

<http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/toronto/archive/2009/07/10/toronto-on-strike-mayor-wants-to-end-strike-quot-today-quot.aspx>

Toronto on strike: Union rejects city's latest offer

Posted: July 10, 2009, 10:15 PM by Allison Hanes

[Mayor David Miller](#), [CUPE Locals 416 and 79](#), [Toronto on strike](#)



HALL MONITOR



ALLISON HANES

In a bid to bring an "immediate" end to a 20-day strike, Mayor David Miller went over the heads of union leaders and appealed directly to picketing Toronto workers yesterday, publicly unveiling the city's settlement offer.

After months of refusing to "bargain in public," Mr. Miller revealed the city's hand: wage hikes of 1%, 1%, 2% and 3% over the next four years, as well as a payout of banked sick time and the replacement of the controversial scheme with a sick leave plan.

The offer was rejected by union leaders, who said they intended to table a counter-offer.

Mr. Miller's appeal marked the first time since 30,000 civic employees walked off the job that the Mayor put himself front and centre in the labour dispute, acting as the key salesman for an offer he touted as both "fair" and "affordable." At the same time, however, he further toughened his language.

"After six months at the negotiating table and after nearly three weeks of an unnecessary strike, we have yet to see a serious or significant signal from union negotiators that they want a settlement," Mr. Miller said at city hall. "I said a week ago, that enough was enough. But even as our negotiators have shown good will at the table, the unions have maintained a position that at best can be described as unrealistic."

He said the unions have demanded wage hikes in excess of 3% a year and refused to budge on reforming their sick-day bank, which represents a \$250-million liability for the city.

Mr. Miller personally called Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 79 leader Ann Dembinski, representing 24,000 indoor workers, and Local 416 leader Mark Ferguson, representing 6,000 outdoor

workers. Until now he had left all contact with the unions to his negotiators.

In the first two hours after it was posted on Toronto's website, the proposal was downloaded 15,000 times.

With a new Angus Reid poll showing 67% of Torontonians disapprove of his handling of the strike, the Mayor reached out to city residents.

"I think it's incumbent upon us to ensure after nearly three weeks that the public understands what's going on and that our employees understand that there are no proposals to take away people's seniority," Mr. Miller said.

If a large portion of Toronto residents are unimpressed with the Mayor's role in the strike, an even higher number -76% -are fed up with the unions.

Nevertheless, pickets increased delays at several temporary trash dumps yesterday, such as Sunnyside Park, Ted Reeve Arena and Wishing Well Park. The right-leaning Responsible Government Group of councillors demanded that the city seek injunctions.

Both union leaders said they were "disgusted" Mr. Miller would use the media to up the ante. "What has happened today has set labour relations in this city back 30 years," Ms. Dembinski said. "In over 25 years of negotiations, I've never seen the Mayor make an attempt to circumvent the unions in the middle of a strike."

Mr. Ferguson said his members are "angrier now than they've ever been."

THE CITY'S PROPOSAL

Key elements of the city's offer:

-Wages -- Hikes of 1% in 2009, 1% in 2010, 2%in 2011 and 3% in 2012, or 7.2%over four years.

-Sick leave -- The current sick-day program, which allows workers to bank up to 18 unused days a year and cash them out upon retirement, would be replaced with a short-term leave plan.

-Sick bank payout -- Employees would receive a cash payout based on time banked and length of employment, with an estimated average payout of \$8,500. Thirty-year veterans would receive credit for 100% of their time owing, but those with the city less than 10 years would get a maximum of \$700.

-Seniority -- No change.

-Family Day -- Employees would get the Family Day statutory holiday in February, instead of Remembrance Day.

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35 Comments

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by jduder
Jul 10 2009
11:59 AM

Mayor Miller once again negotiating with terrorists...and once again Torontonians sit idly by and do nothing against these travesties. How long will we let these groups violate, and steal from this city, and from this nation? If CUPE gets what it wants, it will be yet another devastating blow to Canadian democracy and to the qualities that made it a once great nation.

by Darren in TO
Jul 10 2009
12:11 PM

RESIDENCY BYLAW FOR MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES!

by dichotomy
Jul 10 2009
12:27 PM

Wouldn't this have been a great opportunity to explore outsourcing options? I mean, if they are already on strike - what else can they do? Put their jobs out for tender and the city could save \$300million in a flash!

