

Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 17, 2024

Present: Alexandra C, Darcy L, Naminder S, Angelo S, Wade P, Warren D, John H, and Tyler C

1. Pay Transparency Act

Unifor: The Pay Transparency Act that I sent, wanted to go through it and see... we're not there yet but for next November. I wanted to understand your position.

CPP: Since November of last year all West Fraser job postings have salaries/wages for BC. West Fraser isn't looking at this divisionally, they're looking at it as a whole company so we're in the over 1000 employees category. It's not something I am dealing with at my level though, because I don't have that type of information. The corporate group should have a report coming out in November. I don't know what that looks like yet.

Unifor: Could you report back in regard to West Fraser plan on what they are doing?

CPP: Yes.

2. Camera List

Unifor: Darcy will email, that's great.

CPP: Yes. We haven't added any new ones. Power boiler bed camera at some point...

Unifor: Internally in the power boiler?

CPP: Yes, we could see combustion.

Unifor: I could see that being handy.

CPP: Maybe optimize that system. I will email that list to Angelo.

Unifor: Is it a map?

CPP: It's a spreadsheet, saying where, description, type of camera...

Unifor: Ok.

3. Unpaid Leave for Daytime Appointments

Unifor: We talked about this before and we're seeing more members wanting to use unpaid leave. I think from an employer perspective it's a really good idea. Health and welfare is important and you daytime people... it's tricky. I don't know how you do it. Also, our members they come in and they give up days off to come in and they earn some banked time off and they have to give that up to go sit at the dentist... the hardship is not on the employer and we're

asking for unpaid leave. That's it. We'll keep it fairly basic, just doctors/dentists and we're just looking to put in unpaid leave for a couple hours. We aren't looking for time off in the middle of the day to go play hockey or something. And I'll be honest, we're trying to help you. We want to make sure that by giving a little benefit to the members attracts more employees. We're trying to help you guys.

CPP: Since we last talked we've had some discussions at the management level with Mike and others, and it's not something we have an appetite to change at this point.

Unifor: I think there's a flaw in the thought process. I think some people incur a lot of banked time whereas some that aren't on the call list and don't take calls but don't have any banked time and they want to take unpaid leave. Some people it's simply harder and they have to cough up banked time. I don't think it costs the company and would be beneficial.

Unifor: What exactly is the hardship to the company?

CPP: As we've discussed already, we work really hard to make sure that everyone uses up their paid time off banks at the end of each contract year and this can be a challenge. Unpaid time could make it even more difficult. There are a lot of hours that have to be scheduled.

Unifor: There are guys who wouldn't take unpaid leave. Then some would rather use unpaid leave. It's more the work/life balance. Our members need to have that balance just as you staff people need to have that. We're finding our members are being punished. They're coming in, sacrificing their family time to support the mill. They aren't asking for more money; they're just asking to leave on unpaid time. And I would love to have a conversation with Mr Pagurut to further this discussion because I don't feel it's over.

CPP: I will pass that along.

4. Truth and Reconciliation Day

Unifor: Lots of questions from members. Last year was a bit different because it was on a Saturday. So members do not understand why they have to report to work and do not understand why staff has the day off and if they do have to work.

CPP: It was the same last year, hourly folks scheduled to work that day were paid for the stat. In this case employees scheduled to work on the 30th will be paid for the stat and paid time and a half for the hours worked.

Unifor: How have you conveyed to the members?

CPP: The information has been shared with supervisors.

Unifor: The supervisors seem confused. Why would you not have shared that information with the members? It would have been clearer that way. Right now we have supervisors who think they know what is happening. Personally I think we're missing the intent of the stat all together. The intent was for it to be a way for BC residents to partake in the day. I think the day was missed all together. How do you expect our members to participate in reconciliation events that are ongoing on that day if they have to report to work.

CPP: They are welcome to use something from their paid time off banks. Or do something the week prior, or after work. That's a personal choice.

Unifor: The day was specifically set so people can partake in events that day. How can our members be expected to partake if they aren't given the day off and are required to work?

