



NUNAVUT MUNICIPAL WORKERS DESERVE A LIVING WAGE!

Municipal workers across Nunavut are calling on their employers to come to the bargaining table and negotiate fair wage increases that protect them from rising inflation.

“Financial and food insecurity are growing in the small communities across the entire Territory,” warns Jason Rochon, President of the Nunavut Employees Union.

Statistics Canada put the inflation rate in Iqaluit at 5% in September. While official numbers are not available for other Nunavut communities, the price tag associated with travel and shipping of food and other essential items means the cost of living will climb even higher outside of Nunavut’s capital.

Hamlet Employees in Kinngait have voted overwhelmingly in favor of strike action after the Municipality failed to reach a new Collective Agreement with Nunavut Employees Union (NEU) last month despite the assistance of a Federal Conciliator.

“The Employer’s final wage offer averaging only 1.6% a year over five years is distressing and simply unreasonable in the current inflationary climate,” Rochon adds. “Members are telling us they can’t afford to buy groceries anymore.”

Hamlet employees in Kinngait have been working without a contract since March 31, 2020, almost two-and-a-half years. A legal strike deadline is set for November 22, 2022.

“It is appalling that the Employer left serious concessions on the table, even at the final hour - making a deal impossible,” Rochon states.

The Hamlet has offered a Northern Allowance of \$17,500 per year to replace provisions under the current Collective Agreement that expired in March 2020 - representing a pay increase of less than \$300 per year for some employees. This unacceptable offer would represent one of the lowest allowances in Nunavut. In fact, the offer is about \$7,000 per year less than the Government of Nunavut pays to its own employees living and working in Kinngait.

“The Nunavut Employees Union is asking the municipalities to recognize the financial hardship facing workers in the communities and to partner with us in protecting them against the rising cost of living in Nunavut,” Rochon states.

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