

Greater Vancouver Community Services Society

Memorandum – 3

to: All GVCSS HandyDART Staff at Simon Fraser and Richmond Offices
from: Ron McLeod, Executive Director
subject: CAW Information Bulletin
date: March 27, 2008

We have obtained a copy of “Information Bulletin No. 1” distributed to you by CAW. What it reveals is most disturbing and disappointing. It contains serious inaccuracies and reveals that CAW has been making efforts to impede our ability to continue providing HandyDART services. The Bulletin requires a reply to set the record straight.

GVCSS is compelled by statute to be part of subsector bargaining, in the same way that multiservice HandyDART agencies south of the Fraser have to be part of subsector bargaining. Only the provincial government can change that. GVCSS did not oppose efforts by CAW in the past to have our HandyDART operation removed from the Community subsector bargaining unit.

We have offered to work with CAW to improve working conditions for our HandyDART employees, and even had a meeting with CAW in January of this year for that purpose. CAW has not yet responded to our offer to address concerns, regardless our offer to negotiate is still on the table.

It is only with the merging of service areas into a larger service area that it has become viable to operate the HandyDART contract services through a subsidiary corporation that would be outside of the subsector bargaining unit (Crosstown Accessible Transit).

After we decided to bid on this basis we approached CAW (both in December 2007 and later in January 2008) and asked them to meet with us. We saw it as an opportunity to begin bargaining directly between the affected parties for the first time, and we told CAW that we wanted to discuss issues arising out of the contract with them. From the beginning we intended to offer to level up all employees including our own to the highest existing wage rates (Pacific Transit Cooperative), and hoped to tell the CAW face-to-face. Unfortunately CAW showed no interest in discussing any issues related to the contract with us. Consequently we declared our intentions in the Memorandums sent directly to you on January 28th and February 22nd.

Surprisingly, CAW’s bulletin to you states that “they are not fooled by [GVCSS] sudden turnaround and promises of wage increases”. In actual fact, we are sincere in our promises and extremely shocked by CAW’s suggestion that we are not. CAW’s statement is particularly unfair in light of their failure to discuss this matter with us directly, and thereby give us the opportunity to provide them with a satisfactory form of commitment.

We are also troubled by CAW’s claim that instead of meeting with us, it has instead been meeting with TransLink in an effort to block our chances to make a successful bid. We do not know or understand their reasons for doing this.

As you may know, Pacific Transit Cooperative wage rates are the highest in BC for HandyDART employees. No other potential bidders have made a commitment to pay those wage rates. If any bidder other than GVCSS wins the contract, they will not be legally obligated to either pay those wage rates; recognize seniority of employees hired from GVCSS; or accept even the collective agreement. If CAW hopes that someone other than GVCSS will obtain the contract, the unhappy result could be a loss of seniority and lower wages than Crosstown would pay.

We will provide you with further information about this issue in future Memoranda. In the meantime, please contact me if you have any questions about the content of this memo (604-714-3500).