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May 28, 2008

CUPE 15 challenges Vancouver Park Board in BC Supreme Court

VANCOUVER—CUPE 15 filed an application in the BC Supreme Court yesterday challenging a vote that passed the Vancouver Park Board 2008 operating budget last month.

“We want to send a message to the Vancouver Park Board that they are obliged to follow their own bylaws and respect democracy,” said Paul Faoro, CUPE 15 president. “This is a matter of public interest. The Vancouver Park Board has acted undemocratically.”

According to CUPE 15, a motion to reconsider the previously-failed budget motion should have been ruled out of order by the NPA chairperson, Korina Houghton. The reconsideration motion was approved and a subsequent vote to approve the budget succeeded.

Faoro adds, “The elected Park Board commissioners need to stand up for our public parks and recreation system in Vancouver by not agreeing to any more funding cuts. It’s time to stop the bleeding.” The NPA-controlled park board approved the 2008 budget that contains a \$346,000 cut in funding which will impact park and facility maintenance programs and seasonal staffing.

CUPE 15 has hired the legal firm of McGrady & Company to bring this matter before the BC Supreme Court.

Leo McGrady explains, “In a broad sense the relationship between the board and taxpayers with respect to the expenditure of tax revenues is treated by the law as a trust relationship. The board members are considered trustees for the taxpayers.

“Motions to pass budgets are to be scrutinized carefully, both by the taxpayers and in appropriate cases by the courts.

“It’s our view that given this trust relationship; the fact that this is a \$60,000,000.00 budget; and given the language of the procedural rules governing its passage, that the procedure used in this case may well have been faulty, and merits a review by the Court.”

CUPE 15 represents 5,500 workers, including 1,500 front line recreation and community centre support staff at Vancouver Park Board.

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