But, no - we'll be stuck with the same old whiners when the strike is over. And Miller, too. Yikes.

by Darren in TO
Jul 10 2009
1:02 PM

Why is he negotiating?

Hold firm you fool! Its my tax dollars you're dealing with

by DriftingIntoLogic
Jul 10 2009
1:04 PM

You`re leaving a real jet stream there Mayor Miller!! The public union gets pay increases and bonuses for not taking sick days while the people who pay their tawdry demands get it in the ear(and elsewhere). Shame on Miller and the unions.

by \$
Jul 10 2009
1:33 PM

Petitions:

www.ipetitions.com/.../wastechoice

www.ipetitions.com/.../PrivatizeTorontoTrash

www.ipetitions.com/.../PrivatizeGarbageInToronto

www.ipetitions.com/.../nogarbagehostage

If you're angry, sign them.

by Darren in TO
Jul 10 2009
2:10 PM

Is there a petition on a residency bylaw?

by DriftingIntoLogic
Jul 10 2009
2:36 PM

CONGRATS \$...FINALLY, someone doing something about the oinkers working at City Hall. HEY TAXPAYERS,,,, get at the petitions and sign up. Maybe another petition asking for the firing of 90% of the slugs in gov` t and a 75% roll back on the wages of those left.

by Stewart Pid
Jul 10 2009
3:34 PM

Girly man major tries to grow a set but can't ... begs union to come back!!!

Out source these jobs ... take a page from Ronnie Reagan's book on how to handle unions!

by paulcerar

The strikers are scabs against the people of Toronto, and Mayor Miller is

Jul 10 2009
5:23 PM

a coward.

by johnsmith9
Jul 10 2009
5:29 PM

"Mayor Miller once again negotiating with terrorists." ... ROFL there "jduder", you're as bad as those left wing types that always call GWB a war criminal ... LOL ... inflammatory but no substance.

by 66Scorpio
Jul 10 2009
6:12 PM

I guess it is telling when the unions want even more than a left-wing mayor is prepared to offer.

by Advokat
Jul 10 2009
6:31 PM

Dembinski and Ferguson - aka Tweedledumb and Tweedledumber - have now said that the city's latest offer is not acceptable. What friggin' planet are these imbeciles from?

If I was a CUPE member I would be on my way to their houses with a baseball bat for preventing me from working.

by Rule Me Like You Mean It I hope they reject the offer. The bell tolls louder for CUPE
Jul 10 2009
11:06 PM

by dani190
Jul 10 2009
11:15 PM

Really im pretty sure the residence are the ones who are paying your salaries....

I think quite a few people in this city will vow to let you guys go and i bet you, that you will get 5x the amount of workers you need tomorrow...

In these economic times, i really dont understand some people

by ZeeBC
Jul 11 2009
12:02 AM

Give Miller some credit. He may be a leftwing jerk but he knows when he is between a rock and a hard place. He knows he is saving big bucks while the jerks are on strike. He needs the money as he has mishandled the finances from day one. He also has to take care of his Union buddies. But when push comes to shove you can bet buddies are out the window. After sufficient time has elapsed Miller will come to an agreement, pay the jerks a humongous signing bonus, jack up house taxes and carry on as usual.

by Blue-man
Jul 11 2009
12:09 AM

Asking/telling David Miller to bargain hard with CUPE & that he should outsource garbage & other job categories to reduce the CUPE grip, is like expecting a pig to fly.

GTA residents are incredibly naive. They think they can vote in a socialist, lefty mayor & Council and then get a champion who will fight to minimize their taxes & limit the size & cost of civic services.

Miller sees himself as being the most important player on the public stage. He's a left wing, self-agrandizing, ego-maniac who's basic priority is self-promotion. He could care less about garbage in parks, taxpayers

waiting 4+ hours to get rid of their garbage or cancer patients (contracted with private transportation) caused to miss their radiation or chemo appointments. He's more interested in growing flowers on top of the Gardiner Expressway & destroying Toronto's huge transportation advantage at Toronto Island Airport. Miller thinks the rights of the the 700 privileged, residential squatters on the Islands trump those of a million, "mainland" taxpayers.

