

TO: All MUNFA members
FROM: MUNFA Executive
DATE: Feb. 15, 2023
SUBJECT: Details on Ratification Vote and Return to Work

Your Executive Committee has voted to endorse the tentative agreement presented to them by your Negotiating Committee. As a result of this, the agreement will next go to members for review, discussion, and a ratification vote.

Members have, understandably, many questions about the process of discussing and voting on a tentative agreement — especially given that this time, a tentative agreement comes at the end of a strike, and members are returning to work while waiting for the ratification vote to take place. This Information Bulletin seeks to provide clarity on the process taking place now. If you have further questions or concerns that are not answered by this document, please email munfa@mun.ca.

Next steps

Editing and review

At the moment, your Negotiating Committee and MUNFA staff are examining your Collective Agreement to update it with the changes made during this round of bargaining. There is more information below about this process and why it is taking so long. In short, we expect to finish this process later this week.

After MUNFA's team has edited the Collective Agreement and is satisfied that the document accurately represents all the changes made during negotiations, it has to be reviewed by the administration's team for the same purposes. We expect this process to take place early next week.

The document also has to be circulated to MUNFA members so that you can each review it before you are asked to vote on its ratification. It is a meticulous review of about 200 pages of document. We expect to send this document to members by Tuesday, Feb. 21.

Special General Meeting

The SGM is a forum for all MUNFA members in the bargaining unit to discuss the tentative agreement. At this meeting, the Executive will endorse the tentative agreement, and members of your Negotiating Committee will be present to explain the agreement as well as answer your questions about it. **This meeting will take place next Thursday, Feb. 23, from 12:30 pm-2:30 pm.** [Please click here to register for the meeting on Zoom.](#)

Ratification vote

All members in the MUNFA bargaining unit are asked to vote on ratifying the tentative agreement. **This vote will take place next Friday, Feb. 24, from 8:00 am-4:00 pm. It will be held via Simply Voting**, in the same fashion as the strike authorization vote, and there will be tech support available for members on the day of voting. Expect more details about the vote itself in the coming days.

Questions about the process

1. Why is this process taking so long?

Preparing the final form of a new Collective Agreement is a time-consuming process given that the agreement is nearly 200 pages long and a number of articles therein were changed in some fashion (indeed, the addition of an article early on means that every subsequent article needs to be renumbered, even if it was not actually changed during this round of negotiations). However, this process needs to be completed in order to present you, the members, with an accurate document to look over and consider before you are asked to vote on it — and the [MUNFA Constitution](#) (Article XIII, Section 2.(b)) requires that members be provided with a copy of the proposed deal before you vote on it.

Typically, this process is handled in large part as negotiations are underway — once one article is agreed to by both parties, the necessary edits are made and the two negotiating teams sign off on that portion of the document. That means that by the end, much of this close examination and editing has already been completed.

In this round of bargaining, much to MUNFA's frustration, the administration's bargaining team appears to have been unprepared or unwilling to do even the most basic work of negotiating. This has included, at various times, not presenting their own proposals; not taking your bargaining team's proposals and making changes to them in the spirit of reaching an agreement; and not doing the editing and examination required to have both parties sign off on tentatively agreed-to articles as negotiations are underway.

This means that the entire document needs to be edited to incorporate changes made, and then looked over for any discrepancies or errors, now, after negotiations have concluded.

2. Why are we back at work before the ratification vote?

Given the possibility of further disruptions to teaching and research while your Negotiating Committee works with the administration to compile a comprehensive agreement to present to members, MUNFA Executive provisionally agreed for members to go back to work prior to the ratification vote. A provisional return to work is not unusual, particularly for larger unions and when there have been difficulties with editing/formatting as has been our experience with our employer.

3. What is the process after the ratification vote?

Your Negotiating and Executive committees feel confident that this is a strong deal with a number of important gains and some crucial concessions from the administration. If the

ratification vote passes (and assuming the Board of Regents also approves the tentative agreement) then the changes negotiated thus far become your new Collective Agreement.

If a majority of members vote “no” to ratification, the current tentative agreement would not be approved. MUNFA would navigate a new round of negotiations with the administration, and would make every effort to win again the gains that are included in this contract — however, it is unlikely that members would win the same gains without significant further mobilization.