



January 18, 2010

VIA EMAIL - sunletters@vancouver.sun.com

Dear Editor:

**Re: "City Council holds the line on spending, but labour costs loom",
The Editorial Page, Vancouver Sun, January 14, 2010**

I just want to say first that while I appreciate the Sun's recent editorial on the recent cuts and wage increases, I respectfully must say that it's a little light on context.

Let's be fair about our comparisons. When you talk about labour as the biggest cost in the city's budget, that's true, but no surprise when we go to our libraries, community centres, get safety inspections, even dial 9-1-1, and that is true of any large employer.

We need those people to run the services of the city. It takes workers and workers need wages that are fair and negotiated in fairness.

This labour cost you speak of covers managers too, who are exempt from the collective agreement, and who currently total just under 800 positions. That's a ratio of 1 manager to every 9 employees, and it used to be 1 manager to 14 employees in 1999.

Now, this sounds like the start of a bad joke, but how many managers does it take to run a city? Four more than you'd think, if you take a look at the current job postings. There you'll find 4 open management positions totalling over \$429,000 not including benefits. And we hear the City needs to tighten belts? Huh.

In 2007, we were put through the gears with Sam's Strike. After 3 long months, we finally got a collective agreement. Management got something too. They got wage increases, like us. Unlike us, they got an additional 3% market adjustment increase for "attraction and retention". That means a bonus went in every manager's pocket, above and beyond any pay increases and any revenue neutral adjustments.

Just as the City has rightly taken a hard look at its expenditures, I respectfully submit that it has not taken a hard look at its own management costs. It has gone to the "low-hanging fruit" for cost cutting. Workers are easy pickings and they are expected to take the brunt of the cuts. For what seems like too long now, we've been calling for an audit of management. To date, we haven't seen a report. It's not acceptable that the front-line workers of this city constantly bear the burden of budget cuts, while higher paid management increases, be it through wages or ratios.

We have to do more with less, the public expects decent services, we want to deliver those services, but our members are stretched to the limits. It's time you asked the City to stop blaming the workers for the budget woes and ask what their managers can do to contribute to efficiency and delivery of programs and services.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Faoro
President, CUPE Local 15

bas.CEP L467-UW

Vancouver Municipal, Education and Community Workers
545 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia Canada V5Z 1K9
Tel 604.879.4671 Fax 604.879.7582
www.cupe15.org email@cupe15.org