

Weekly Round Up (November 23 – 29, 2019)

Breaking News!

Here's the link to our Member Update on the GoA and AHS announcements of job cuts:

[Up to 5,900 AUPE Positions To Be Laid Off, GOA And AHS Tell AUPE](#)

Political Roundup

What was in Alberta's labour news this week (Nov. 23 – 29)

LEGISLATION

Bill 20 (Fiscal Measures and Taxation Act) is currently in Committee of the Whole; has passed 2nd reading.

Bill 21 (Ensuring Fiscal Sustainability Act) is currently in Committee of the Whole; has passed 2nd reading.

Bill 22 (Reform of Agencies, Boards and Commissions and Government Enterprises Act) received Royal Assent November 22, 2019.

Bill 23 (Justice Statutes Amendment Act) received Royal Assent November 22, 2019.

Bill 24 (Appropriation Act \$) received Royal Assent November 26, 2019.

Bill 25 (Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act) passed 3rd reading November 27, 2019.

Bill 26 (Farm Freedom and Safety Act) is currently in Committee of the Whole; has passed 2nd reading.

Bill 27 (Trespass Statutes) passed 3rd reading November 27, 2019.

Bill 28 (Opioid Damages) passed 3rd reading November 28, 2019.

Bill 29 (Municipal Government Tax Incentives) passed 2nd reading November 28, 2019.

Note: If Government House Leader invokes standing orders, the session is adjourned when he says it is.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Justice & Solicitor General

GoA [announced](#) they are hiring eight additional articling students in addition to the eight they hire every year with a goal to increase this number to 20 or more by 2021. The minister said this move, in addition to their previously announced intention to hire 50 new Crown prosecutors, will allow prosecutors to focus on higher-priority duties. There has been no mention of any support staff to support all of this additional work though.

Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA)

Alberta's Child and Youth Advocate released a special [report](#) on the experiences of six young adults leaving government care who passed away over nine months in 2018. The government announced through the budget they will be limiting transition services to those young adults under age 22 going forward. (It had been increased to 24 years in July, 2014.)

Privatization of Legal Services

The [news](#) that government lawyers are going to be laid off, and the work will be outsourced, may have implications for Local 001 or 002 members who may support them.

"Justice Minister Doug Schweitzer is making the cuts despite an internal draft white paper that found outsourcing of legal work by the government will cost about two-thirds more than retaining lawyers and doing the work in house."

OTHER

Labour Relations Code Review – we received an invitation to respond to a Review of the Labour Relations Code. Written responses are due December 20. (Fun fact: When the NDP did its LRC review in 2017, bosses and the opposition howled because they only allocated 36 days for review. This review was launched November 22: that's 28 full days!) Note: there has been zero public comment about this from anyone.

AUPE will be submitting a position paper to the Government by December 20.

Labour Relations Code Review II – in a separate letter from the same individual, we – along with other unions - were invited to a meeting about a particular aspect of the LRC:

"Alberta unions were informed Friday, November 22, of a "labour relations consultation" meeting next Saturday (November 30th) by Shawn McLeod, the deputy minister of labour and immigration. The purpose of the one-hour meeting, according to McLeod's email, is to discuss legislation intended to "protect workers from being forced to fund political parties and causes." The government is holding meetings "with a number of parties" to discuss its campaign promise "to bring back balance to labour legislation," McLeod said in the email."

AUPE responded by sending a letter to Deputy Minister McLeod, asking for further clarification of the scope and parameters for the "consultation." We will not enter into discussions until that is determined. All other unions invited to the consultation have followed AUPE's lead and turned down the invitation until they have more information. We have yet to receive a response to the questions we have asked.

The United Nurses of Alberta (UNA) Lost Their LRB Complaint

UNA filed a complaint against AHS for bargaining in bad faith when it changed its position for the third year wage arbitration from zero to minus three. The LRB stated in its decision: "AHS in the context of this application did not breach Sec 60(3) of the Code by changing its proposal from 0% to a 3% reduction on the wage grid."

Bargaining came up in Question Period:

Public Service Wages

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees is pushing the government for a 7.85 per cent wage increase. AUPE bosses are completely out of touch with the financial realities of our province. Albertans are facing unemployment, and the management at AUPE has the audacity to ask taxpayers for an outrageous increase in pay. It's not the teachers and it's not the nurses that are out of touch; it's the union bosses. To the minister: what message do you have for AUPE going into negotiations?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Finance and the President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Listen, we're all in this together as Albertans. We all have to do our part to live within our means, and we cannot ask Alberta taxpayers for public-sector pay raises at a time when over the last few years we've seen so many Albertans lose their jobs and certainly, in some cases, take a cut in pay. Our MLAs have rolled back our pay by 5 per cent, our Premier by 10 per cent. I would ask union bosses to work with us at this time of restraint. [interjections]

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Pitt: Given that Albertans are paying higher on average for government services and given that AUPE management is demanding an increase in pay, knowing that it very well could lead to a reduction in employees, yet omitting this information from its members and given that members of the AUPE are starting to realize this union is out of touch and they're starting to hold them accountable for the millions they pay in dues, Minister, how will you ensure taxpayer dollars are being spent in the best way possible while maintaining high-quality government services?

The Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Public-sector wages make up over 50 per cent of our budget, and our public-sector

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remuneration rates are higher than those of other provinces. We can no longer afford to be an outlier in this Confederation. Our government will be a responsible steward of this province's finances. We will make decisions that are in the best interests of Albertans. We will manage this province's finances responsibly.

Mrs. Pitt: Given that thousands of Albertans have lost their jobs over the past four years and further given that the demands of the unions in our province seem to be dominating the headlines and much of the government's time, not to mention the lies they are spewing to their members – I am happy to see that so many people are holding them accountable – Minister, how will your ministry balance the misguided demands of unions with the actual needs of everyday Albertans who just want to get back to work?

2:20

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Toews: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me start by saying that we appreciate and recognize the contribution that the public sector makes in delivering high-quality services to Albertans every day. Our government is committed to ensuring that the public sector is sustainable, not only today but for the next generation, and our government will not allow union demands to outweigh the voices of so many Albertans that are still struggling with economic uncertainty. Let me be clear. There are no provisions for publicsector wage increases in this budget.

The 2018-2019 Annual Report of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate was referred to the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices for review. (The Committee may, without leave of the Assembly, sit during a period when the Assembly is adjourned or prorogued; In accordance with section 21(4) of the Child and Youth Advocate Act, the Committee shall report back to the Assembly within 90 days of the report being referred to it if the Assembly is then sitting or, if it is not then sitting, within 15 days after the commencement of the next sitting.)

Job losses

Between Nov. 23 and Nov. 29 2019, we were notified of:

Alberta Innovates (updated from last week)

125 jobs cut (of these, approximately 54 will be AUPE members).

Wage Rollbacks

Bargaining tables where the employer is or will consider tabling wage rollbacks:

- GoA: -2%
- U of L: -2%
- University of Athabasca: -2%
- AHS / NC: -2%
- AHS / GSS: -2%
- Alberta University of Arts: -2%
- Lethbridge College: -2%

- Carewest NC: -2%
 - Carewest GSS: -2%
 - Alberta Pensions: -2%
 - NAIT: -2%
 - Medicine Hat College: -2%
- Added this week:**
- Covenant Health St. Therese Villa: -2%
 - Alberta Pension Services: -2%

Event Roundup

Events You Don't Want to Miss (Nov. 29 – Dec. 6)

Ally Events

Support our Students: Rally for Public Education - Saturday, November 30

Where: **McDougall Centre (455 6 St SW), Calgary Premier's Office**

When: **Saturday, Nov. 30, 12:00PM– 2:00PM**

Who: **Public, all AUPE members and our supporters are invited to join during their non-work time. AUPE Vice-President Bobby-Joe will be speaking.**

[Visit the Facebook event page](#)

Join the Resistance Edmonton Town Hall – Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) - Monday, December 2

Where: **MacEwan University, Multipurpose Room, 11110 104 Ave NW**

When: **Monday, December 9, 6:30PM – 8:30PM**

Who: **The public, and all AUPE members and our supporters are invited to RSVP for this (AFL) event. AUPE President Guy Smith will be there.**

AUPE Fight Back Information Pickets

Elk Point: Monday, December 2

Where: **Elk Point Hospital, 5310 50 Avenue NE, Elk Point**

When: **Monday, Dec. 2, 12PM - 1PM**

Who: **All AUPE members and our supporters are invited to join this info-picket on their non-work time.**

Contact: **Tracy Pendleton, 306-304-2859**

Grande Prairie: Wednesday, December 4

Where: **Grande Prairie City Hall, 10205 98 Street, Grande Prairie**

When: **Wednesday, Dec. 4, 11:45AM - 1PM**

Who: **All AUPE members and our supporters are invited to join this info-picket on their non-work time.**

Contact: **Trevor Zimmerman, 780-919-9975 or t.zimmerman@aupe.org**

Social Events

Grande Prairie Area Council Children's X-Mas Party

Friday, December 6 - 5 pm

Bargaining Roundup

Go to aupe.org for full updates.

[Emcon](#) met to begin bargaining. The employer was not prepared but says they will have ingoing proposals ready for the next meeting.

[The Good Samaritan Society](#) continued bargaining. Three more non-monetary articles were signed off.

[AGLC](#) ratified their tentative agreement. The new collective agreement includes improvements for shift and weekend differentials, two additional special leave days, five paid days leave for domestic violence and more.