CUPE LOCAL 3906
CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES - MCMASTER ACADEMIC & RESIDENCE WORKERS
Tel: 905-525-9140 ext. 24003 **Fax:** 905-525-3837 **Email:** staff@cupe3906.org
McMaster University, Kenneth Taylor Hall B111, 1280 Main St W, Hamilton, ON, L8S 4M4

General Membership Meeting Minutes
Date: Sep 24th, 2026
Time: 1:00 PM

Executive Committee

President:	Kusum Bhatta (she/her)
Vice President:	Asim Abbas (he/him)
Vice President External:	Albert Ashong (he/him)
Secretary Treasurer:	Shivam Gupta (he/him)
Recording Secretary:	Zeeshan Ul Haq (he/him)
Lead Steward, Unit 1:	Simran (she/her)
Lead Steward, Unit 2:	Dr. Hamed Afshari (he/him)
Lead Steward, Unit 3:	Dr. Ketan Ajay (he/him)
Lead Steward, Unit 4:	Arham Ali (he/him)
Health and Safety Officer:	Mahnaz Tajik (she/her)
Benefits & Advocacy Officer:	Nancy Kansal (she/her)
Equity Officer:	Yuly Wu (she/her)
International Officer:	Md. Masuduzzaman (he/him)
Undergraduate Officer:	Nabil Rajput (he/him)

Committee & Working Group Chairs

PAC Chair:	Asim Abbas and Dee Rooke
Contract Action Committee:	Caleb Smolenaars
Women and Gender Rights Committee:	Kusum Bhatta
Indigenous Solidarity:	Emily Howse-Hackl and Ayra Thomas
Communications Committee:	Caleb Smolenaars
Prisoners Solidarity:	Sonia Hill and Patricia Mills
Palestine Solidarity:	Naila Bounefissa
OUWCC:	Kyle Morrison

Trustees

exp. Fall 2026 audit: Camden Church
exp. Fall 2027 audit: Kyle Morrison exp.
Fall 2028 audit: Maxwell Altman

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Staff
Staff Representative: Brad Walchuk (he/him)
Staff Representative: Mary Ellen Campbell (she/her)
Administrator Coordinator: Francesca Brugnano (she/her)

Agenda

Meeting Called to Order at 1:03 P.M.

1. **Acknowledgement of Indigenous Territory**

   Read at 1:12 P.M.

2. **Reading of the Equity Statement**

   Read at 1:14 P.M.

3. **Roll Call of Officers & Introductions**

   Mahnaz Tajik and Nabil Rajput were absent.

   KB welcomed members to the first GMM of the fall and explained that the GMM is held monthly, that it is where members stay informed, ask questions and get involved, and that the Local has four units (Unit 1 TAs/RAs in lieu, Unit 2 Sessional Instructors, Unit 3 Postdocs, Unit 4 Residence Workers) with more than 3,000 members. KB noted that the office internet was down and the meeting was running on mobile data.

4. **Approval of the Agenda**

   KB noted that the main item is budget approval, along with elections for HDLC delegates.

   PG moves to approve the agenda.

   AA seconds.

   No discussion.

   Motion carries

5. **Approval of the Past General Membership Meeting Minutes**

   NK moves to approve the minutes of the last meeting.

   AA seconds.

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No discussion.

Motion carries.

6. **Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

None

7. **Secretary-Treasurer's Report**

SG: No report this month. The monthly bank reconciliation could not be completed because the office internet has been down for a couple of weeks and the accountant accesses the Treasurer's desktop remotely. The August and September reports will be presented at October GMM.

KB: Service has been requested several times without success, and the Local is looking into replacing the provider.

8. **Communications and Bills**

None to report

9. **Budget Approval**

AA moves to approve the budget

KA seconds,

Discussion

SG presented the budget, showing the 2024–2025 and 2025–2026 budgets and actuals for comparison.

SG (Income): Interest income is budgeted at $35,000 (about $30,000 at 3% on $1 million held in a non-redeemable account that pays at maturity, and about $5,000 from the benefits savings account). About $20,000 is expected in CUPE National cost share for the Unit 2 and Unit 4 bargaining, as receipts will be submitted this year; the $63,000 budgeted last year was not received. Unit 1 dues about $763,000 (1.5% wage increase); Unit 2 dues about $266,000 (5.75% wage increase, based on last year's actual of about $251,000, which was lower due to less sessional hiring); Unit 3 dues about $304,000 (about $289,000 last year); Unit 4 dues about $50,000 (about $14,690 received since March, estimate from staff and the Unit 4 Lead Steward); initiation fees about $1,900. Total income about $1.4 million.