Unifor: I think it's odd that WF will do something like this considering, we should be working on this relationship so when we need chips in the future... I think we know where we're going to be going. I think this is a good opportunity to show case how they're supporting Truth and Reconciliation Day and building those relationships with the true intent. I talked to other West Fraser employees and they're getting the day off. I think it would've been an awesome opportunity to say "this is what we believe in" so I hope they reconsider. We would like to highlight that this is the second year in a row that West Fraser has not followed the intent of the act in supporting Truth and Reconciliation Day.

Unifor: Will there be follow up on this, if we wanted to use an unpaid day and take the day off?

CPP: Probably not, but I will look into this.

5. Retirees Working Shutdown

Unifor: Who is working?

CPP: Just Robin P.

Unifor: Any more talk about area shuts?

CPP: We pretty much just put a pin in that because there just aren't that many people available or interested in doing that. If you guys know anything more or have ideas let me know.

6. Chip Supply

CPP: We had 142 loads yesterday.

Unifor: What has been done to increase the chip supply?

CPP: Over the summer, there were different sawmills taking downtime so that impacted everyone in the fibre basket. It was a shell game, chips getting shifted around. Our deliveries were down. We are supplementing with whole log chips, chips are coming by truck from Hinton Pulp. We tried bringing logs and chipping them here but we're doing this. We're continuing to pursue opportunities wherever they are. There are a few things coming up that we're going after. We're beating all the bushes we can.

Unifor: Any contracts expiring at the end of the year?

CPP: I don't think we do. Maybe Dunkley but we don't have it right now. I think maybe Soda Creek, but I can't guarantee that. We're pursuing them. I don't know of any of ours expiring.

Unifor: The plan is to increase chip contracts and reduce whole log chipping?

CPP: It comes down to availability and dollars. Usually, residuals are less expensive but if you're bringing it a long way then the transport eats the difference. But whole log will be part of our makeup for the foreseeable future.

Unifor: Have you guys contacted the Brink company? It looks like they're trying to buy a bunch from Canfor.

CPP: Well John Brink is an interesting fellow. He put it out there that he wants the tenures and some equipment. But if you watched 6 hours after that, Canfor said they'd been approached by people and they wouldn't share until there was something to share.

Unifor: It just seems like maybe an opportunity or something.

CPP: They're a business and they'll do what they do.

Unifor: Is the projection to get through the winter at our current rate?

CPP: Short answer is yes but the other side is that all it takes is a hiccup and then who knows. We didn't even know about some of the sawmill curtailments until they were happening this summer. At the moment we're running like we're running.

Unifor: Ok.

7. First Aid Regulations

Unifor: Back in May, Marlene did a really good presentation about the new regulations coming out in November. It was great to hear from the company how you were going to work through the issue and let us know how CPP would be looking at it. Unfortunately, that didn't turn out to be the case. We're left with some things that the company did which were not in the spirit of what we talked about. So we bring these matters up for the safety of our membership. It was legislated. Really frustrating that the company built a plan around this emergency, as it was deemed, without consulting with us. Especially since we brought it up and made the company aware that we were concerned about how this would work out. So with that frustration is extremely high. WCB came out with this regulation for a reason, and we think it's to protect our members. We think the plan West Fraser has is a loophole and will not protect our members and provide the first aid that they require from this legislation that WCB has come up with. It's our position that the company is obligated to hire a dayshift first aid attendant. Full time. We do not feel as though the company's current plan will meet the regulations.

CPP: We disagree. What we discussed in JOHSC... I appreciate you brought this here so we can discuss elsewhere. Has anyone in this room felt they weren't adequately looked after by our first aid attendant?

Unifor: I think the Michele incident could've gone better.

CPP: Really?

Unifor: I think more educated help would've helped. It would be like if you were in a car accident and you were attended by multiple physicians. We had a gas incident a few years ago and 5 people went to first aid.

