

Secretary-Treasurer's Annual Report, AGM 2021

The union has faced many challenges over the last year. Thanks to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, we've spent the entire year with the union office closed to members. Our incredible staff have been working remotely, and working incredibly hard under difficult circumstances to keep the union functioning. Our Unit 2 members faced a difficult round of bargaining over the summer of 2020 and decided to accept a one year deal while we worked towards a resolution on a significant grievance that was holding up bargaining in that unit. As a result, we face another tough round of bargaining for those members this coming spring and summer. Last summer, we also became aware that our employer was planning to interpret our Unit 1 scope clause in such a way as to exclude anyone working out of province from the bargaining unit, thus depriving them of union protections and benefits. Though there has been considerable opposition from the union and from many others in the McMaster community, we have so far been unable to resolve that situation and make those excluded members whole.

Despite these challenges, the union remains in a strong financial position, well-resourced to fight back against McMaster, whether through grievances and arbitrations, or through political campaigns and job action.

Thanks to the hard work of our three Trustees, we were able to complete two audits in the fall of 2020, and this allowed us to get fully caught up and to align our audit schedule with our fiscal year, which will make future audits much easier and more straightforward to conduct. We have also finally figured out the cost share process, and have now been reimbursed by CUPE National for half of the expenses from the spring/summer 2020 Unit 2 bargaining support campaign. A similar cost share proposal to support the upcoming round of Unit 2 bargaining has also been approved by CUPE National. Our Strike Fund is now just shy of \$800,000.00, leaving us in a strong position to win should we see a strike by any or all of our bargaining units over the next few years.

In this year's budget, the membership made substantial investments in our committees and working groups, and since September, we've distributed more than \$35,000.00 in donations, mostly to local organizations fighting for social and economic justice. We've used our financial resources to support a strong and sustained presence at 1492 Landback Lane through our Indigenous Solidarity Working Group, and their Community Impact Fund continues to distribute funds in support of community sustenance projects in Indigenous communities. We also made our first contribution under the recently established Solidarity with Detained Migrants Initiative; a \$2000 donation to the Solidarity Across Borders Mutual Aid Fund, providing material support to detained migrants and their families.

We are currently working with Local 3902 (University of Toronto) and a company called UnionWare to launch an online portal for members that we can use for benefits applications and organizing, and we hope it will be ready for September 2021. A number of us are also working with McMaster to develop the paid TA training we won in the last round of Unit 1 bargaining, which will also begin this September.