SG (Salaries and Benefits): Second CPP contribution about $1,500. Staff payroll about $340,000 under the CUPE 1281 collective agreement. Executive honoraria calculated from the honoraria table, with an allowance for up to four transition honoraria following mid-year elections. CPP/EI about $34,000; Multi-Sector Pension Plan about $25,500. Book-off for the President, Vice-

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President and Secretary-Treasurer reduced to $70,000 based on the last two years (about $70,000 in 2024–2025 and about $50,000 last year). The Health and Safety line is removed; any such costs will come from office expenses. Staff benefits under the collective agreement (PD fund, insurance about $50,000, per diem $1,500, healthcare spending account $7,500, cell phones $3,600, transit, clothing allowance $1,200) total about $80,000; no bargaining bonus is budgeted this year. Total salaries and benefits about $680,000.

SG (Professional Fees): Legal fees for grievances and arbitration $15,000; accounting at status quo; CUPE 1281 legal fees $2,500. The design and consulting lines are removed. Total about $21,000.

SG (Office and Admin): Office supplies $4,000 (last year's $6,700 included one-time laptops and a fridge). A new fall orientation items line was created, separate from printing: $25,000, of which $15,000 has already been spent on merchandise, with a further $10,000 added. Telephone $1,000; printing and reproduction $1,500; postage $1,000; equipment lease and purchase $26,000 (subscriptions and printer lease); repairs and maintenance $500; refreshments $2,400 (coffee machine and water cooler); bank service charges $1,500; internet $1,600; office insurance $3,500; rent kept at status quo in case it is charged. The office and admin "other" line will be removed so expenses are recorded in the correct lines. Total about $84,000.

SG (Meetings, Committees and Conferences): Conference fees $11,800 based on the delegate table; delegate numbers were reduced because of the deficit, except the five Health and Safety delegates already approved. Equity Action Committee $2,000; PAC operations $2,000 (new); Steward Council $600 per unit ($200 per term) for Units 2, 3 and 4 and $750 for Unit 1; International Committee $4,000, of which $2,400 is for the pantry; childcare $300; general meetings $50. Committee and steward honoraria about $71,424 (committee chairs $60 per month, split equally between co-chairs, now applied consistently including to ISWG; about 60 stewards at $240 per term; Bylaws Committee; new honoraria for the Palestine Solidarity Working Group and Equity Action Committee). Undergraduate Committee $500; Communications $500; Women and Gender Rights Committee $4,000. Inactive committee lines removed. Total about $100,000.

SG (Travel and Accommodation): Budgeted $32,000 last year but spent about $56,000; with fewer delegates, about $42,000 is budgeted based on the conference table.

SG (Working Groups): Palestine Solidarity $1,000; Indigenous Solidarity reduced from $15,000 to $10,000; Prisoners Solidarity $2,500; Raise the Floor renamed to the Contract Action Team at $2,500 given upcoming bargaining; inactive groups removed. Total about $16,000.

SG (Per Capita, Dues and Donations): CUPE National per capita for 2025–2026 is $445,000; it has not been paid since March, a cheque was prepared in August and will be paid soon. This year's estimate is 0.85% of total wages. OFL about $20,000 to cover arrears from April 2024 onward and the current year. HDLC $2,500. CUPE Ontario about $22,000. Per capita total about $516,000. Bonding line removed, as it is paid with per capita. PAC donations $2,000 as required by Bylaws

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Article 15B; executive donations reduced to $2,500; personal appeals line removed; GMM donations $8,000; Presidential Initiative, Detained Migrant Initiative and Workers Arts and Heritage Centre lines removed, as donations can be made through the GMM or executive donation lines.

SG (Bargaining and Mobilization): With Unit 1 and Unit 3 bargaining upcoming, per diem and travel $8,000; bargaining honoraria $37,440 (eight Unit 1 and five Unit 3 committee members); unused bargaining lines removed; bargaining total about $45,400. Pre-strike member outreach $15,000; strike and communications total about $20,000; mobilization supplies $3,000.

