



ST. JOHN'S
International Airport Authority

For Immediate Release

News Release

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Authority's Latest Attempt to Engage PSAC is Rejected

PSAC shows no interest to resume negotiations despite the Authority's efforts to engage them

ST. JOHN'S, NL - Friday, November 2, 2012 – Since the start of the strike at St. John's International Airport, the Airport Authority has repeatedly stated its willingness to re-start negotiations, and demonstrated flexibility on all outstanding issues. However, its efforts to engage PSAC continue to be rejected.

“Over the past eight weeks, the Authority has had numerous conversations with union representatives and the federal Mediator to explore a re-start to negotiations, and provided the Mediator with documentation to confirm our flexibility. Over two weeks ago we provided the Mediator and PSAC's Chief Negotiator a Statement of Principles that reaffirms our flexibility on the nine major outstanding issues and provides a basis to resume negotiations. We now know from recent conversations that PSAC has no flexibility on any outstanding issue, and is unwilling to return to the bargaining table to engage in collective bargaining,” says Keith Collins, President and CEO of the St. John's International Airport Authority.

Despite their public statements to the contrary, the union's bargaining team has made no effort to re-engage the Authority in bargaining, and has indicated no flexibility since the strike began on September 11th. In fact, PSAC's most recent public statements indicate that it is committed to a long strike at the Airport, extending into the winter months.

“We will leave our current set of proposals and proposed Statement of Principles on the table for the next few days in the hope that PSAC will decide to resume negotiations to obtain a fair and balanced collective agreement for both parties. Otherwise, the Union’s inflexibility and unwillingness to negotiate leaves the Authority with no other alternative but to reconsider its position on all items. The efforts we have made to express our flexibility on all the outstanding issues and our interest in reaching a negotiated settlement to this dispute have not been reciprocated by PSAC”, says Collins.

The Authority also strongly disagrees with how the Union has characterized the Authority’s business issues as concessions in an effort to excuse it from negotiating these items. “All items in our collective agreement should be able to be discussed with an open mind, however the Union has a very closed mind when it comes to the business issues at the St. John’s International Airport and we don’t understand why we are being treated differently by PSAC, who have negotiated these issues at other airports,” added Collins.

Comparative information on the Authority’s proposals on contracting and job security language with that of other Canadian airports and the local market, along with further information on the negotiations between PSAC and St. John’s International Airport Authority, can be found on the negotiations website at www.sjiaanegotiations.com.

See attached for Statement of Principles

Summary of SJIAA Key Principles 15 October 2012

There are nine outstanding issues that need to be addressed in a comprehensive settlement in order to reach a negotiated settlement in the near future. The following is a general overview of the Authority's flexibility at this time for further negotiation on these issues:

1. Wages – The Authority will be the top Tier 2 airport in Atlantic Canada in respect of wage rates; those wages will also be competitive with comparable employers locally and within Atlantic Canada. Wages may be further enhanced during the term of the new agreement by reallocating money from other areas such as retroactivity and/or shift and weekend premiums and by further movement in the Authority's position on wages.
2. Contract Duration – longer than the union's proposed 4 years and less than the Authority's proposed 8 year term.
3. Job Security – job security protection will be maintained for current employees.
4. Pension Plan – plan provisions will be maintained while those enrolled in the DB plan contribute on a more equitable basis, based upon industry standards. The Authority has flexibility on the timing to implement this approach.
5. Contracting – protecting the work that is performed by employees in the bargaining unit and not altering the existing contracting practices at St. John's International Airport.
6. Staffing – the Union's outstanding proposal to protect full time employees who wish to move into posted temporary positions is acceptable to the Authority, provided the Union recognizes the Authority's right to manage filling vacancies.

7. Casual and Seasonal Employees – merge all casual employees into the one category – Seasonal – with recall rights and improved overall benefit coverage as a new group. This will require some very modest realignment of benefit coverage to offset the significant additional costs incurred by the Authority as a result of these enhancements.

8. Benefit Plans – Employees will be guaranteed substantially the same benefits in the event there is any change in benefit plan providers.

9. Other monetary benefits sought by the union can be enhanced with respect to vacation, meal allowances, and shift and weekend premiums.

The above is in addition to the numerous clauses that have already been settled between the parties. The Authority believes that this statement of principles indicates our sincere desire to resume negotiations on a basis which would lead to the settlement of a new collective agreement.

St. John's International Airport Authority is a private, not-for-profit organization with the mandate to provide the region with a safe, cost-efficient transportation facility that is a catalyst for economic growth. Under the provisions of a long-term Ground Lease with the Federal Government of Canada, the Airport Authority is responsible for the airport's operations on behalf of the community it serves.