

Secretary-Treasurer's Conference

January 20-23, 2016

Sheraton Hotel – Richmond Hill, ONT

First, let me thank the membership so much for having the opportunity to attend this conference. A great turnout (probably around 250-300 attendees) with great questions, speakers and courses.

The conference opened with Greetings from our Secretary-Treasurer, Candace Rennick, Fred Hahn, Patty Coates, and Joanne Webb who gave a brief history of the Mississauga Aboriginal Tribe she is from as well as graced each morning with a "smudge" for those who wished to participate.

Mike Stevens touched on fraud and risk within the Locals; even describing how it can escalate to huge amounts of dollars such as the CAO from a northern town who even expensed his vacations but expensed them under the "Mayor's" name ultimately, to the tune of \$350,000!

Stephen Lewis, another great speaker, gave details on his ongoing fight for AIDS relief and bringing to light one such instance where one group of peacekeepers turned into children's worst nightmares. The fight for social justice continues.

Several workshops such as Excel for Advanced was quite overwhelming, but the By-laws course was full of great information such as the By-law review from different Locals has been incredibly lengthy but Dennis Burke promises to have the wait-time reduced from 60 days to 30 days. Several more staff have been hired to help out with the huge backlog of requests. There were some very scary scenarios where locals were put on "Administration" in which National takes over the running of the local. Also, Dennis confirmed that the Canada Revenue Agency is looking for tax to be collected from the FIRST DOLLAR in the case of honorariums and as such, the Local has the obligation to inform the member any money is a taxable income and should be declared. When asked about cash retiree gifts being previously approved in the by-laws, Dennis confirmed this was done before the CRA rules changed and will no longer be approved in By-laws – they are asking locals to reconsider this by-law and change the "gift" to an item as opposed to cash. Cash and Gift Cards are treated the same! Bereavements/charitable donations were confirmed as acceptable as it does not benefit the member directly. One scary item is any locals in arrears by more than 2 months is NOT entitled to strike pay or strike support!

The Budget section of the workshops is currently only offered at the Treasurer's conference but they are looking to expand it. This was extremely helpful in suggesting ideas on how to create the Budget which I've not had much exposure to. It was interesting to note that some locals have auditors conduct a review of the books (while Trustees also review the books as well). For small locals, the cost can range from approximately \$2,000 to \$25,000 for larger locals.

Again, thank you so much for allowing me to attend. A great learning experience, making new connections and friends and learning lots of different points of view.

Marg Lemoine
Treasurer, CUPE Local 973