SG (Other Expenses): Late payment and interest $2,000 (to be minimized); subscriptions line removed; socials $10,000 (steward socials at $200 per term and drop-in socials); education and training $1,000 (Fall and Spring Schools now in conferences); Steward Award $300 as required by the Bylaws; trustee audit $750. Total about $14,000.

SG: The projected deficit is about $116,000. Last year ended with a deficit of about $70,000 against a budgeted $30,000, because income came in below budget. The Local has run deficits in each of the last four years, including about $200,000 in the strike year; the year before that had a surplus of about $104,000, which went to the strike account.

KB: Thanked SG for the comparative presentation and noted that spending was reduced in many areas, but the deficit could still not be brought lower.

PG: Thanked SG. Asked what book-off entails, for a breakdown of the different insurance lines, whether Unit 1 members would be covered if unable to TA during a strike, and whether there is a plan to reduce the deficit over the next few years.

SG: Book-off is a fixed cost paid at the TA rate. All executives receive an honorarium for 10 hours; the President and Secretary-Treasurer have 20 hours and the Vice-President 15 hours. The three insurance lines are staff medical insurance under the collective agreement, office insurance, and CUPE National bonding, which covers the Local for up to $100,000 in case of financial fraud, provided per capita and reports are submitted on time. During the 2022 strike, members received $15 per hour for up to 20 hours per week.

BW: This budget covers September 2026 to August 31, 2027. The Unit 1 and Unit 3 collective agreements expire on August 31, 2027, so no unit would be in a legal strike position during this budget year.

MEC: This is the operating budget. The Local has a separate strike fund of almost $1 million that is not reflected here, and CUPE National now covers strike pay from day one.

SG: The deficit is not sustainable. Dues are the only source of income, so expenses must be controlled; flexible expenses were reduced as much as possible. About $170,000 is owed to CUPE National since March, and about $170,000 must be repaid to the strike account. The benefits interest approved for operations at the last GMM can cover only one of these; National will be

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paid first, and a motion may be needed on the funds moved from the strike account to operations.

KB: Thanked SG for the extensive background work over the summer to trace the strike account transfers and unpaid dues.

SS (on behalf of PG): Asked whether the budget could be made available on the website.

BW: Transparency is important, but posting it online would make it visible to the employer and the public. Suggested instead reviewing the budget and year-to-date spending regularly at GMMs throughout the year.

PG: Agreed and noted that she was going to move a motion to post it online but finds the suggestion reasonable; wants to better understand the breakdowns.

SG: Will continue to present comprehensive reports at each GMM with a two-year comparison and is happy to answer any specific questions.

KB: Members can contact SG or the executive with questions, and a copy of the budget sheet is available at the office through SG.

Motion carries

10. Reports of Committees, Delegates & Working Groups

a. Stewards Network (Chaired by: Simran, Hamed Afshari, Ketan Ajay, and Arham Ali)

BW: Explained that each officer leads a related committee, and that members can join any committee at any time without an election, except the Bylaws Committee.

SS: Has presented at TA orientations in more than 36 departments. There are more than 1,400 new and returning TAs this year; the numbers from graduate administrators came after the budget was set. Hopes to get more merchandise and is open to discussing new vendors, noting the Local has been restricted to purchasing through the union website.

HA: No update. Held a Unit 2 orientation in September and answered questions from Unit 2 members.

KA: There was a good turnout of postdocs at the Unit 3 social on September 22. Bargaining is coming up and members should stay connected.

Arham: Attended ClubFest and met with Unifor representatives; elections were held yesterday.

b. LMC

KB: No LMC meeting has been held; no updates. The LMC is the meeting with the employer where members' concerns are raised.

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c. PAC (Co-Chaired by: Asim Abbas and Dee Rooke)

AA: PAC decided to set up a table for a membership drive with all units. Members interested in joining PAC are encouraged to reach out. PAC attended the Labour Day event at Bayfront Park.

d. Bylaws Committee (Chaired by: Kusum)

KB: The committee met this month but did not have quorum. Items submitted by members were discussed, but no votes could be taken, so there are no updates for the GMM.

e. Equity Action Committee (Chaired by: Yuly Wu)

YW: The first fall Equity Action Committee meeting was held on Monday. A joint event with the Women and Gender Rights Committee will be held this Friday afternoon; the poster and registration link were shared in the chat. Other updates are in the written report.

f. International Committee (Chaired by: Md. Masuduzzaman)

MM: The International Committee will meet next week. Attended orientations and encouraged interested students to join the committee. Plans to restock the pantry next month and will inform members once it is restocked.

