

POLITICS

# Garbage pickup, child care among Hamilton services likely impacted by looming strike



By **Don Mitchell** • Global News

Posted August 15, 2023 2:39 pm



Labour negotiations between the City of Hamilton and CUPE Local 5167 roll on with the possibility of a legal strike August 21, 2023 just days away. **Global News**

-A A+

**Editors note: A correction has been made in the latter half of this post regarding the results of a CUPE members survey mentioned. The original version of this post said 95.3 per cent of members considered a pay increase “priority one” during negotiations. However, that number was actually the outcome of the strike vote.**

With the reality of a city workers strike now just days away, City of **Hamilton** staff say they’ve begun putting together a labour disruption

contingency plan that will involve shifting remaining staff to keep vital services operating.

Should negotiations between the city and CUPE Local 5167 continue to erode, some 3,200 of an estimated 8,500 city-wide employees could be off the job Monday.

City Manager Janette Smith says residents could see garbage collection, child care, recreational programming and events using city property or services “significantly reduced or suspended,” if negotiations are unsuccessful.

“What I want to do is just confirm right up front that not all services are impacted,” Smith said.

“I want to just confirm with everyone that transit, paramedic services, fire services, our long-term care homes are definitely not impacted, and that’s just to name a few of the more high-profile ones that will continue.”

Public health inspections, parking enforcement, road services as well as city services at museums and libraries are other areas Smith said could also be affected by a work stoppage.

#### MORE ON POLITICS

- [Should Ottawa build homes again? ‘Conversations’ happening, minister says](#)
- [Find \\$15B in spending cuts by October, Anand tells federal ministers](#)
- [Canada watchdog probes Ralph Lauren over alleged forced Uyghur labour](#)

Property tax collection and individuals receiving Ontario Works cheques will continue to get payments from the city.

Blue box recycling for the entire city will not be affected but curbside collection of garbage, green bins and yard waste would only continue in Stony Creek, Hamilton Mountain, Ancaster south of the 403 and Glanbrook.

The lower city, Dundas, Flamborough and Ancaster north of the Highway 403 would see residential garbage collection stopped.

Smith says an operations team will look “day to day, hour to hour” to shift staff from non-essential services over to other departments upon any “emergency issues.”

Human resources director Lora Fontana said she was “optimistic” with current negotiations but wouldn’t reveal how close or far apart city negotiators are with the union.

“We’ve got fiscal responsibility in terms of striking the balance of negotiating something fair and equitable for our members, and then striking that balance with our fiscal responsibilities to the taxpayers in our community,” Fontana explained.

Local 5167 is the largest of 11 bargaining units the City of Hamilton deals with, representing inside and outside workers.

About 78 per cent of the city’s 8,500 employees are unionized.

A “no board” report issued by the Minister of Labour in early August started the clock on the possible strike or lockout, with workers in a legal position to walk out on Aug. 21st.

Last week, 5167 president Jay Hunter suggested the city has the cash to pay the CUPE workers after non-union management employees were given between eight and 15 per cent more in recent times.


“To add insult to injury, we’ve come to learn that the city has increased wages for managers and non-union staff at a much higher rate than what our members are asking for,” 5167 president Jay Hunter said.

“Clearly there’s money available to pay staff.”

In June, a CUPE survey said most members considered a pay increase “priority one” during negotiations, suggesting they’ve been taking “subpar collective increases” in recent years.


Hunter said he hoped an increase would be “something in the neighborhood of the rate of inflation.”


A vote in the spring saw 95.3 per cent of members voting in favour of a strike.




**CUPE Local 5167** 

@CUPELocal5167 · [Follow](#)

Members have given the bargaining committee their resounding support. More information will follow the next meeting with the employers bargaining committee. The union's committee may file for a no board report if the employers monetary offer doesn't meet our members mandate.



5:08 PM · Jun 9, 2023 

 35  Reply  Copy link

[Read more on Twitter](#)

Employees have been out of contact since the **expiration of their last deal** on Dec. 31, 2022.

Labour negotiations have been ongoing between the city and CUPE since early February.