The police are no better. They might cross the picket lines if a striker is under threat from a taxpayer but the flip side of that??Forget it.

GTA residents & taxpayers: If you want change, the only way is at the ballot box, next election. Vote out these scum-suckers whose 1st priority as Councillors is their \$\$\$, not your taxes. They wouldn't have a clue about incentive-based personal income. They are focused on their ENTITLEMENTS.

The answer is obvious but the real mindset of GTA voters is conflicted. What they need is a Mike Harris approach but they've been so brain-washed to the contrary that I'll be betting on Miller again, next time around. My butt is now firmly entrenched in Mississauga, thank you very much, and I ain't coming back. Good luck.

by gtarob
Jul 11 2009
12:32 AM

What are these people Crazy ?? Be happy to have a job with over 9% unemployment in GTA , Everybody has to make sacrifices now I am a member of a skilled trade union and if I am sick I don't get paid , I get paid by the hour , no work no cash!!

The city does not have a surplus of cash, they are losing money every day if they where a car company they would go under ... I bet the 9% unemployed would love to have the jobs for less money !!

by ZeeBC
Jul 11 2009
12:38 AM

BCer's open the popcorn, sit back and watch Toronto go down the sewer.

We have some sympathy for the good citizens trapped in Toronto but not for the jerks who voted for your predicament.

by Blue-man
Jul 11 2009
12:49 AM

BTW, I suspect that individual police officers wouldn't hesitate to neutralize a striker harassing a citizen trying to get rid of his/her garbage. But like with the Tamils shutting down the Gardiner Expressway to make political statements, the street coppers are under orders that come from Chief Blair. And where do you think Blair gets his marching orders?

No, the kind of person who aspires to be a police officer is not one who would overlook rough treatment by union strikers directed at a vulnerable, ordinary citizen. After all, the strikers doing the physical intervention on the picket line aren't selected from the old or the infirm in

their ranks.

by jduder
Jul 11 2009
1:17 AM

johnsmith9 Maybe you should look up the definition of terrorism. Here are some highlights for you from the always invaluable dictionary:

"the use of violence and threats to intimidate or coerce, esp. for political purposes"

"the state of fear and SUBMISSION produced by terrorism or terrorization."

Sounds to me like a pretty accurate description of CUPE, doesn't it? I realize it's difficult to escape the legacy of GWB's terrorism hysteria, so fine...don't call them terrorists, but the fact remains that they're share a frightening similarity in their agendas and rhetoric.

You call it simply inflammatory, but maybe it needs to be said, so that we may shed light on the true nature and threat of groups like CUPE.

Perhaps if nothing changes, and Canada continues to decline economically until it ceases to exist as a sustainable nation, people like you will understand why many Canadians refer to these groups as "terrorists"

by Queen'sU
Jul 11 2009
1:45 AM

I hope that this strike drags on until the members of the unions start really suffering from their loss of pay. I hope that they miss bill payments, rack up more interest on their debts, and cut back on their spending. Only this will make them realize that their whole premise to strike is ridiculous, and they will pay the consequences for it.

by InHalifax
Jul 11 2009
7:49 AM

There's benefit to this. Miller in his continued ineptitude will end up capitulating to the union, pushing the city away from the far left and ensuring he won't get re-elected next year. Hopefully the city can get its act together after that and do some union busting.

by Medoras
Jul 11 2009
8:25 AM

The first to blink loses - meaning Toronto taxpayers. It is said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. It's time for Torontonians to get off their complacent rear ends and fix the problem. Re-electing a series of lame duck, partisan bureaucrats and their compliant lapdogs to affect change while hampered by a gaggle of intransigent, Victorian-era unions doesn't work. We need a strong, courageous leader who will privatize and contract out, where necessary and rid the city of these blackmailing unions once and for all. Will a genuine contender please step forward. No lawyers, professional politicians, MBA's or Harvard-educated wimps allowed.

