



GSO Contract Arbitration - Update # 1 June 15, 2018

No News Yet From Labour Board Arbitration Panel

In our previous updates to Government Ships Officers (GSO's) at Coast Guard and DND we explained the reasons why the delays in obtaining new Collective Agreements in the federal public sector are not attributable to any of the unions and we described the important steps taken by the Guild and the work that had been undertaken by the Guild's elected representatives and staff.

We also committed to keeping Members promptly informed of developments regarding the Guild's efforts to obtain an improved Collective Agreement. Due to the employer designating 96% of the GSO bargaining unit as "essential services" and thus unable to participate in a strike, the Guild had requested that Minister Scott Brison, the President of the Federal Treasury Board, approve the use of "binding arbitration" in the event of an impasse in bargaining. As you know, that request was approved in October 2016 and an impasse was reached in bargaining in September of 2017 and the Guild immediately filed a request for arbitration with the Labour Board.

The Arbitration Panel includes a nominee appointed by the Guild, and a nominee appointed by the Treasury Board. The Guild appointed Mr. Joe Herbert as our nominee to the arbitration panel. Mr. Herbert has an intimate understanding of the complexities of the Ship's Officers Collective Agreement, having been our nominee on previous arbitration panels. The Treasury Board appointed Mr. Anthony Boettger as their nominee, who also has first-hand experience with the Ships' Officer Collective Agreement. These two nominees were unable to agree to a third panel member to act as Chairman, so the Federal Public Sector Labour Board, in accordance with the Act, appointed Mr. Sydney Baxter as Chairman and scheduled an Arbitration Hearing which took place in Ottawa on May 14th, 2018.

On the date of this hearing, the Guild sent an update by e-mail to GSO Members, with a link to our website, where the Guild's written submission is posted in both official languages, along with the employer's submission in English. The employer's written submission, and the employer's presentation during the formal hearing, concentrated on attempting to convince the arbitration panel that all the Guild's demands on behalf of our Members are excessive and unwarranted.

The Guild was very well-prepared for the arbitration and the demands on behalf of GSO's are supported by additional volumes of convincing data, research, arguments and documents that were presented and explained during the hearing. In attendance on behalf of the Guild were Peter Mercer, Greg Colbeck, Danny Parmiter, Geoff Legge, Tim Rooney, Vince Maessen, Bernard Talbot, Kieran Clarke, David Jewitt, Alison Longmore, Joy Thomson, Mark Boucher and Tom Spindler.

The Chairman of the Arbitration Panel will issue a final and binding written decision on all matters that were presented by both sides during the hearing. The 3-person arbitration panel meets in private to consider this matter but we have recently been advised that such meetings will take place until at least the end of July 2018.

Members are reminded to ensure the Guild has their correct e-mail address. We recognize the importance of continuing to keep GSO's informed promptly of any developments.