

ATU 588

CUPE Local 21

CUPE Local 7

April 15, 2020

City Council

City of Regina Queen Elizabeth II Court

Regina, SK, S4P 3C8

Re: COVID-19 Financial Update

ATU 588, CUPE Local 21 and CUPE Local 7 are providing this joint submission to City Council regarding possible measures the City of Regina, at the direction of City Council are considering at today's meeting. As unions, we represent the City of Regina employees from Transit, Outside Workers and Inside Workers. This range includes Transit Drivers, Mechanics, Customer Service Representatives, Equipment Operators, Building Officials, Recreation and Facilities Workers, Dispatchers, Foresters and Pest Control, Administrative Staff and all of your front-line employees that are the face of the Citizens of the City of Regina.

Our memberships take pride in the work we perform and, in some cases, through this pandemic, are possibly putting their own lives and their families health on the line to come to work and perform the critical services required to keep the City running. We commend the City in taking precautions to ensure our members that continue to work are doing so safely and we will continue to work with Management to ensure that the safety of our members is a priority.

Today, each of you are likely tasked with a very difficult set of variables to consider. Based on the information being provided to you, that based on "worst case scenario" the City could lose \$20M in revenue. We are writing to you to provide some information regarding ensuring that your employees and our members are adequately supported during these difficult times.

We are aware that many people have faced layoffs in these past weeks, the City itself laid off over 350 casual employees, the bulk from CUPE Local 21, but also deferred the recall of approximately 450 other casual members from CUPE Local 21. Local 21's casual brothers and sisters, your electorate, are the foundation of Local 21. These are employees who seasonally commit to working for the City to work on our roads, in our parks and on our underground infrastructure. They are the ones who will one day become our permanent workforces, the ones who go on to have 30 year plus careers and some will even become Leaders in this organization. Now these employees, some of them with over 20 years of service, are placed on hold, unsure of what the future holds for them and their families. How the casual workforce is treated during this pandemic will echo across generations and manifest itself as workplace disdain, distrust, and dissension if they feel discarded during these unprecedented times. We ask that you seriously consider if there is more that as an employer you can do for them.

Based on comments by the Mayor and our City Manager, we are still hopeful that the City will not be considering any further layoffs of any employees. We know that the longer the measures to control the epidemic last, the more difficult these hopes, commitments and conversations will be. We are asking that we be considered your partners in these decisions, as we bring a different perspective to the table, the one of your front-line employees. Without that perspective and knowledge, Management might miss the simplest corrections and opportunities.

The Unions are the ones your employees turn to when they are unsure or when they have concerns, and where they bring safety concerns that are being ignored by management. We are the truth for employees. Accepting that and including us in these most difficult conversations and decisions, ensures that all considerations are on the table and that, as the unions representing these employees, we have heard your thoughts and considerations and understood your rationale. Leaving us out of these vital decisions and options, will only lead to misinformation, confusion and a “left behind by the employer” feeling.

ATU 588, CUPE Local 7 and CUPE Local 21 is requesting City Council and Administration to provide all laid off employees the Supplemental Unemployment Benefit Program (SUB) that is available to employers. The purpose of a SUB plan is to provide supplemental payments to Employment Insurance (EI) benefits during a period of unemployment due to temporary stoppage of work; training; illness, injury or quarantine. This allows an employer to supplement employees who are receiving EI to up to 95% of their normal weeks earning. Below is a basic example on how it works:

SUB payable when the employee is receiving EI benefits and has no other earnings.	
a. Employee's normal weekly earnings	\$1,000
b. Employee's other earnings	\$0
c. 95% of normal weekly earnings	\$950
d. Maximum EI payment	\$573
e. Calculation of maximum SUB payment (C – D = E)	\$377

The cost of a SUB plan or recalling staff, safely, pales in comparison to the workplace efficiency we risk losing if a workforce feels like they are disposable or forgotten. These options provide financial security to your employees, as well as lower the stress on already limited resources, such as food banks. We implore you to look at your reserve funding to help our members in this time of great need and uncertainty. If a worldwide pandemic is not enough of a catalyst to access that funding, what is?

While ATU has found that they are in a different position than their CUPE Brothers and Sisters, they understand that they could very well find themselves in a very similar position very soon and encourage City Council to seriously consider a SUB plan for all laid off employees.

This decision would be a signal to our memberships and all your employees that they will be looked after if decisions regarding the service levels need to happen in areas like Transit, Parks, Roadways, etc.

At a time that some employees are literally putting their lives at risk for the citizens of this city, they deserve a commitment from their employer that their income will be secure in the event layoffs occur. They have earned that piece of mind.

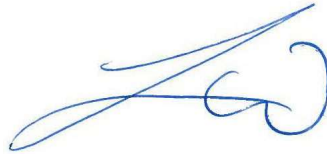
We are all in this together as One City One Team, our joint submission shows our commitment to work together with the City of Regina. The City of Regina cannot claim to be an employer of choice if we do not choose our employees first. This is a time the people of Regina require strong leadership. We trust you will make the appropriate decision.

Thank you,



Kevin Lucier

ATU 588



Laird Williamson

CUPE Local 21



Richel Nixon

CUPE Local 7