CPP: How would another level 3 first aider have helped? Look, I've been a first aid attendant. I was a guy with a radio out on the floor. WorkSafe doesn't require a dedicated first aid attendant. It can be a machine tender, a machinist, we go above and beyond already. We have come up with a solution and we'll continue to evolve that. It's not adding bodies, it's adding certifications.

Unifor: Adding people that are not familiar with our process is not helpful. We've had multiple serious incidents over the last few years. We are looking for better help and we think this legislation was brought down to assist our members. We feel West Fraser is using a loophole as opposed to fixing the problem. Really frustrated that the company did not take us seriously. Using staff members is not adequate. Does not meet our requirements.

CPP: Ok.

8. Grievance 24-01 Roy Norman

Unifor: Tabled for October.

9. Grievance 24-02 Roy Norman

Unifor: Tabled for October.

10. Grievance 24-03 Failure to Notify

Unifor: Rick J brought this up. As far as I understand, there is an Instrument Tech of some sort doing some contracting. This one in particular. There was a notice sent out, he ended up working past that and no new notification sent and then brought back another time. The wording was we were attaching it to the original one...

CPP: (Read NOIC #2024-0653). There was a PR created (22337430) if you open the PR and it says 4 days, July 17 and 18, the other two days to be confirmed. That notice was put in on time as appropriate. It was reviewed June 19 and only me [Darcy] and Festus attended so unfortunately I don't have official minutes. There were no questions brought up during or after. Not until Rick came in and saw Kim doing Delta V work. I fail to see how it's a failure to notify. Could there have been more description? Sure. Is there normally? Sure. We had reviewed other notices the day I received this grievance, and I gave examples of at least half a dozen other NOICs that were similar. I understand instrument mechanics are a hot button topic, and we continue to have discussions with that group, we're slowly staffing back up, I understand why it's a raw nerve but we did not fail to notify.

Unifor: So in the PR it said there'd be more days, and they weren't in there?

CPP: Yep. Rick and I agreed we didn't want to read every PR so that's why we discuss in the meetings. Sometimes we just need to understand. If it had been Hindsight doing urinal repairs, then nobody would question it. I understand this one is a touchy subject, if Rick had been at that meeting maybe he would've asked more questions.

Unifor: How long was he here the second time?

CPP: It was a total of 4 days. Same job description.

Unifor: Ok.

CPP: It's tricky with people on shift. Warren and Rick for example. I think it was a few weeks after the notice. But the notice was in for 4 days of work.

11. Grievances 24-04 and 24-05 Jesse F and Connor V Unjust Discipline

Unifor: He got a day suspension for being AWOL. The concern with this one is this a first-time offence for Jesse. It doesn't take into consideration any personal situation. The question behind this really is, if a guy makes a first-time mistake why are we going heavy handed? Discipline should be correcting behaviour. I could understand if it was a written warning or something but to realize you've missed your alarm or whatever the case is, regardless of circumstances, come in, get sent home, and then be given a one-day suspension it seems out of line for the... the punishment doesn't seem to fit the crime. Fair enough if it's a second time, but if they haven't been AWOL before, and then they're suspended the first time... who knows what the circumstances are, and we'd like to have a discussion about that.

Unifor: I'll mention too that I was AWOL once a very long time ago, misunderstanding with the shift, but I was given a written warning. I wasn't just suspended. We talk a lot about mental health and here's a guy wondering if he's going to lose him employment, losing pay... seems like a lot.

CPP: I can't speak to 15 years ago, and I understand there are circumstances, this is consistent. This is how we deal with AWOLs. It's a day suspension.

Unifor: It's not dealt with at an individual level?

CPP: The discipline is still the discipline.

Unifor: The individual was sent home and said he was suspended until further notice. He was told to wait by the phone. That is not consistent with what you just said.

CPP: That is our practice.

Unifor: This individual was further anguished by being told to stay at home until further notice. If you are saying that it's not an individual basis, that is not what he was told. That leads us to, was there something personal, maybe somebody didn't like him.