by CanadianGulag

Maybe it is time for Chairman Miller to start issuing IOU's like

Jul 11 2009
9:39 AM

California. The Nanny State is hitting the wall, and Chairman Miller is driving the BUS. www.howestreet.com/index.php

by esyho
Jul 11 2009
11:00 AM

CUPE, why are you guys paying dues to some dudes that are not in their best intention to give your job back? Why are you walking the line and they, in their AC office, rejecting a more than acceptable offer? Why can you have any sayings? WHY WHY WHY???

by Blue-man
Jul 11 2009
12:06 PM

Maybe, just maybe, Dalton, who is busy making himself invisible & hiding from the press these days (the MSM always cuts him slack big-time anyway) is actually doing the right thing (intentionally or inadvertently) by NOT recalling the Legislature to end the strike.

The longer it goes, the stinkier the city gets, the more inconvenienced the taxpayers are, the more residents feel ripped-off, the uglier the behaviour of picketers gets, etc, etc, and, therefore, the greater the likelihood that voters will turf "His Hisness", the self-serving, egomaniacal mayor & all like-minded councillors (voters know who they are) next election.

Every politician knows that political memories are short. Miller will sweet-talk some of his new detractors by election day (too bad it's not this Fall) & that means EVERY living, breathing right-thinking Toronto voter must get to the polls when the time comes.

If he'd run for Mayor of Toronto, the natural opposition candidate is Etobicoke Councillor, Doug Holyday. He was Mayor of Etobicoke before amalgamation and he gets the credit for Etobicoke having an out-sourced, private sector garbage collection which is both cheaper & more reliable than CUPE's services.

If Doug won't do it, (and who could blame him) maybe Hazel will step out from Mississauga for a Term & do the job. She's still a spring chicken compared to His Blondness and gets more done in a day than His Hisness does in a week.

Good luck Toronto.

by RayL
Jul 11 2009
12:08 PM

How did this motley agglomeration of City employees wind up in the same bargaining unit? Who certifies this nonsense?

by fish77
Jul 11 2009
12:09 PM

It is time all public sector jobs were put out for tender .I am tired of being ripped off by greedy unions.

Stand fast and ask for bids on garbage removal all over the country. Remember Ronald Reagan's solution?.

by canuck172
Jul 12 2009

Darren in TO give up on the Residency Bylaw it ain't gonna happen

5:00 PM

by canuck172
Jul 12 2009

Darren in TO give up on the Residency Bylaw it ain't gonna happen

5:00 PM

by Darren in TO
Jul 12 2009

canuck172, wow you had to say it twice to make sure your message got across.

5:45 PM

The fact is that residency bylaws for municipal employees work just fine in other US jurisdiction, where their constitution is even far more encompassing than our charter. The fact remains that when you hear about a municipal employee being in the news for doing something wrong the odds are they live in the 905; ex the Paramedic's head who lives in Barrie, the unionist who kicked in a car door who lives in Thornhill, a few months ago the janitor arrested for the killing of the owner of 6 steps lives in Durham, the water services employee arrested for asking for bribes to speed up jobs and he lives in M'auga.

I personally know 2 Maintenance employees for the TTC, and both live in the burbs, and both brag about sleeping on the job and doing *uc* all on the job.

So yes, there is a reason why I ask for a residency bylaw. My municipal taxes go towards your salary, then you should live here

by Gezza
Jul 12 2009
8:31 PM

I missed the rationale here: if you hijack a plane or a car, you get arrested if not shot by the law enforcement; how can someone have hijacked the largest city with its residents in Canada for 20+ days and is still getting away with it?

by Sasha Baron Coleman
Jul 12 2009
11:23 PM

Darren,

Requiring city workers to work is the city, won't accomplish much. The best is to let the city have auctions and let any firm compete to provide services. That's the only solution. I for one, don't think that Torontonians are smart enough to demand the politicians to work for them so I left the city. Good luck to all Torontonians out there (especially to those who voted for Miller in the last election).

by Darren in TO
Jul 13 2009
10:42 AM

Sasha Baron Coleman, you misunderstood my comment, or you have a typo.

It would accomplish a lot, as they would know first hand the tax burden and the issues we go through daily.

Anyways, if you don't live here anymore, why bother commenting on this anyways?