KB: Clarified that, although the pantry was started by the International Committee, members can connect with the Local about pantry support.

g. Communications Committee (Chaired by: Caleb Smolenaars)

No report.

h. Women and Gender Rights Committee (Chaired by: Kusum Bhatta)

KB: The report is on the website, and information on the joint event was shared in the chat.

i. Indigenous Solidarity Working Group (ISWG) (Co-Chaired by Emily Howse-Hackl/Ayra Thomas))

No report. KB noted that ISWG welcomes new members.

j. Contract Action Committee (Chaired by: Rand Clayton and Caleb Smolenaars)

No report. KB noted that Rand Clayton has stepped down, leaving Caleb Smolenaars as chair, and that the committee has not met in four to five months. Members were encouraged to join committees that need more members.

k. Health & Safety Committee (Chaired by: Mahnaz Tajik)

Not present; no report.

l. Benefits Committee (Chaired by: Nancy Kansal)

Not present; no report.

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m. Prison Solidarity Working Group (PSWG) (Chaired by: Sonia Hill and Patricia Mills)
Not present; no report.

n. Hamilton & District Labour Council (HDLC)
Albert: No major updates after the long summer break. Meetings have resumed, and updates are in his report on the website.

KB: Gioia Myers is also a delegate, and two further delegate positions are up for election today.

o. OUWCC (rep: Kyle Morrison)
BW: Per Kyle Morrison, the OUWCC is planning its annual conference during Reading Week and is considering a shorter name. BW also shared an HDLC event in the chat.

p. CUPE Council
No update.

11. Nominations, Elections & Installations (Chaired by BW)

Chaired by MEC.

a. HDLC Delegates (2) (Mary Ellen)
MEC: The HDLC meets in person on the third Thursday of each month, except in the summer. The Local has eight delegates and is entitled to ten, so two positions are vacant. Positions are open to members of all units. Three calls for nominations were made.

Alissa Hamilton self-nominated in writing, as she could not attend.

Asim Abbas self-nominated.

No further nominations. Nominations closed.

Alissa Hamilton and Asim Abbas acclaimed as HDLC delegates.

b. LAH Steward (Unit 4) (1)
MEC: This position is for Unit 4 (Residence Life) members only, and Unit 4 quorum is five members. Only two Unit 4 members were present, so quorum was not met.

The position remains vacant and may be temporarily appointed by the Executive until an election can be held with Unit 4 quorum.

12. Unfinished/Old Business

a. Motion: To pass policy for steward social (Appendix 1) (Deferred from last meeting)
PG moves to adopt the Steward Social Policy as outlined in Appendix 1.

SS seconds.

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No discussion.

Motion carries.

13. New Business

SG: Asked about the training that BW had emailed about.

BW: The Niagara District CUPE Council is holding a Fall School on Saturday, October 17, 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., in St. Catharines. Courses include Reconciliation and Indigenous Cultural Safety; a steward learning series (popular economics for stewards, and representing members in front of management); and a health and safety stream (violence prevention, and sexual violence and harassment at work). There is money in the budget for members who wish to attend; a motion can be brought, or interested members can contact the Executive. The flyer link was shared in the chat.

14. Other Business

PG: Asked about the timeframe for steward honoraria cheques.

KB/SG: The cheques are signed. Most were mailed today to home addresses by BW, and members may also pick them up at the office. An email will be sent after the meeting.

SS: Is following up with a few stewards whose addresses were unclear.

15. Good of the Union

KB: Reminded members of the joint EAC and Women and Gender Rights Committee outdoor event tomorrow. The Local will begin preparing for upcoming bargaining; members are encouraged to join committees, get mobilized and become familiar with their collective agreement, and Diana will advise on next steps.

16. Adjournment

Motion: SG moves to adjourn.

YW and NK second it.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:44 PM.

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Recording Secretary

Zeeshan Ul Haq

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