CPP: Ok so we're clear, that was all run through me and Alex before anything happens. Something like that happens. This was "you're being sent home pending investigation" this isn't the first time.

Unifor: We're wondering if this is personal?

CPP: it wasn't.

Unifor: Would you say it's not typical?

CPP: I wouldn't say either way. I said AWOL is suspension. So we have to take his notes, we have to gather those, we have to discuss those, on this site we don't make a decision with regards to suspension without running it past corporate to make sure we're being consistent.

Unifor: When does it become AWOL vs late? Is it a few minutes?

CPP: Off the top of my head, I think 2 or 3 hours.

Unifor: Past practice is I got a written... I think that was common if we went back.

CPP: Sure, but we have to be careful about how far back we're going.

Unifor: You would think as an employer, I represented this guy so I looked at him. So he came in late, he looked like he was ready for work and then told he was being sent home. Is that the practice? Usually you would say, we're going to have to discuss how we deal with this late and send him back to work. The way we see it, he kind of got a two day because he did show up. Is it automatic to not even show up if you're late? That's what surprised me. He was ready for work. He was just sent home instead of going back to work. Is that not an option anymore?

CPP: In this scenario, we knew about it as it was happening. I can't answer that. He called just after 10:00 and showed up at 11:00. And we had to sit him down and send him home because he was AWOL. That's pretty standard practice.

Unifor: It just seems like the punishment is too severe. We're trying to help you with our members to make an environment that is conducive to being here. The reality is that none of us want to be here. we come to earn a wage to be able to live. If the environment is such that we don't want to be here, how do you expect people to give up their time to save this place? If none of us gave a little extra, this place would not be running. You staffers do a little extra and expect to be treated fairly. This is an incident where our member was not given reasonable doubt. Buddy was late and ready to work. This isn't a repeat person. He puts in an honest effort. In the voice of time, the next grievance is exactly the same. Connor puts in hours of overtime into this place. Obviously he was confused about the holiday. There was some question behind that. He was out camping and because of it, realized it and felt terrible. Not a repeat offender and not a problem employee. One of the hardest working people we have in the place. I completely understand the punishment if it's a person who has a history. But when it's first-time offence and honest mistake and what feels like a heavy handed punishment for a mistake it sends a terrible message. It feels like we're taking humanity out of the situation. The expectation is that punishment is adequate to the crime. We think it exceeded the crime.

CPP: I appreciate what you are saying but I respectfully disagree. Being AWOL is a very serious thing. I don't believe that either of these individuals... one of the primary purposes of discipline is to correct behaviour. I don't believe either of these individuals will show up late/ AWOL after these.

Unifor: 15 years ago the written warning I received was serious and I haven't been late or AWOL since then. I think just suspending somebody is necessary for them to realize there's a mistake made.

CPP: I don't disagree. People are very different.

Unifor: We aren't saying it isn't serious. But the view we have is that it doesn't fit the immediate suspension. If you get a written warning and you have to use banked time, then that sends home a message that you can't let this happen again. The suspension says you don't care about them. That's the message that comes across. Especially when it's these two guys, if they get this then what will I get?

CPP: Same thing. That's kind of the point.

Unifor: What is the next step in progressive discipline? In this specific case, you are AWOL and it happens twice in a row.

CPP: Same process, was it the same thing, was there a car wreck or something? That's the first thing we ask. It could be the same, it could be a longer suspension, it could be a termination, but I can't see that unless there was some very weird circumstance.

Unifor: I just want to leave you guys with this. We're really trying to help you guys understand that discipline doesn't set an environment where people want to do a little bit more. Not just these individuals but it affects an entire department. It affects other departments as well. It's a negative. Net negative. Morale is not good. Members are not happy. There's additional stresses put on, stresses when they're looking at chip piles. We all know we're dinosaurs. They're shutting down pulp mills and sawmills. This doesn't not set a conducive environment for working harder. We're trying to help you.

CPP: I appreciate that.

Unifor: We're struggling to attract trades people. People ask about how is your job and I think you might get mixed reviews right now.

CPP: That's fair.