charlottetown, PE from October 25-27, 2024.

A callout for steering committee members was distributed for these conferences. Members across the region have until April 18 to apply if they'd like to be on the steering committee.



## **Regional Coordinators Update**

Holmann Richard, Atlantic Regional Coordinator provided an update on the following:

With regards to lobby reports, if you lobby an MP send your report to Lori Walton for the Maritimes and Alley Doyle for NL who will update the REVP office.

With regards to mobilization for the FB group, RVP Marjorie Gavel has visited all 4 provinces and working with regional reps Sancia, Cherise and Alley on mobilization activities.

When we organize mobilization activities it is not the rep assigned to the local who decides the specific activities or action. It is the members who need to determine what they want and what would be effective and from there the rep prepares a mobilization plan and budget which is presented to the REVP and mobilization officer in Ottawa.

The Regional Organizer currently on leave. We wanted to try and bring someone in temporary to work on some campaigns.

The new Regional Education Officer started middle of last month and met with education committee. Danyel will be moving soon to Halifax

Emma Harding is the new indeterminate secretary hired in the Halifax Regional Office.

Genevieve Babineau is back in the admin position for the Charlottetown Regional Office. Until the rep position can be filled in PEI, Moncton staff will assist in the meantime. Would like this rep position to be filled next month.



Questions asked:

Gerry - Currently only bilingual training offered is in NB. But this has a budgetary impact to have both languages concurrently. However, currently all training offered is either English or French not bilingual, why is this.

Holmann advised he would discuss with Chris and see if it is possible as there is additional funds for the purpose of bilingual courses. Courses in French have less participants. So is it better to offer bilingual or one or the other.

Mark - asked if there is a checklist to profile an organization to see the health to be potentially organized.

Holmann advised he would follow up with an answer.

### **Council Committee Reports**

A representative from each of the council committees read aloud their report.

#### Environment Committee

Brother Ryan Smith read aloud the report of the committee as well as the committee's earth day project initiative.

m/s Ryan Smith and Sarah Bolger

That the report be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED

#### Health and Safety Committee

Brian read aloud the report of the committee.

m/s Brian Oldford and Ryan Smith

that the report be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED



Recommendation from the H&S committee is to lay 1 wreath for each province on day of mourning. It was determined that, when possible, a council director on the H&S from each province lay it. The H&S committee would meet before the DOM and will determine where to lay the wreath and who will lay them.

m/s Brian Oldford and Ryan Smith

That the recommendation be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED

Human Rights Committee

Angela Decker read aloud the report of the committee.

m/s Angela Decker and Sarah Bolger

That the report be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED

Women's Committee

Jackie Ellis read aloud the report of the committee.

m/s Jackie Ellis and Kim Asling

That the report be adopted

MOTION CARRIED

To note: The report mentioned the possibility of holding Women's retreats as done in the past. Chris exclaimed that regional women's conferences are in the National budget and held in the region once per cycle. What the National budget does not contain are regional equity conferences for three equity groups: Pride, Access, Indigenous. It would be important to earmark any additional funds to host a conference for these equity groups at this time and foregoing women's retreats. This is something that can be revisited following the PSAC National Convention as a





resolution to provide those other 3 equity groups with a conference each cycle is a resolution that will be debated on convention floor.

Political Action Committee

Gerry Finnigan read aloud the report of the committee.

m/s Gerry Finnigan and Darren Smith

That the report be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED

To note: Chris advised all national resolutions dealing with federation of labour funding that were submitted by Area Councils or locals were ruled out of order. PSAC doesn't have authority to dictate who is accepted as a delegate and thus we cannot fund them to attend, and Area Councils are not an affiliate body - it is locals.

**Recommendation:** PSAC Atlantic promote and fund (where applicable) a membership driven initiative to elect labour friendly representatives in government using tools available (call hub and action network).

Chris - Once the writ is dropped, we have funding restrictions but only if we are being partisan. Nonpartisan then we are safe with our spending.

Leanne - This is a membership driven initiative. We could use the info that PSAC HQ is gathering from the Monk institute. Any costs related we would be looking at accessing from the regional political action budget under the REVPs purview.

m/s Gerry Finnigan and Darren Smith

That the recommendation be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED



Finance Committee

Kim Asling read aloud the report of the committee.

m/s Kim Asling and Brian Oldford

That the report be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED

Regulations proposed by the finance committee:

1. Other Expense Policy

Carried

2. Director's Expenses

Carried

Education Committee

Ellen Cross and Jonathan Cox read aloud the report of the committee.

m/s Ellen Cross and Jonathan Cox

That the report be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED

Three Recommendations of the committee

1. BIR that PSAC develop a new education course that builds on and extends from spirit and intent from the PSAC statement on harassment by illustrating examples of harassment, conduct and hurtful words.

CARRIED

2. BIR that PSAC atlantic required to follow up with participants selected to training courses send a reminder before the course to confirm their attendance and this would give sufficient notice to then go to the wait list.

CARRIED

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3. BIR that PSAC atlantic develop advanced training focused on mental health training for union activists.

Holmann advised that the National H&S officers may have to do a train the Trainor as its an advance course.

CARRIED

### **Managed Health Care Services Inc**

Krista Williams from MHCSI provided us with an introduction to their free benefit program. Materials are available on the PSAC Atlantic website.

### **REVP and Director's Reports**

Chris advised everyone that in following the practice of the NBoD only those who provided a report that was submitted in advance of the meeting and included in the meeting package will be able to provide updates.

REVP and Directors reports were adopted.

m/s Darren Smith and Kim Asling

That the reports be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED

### **Meeting of the Next Regional Council**

The next meeting of the Regional Council will be on September 14-15, 2024, at the Marble Inn Resort, Steadybrook (Cornerbrook NL).

Committees will meet virtually in advance and the reps will reach out to their committees.



## **Action Network**

Laura Haywood, communications officer provided an overview of the action network. It will not be rolled out for the admin staff until 2025. However, the communications officers will be able to send out their newsletters via action network.

## **Upcoming Events**

- Day of mourning
- National indigenous peoples' day
- Pride
- Labour day

Chris asked if committees discussed anything around these days and if not, this is a good starting point.

Kim mentioned that land acknowledgements should be personal and honour spirit of reconciliation from the calls to action. There is some reflection that comes with the land acknowledgements, and we should ensure we are respecting and doing our part during land acknowledgements.

It was discussed that with some many important dates through the year, perhaps setting priorities should be done and perhaps we would get a better turnout. Perhaps this could be a discussion day at council or on a conference call to discuss priorities for significant dates in 2024 and ongoing.

## **PSAC Communication**

Brian advised that this was mentioned previously. Concern is around timeliness of communication from national to the region and then to the members. Often the information being sent to regional members is delayed.



## **REVP Calendar**

Brian requested if it is possible to provide the monthly REVP calendar to the council directors. This would allow the possible opportunity for directors in the area of the REVP to join at various meetings or events, when appropriate.

Chris confirmed that going forward the REVP calendar will be sent the last week of each month.

Chris thanks staff, translators, technicians and all members in the room and wished them a safe return home.

Meeting adjourned at Noon

