After a two week pause from bargaining, we met with the management team again on Monday, September 23. Between session #2 and #3, the union provided a written draft of all the agreements reached on Day 2 and we held a few offline discussions related to job descriptions for PAS/Dept Secretaries, Emergency Dept. employees and the two jobs in Environmental Services. In the meetings, we reached agreement on changes in the Paramedic Job Description related to Community Paramedic work, agreed to disagree on adding more detail to dept. duties in the PAS job description and exposed significant disagreements in Environmental Services. The main issue in EVS is management’s intention to transfer Tech Classification duties that pay $3/hour more to the Aide Classification where the work will be done for less compensation. They want to limit Tech work to be just stripping and waxing floors. This is a significant issue of disagreement that management needs to take seriously.

CRMC’s outside attorney was present for bargaining this time. Unfortunately, that means less was accomplished. Even though we provided draft Tentative Agreements to the management team between meetings, they were not prepared to sign the draft TAs at the start of the day as their attorney still wanted to revisit some items and the management team now objected to including into the Health and Safety Article that they would send the union, “First Report of Injury Forms” upon request. This was frustrating for all of us on the union team.

In the morning, CRMC management presented us an updated list of non-economic proposals and referred to 3 items on their proposal as Tentative Agreements that we had not yet quite agreed to. After we clarified these items and reviewed all outstanding non-economic items on both parties’ list of issues, we reached verbal agreement on a few items, like the location of the union bulletin boards. But mostly, management’s attorney promised to provide written proposals to us at a later date on open issues, like the Grievance Procedure and updated Leave of Absence language. While it felt like we made progress in our discussions, there is nothing in writing at the end of the day that we can report as a “Tentative Agreement.”

Management was also still not ready to present proposals
on the Absenteeism policy and while we made progress on the Mandatory Shift issues at Heartwood, we still did not reach an agreement.

The biggest disappointment of the day was that management did not present us with a comprehensive economic proposal. At 3pm they spent time discussing some, but not all of the union’s economic proposals. The good news is that we made progress on improving Bereavement Leave and Holiday Pay. We don’t have it in writing yet, but the progress was encouraging. CRMC management then expressed “philosophical concerns” with our proposals on Health Insurance and a Union Pension. And they felt that other fringe benefit provisions like the uniform allowance, were already “quite generous.” We were promised a full economic proposal at our next session.

We will be back to the table for bargaining on Monday, September 30 and Wednesday, October 2. We have a lot of work to do to get an agreement by Wednesday night but the team is prepared to work late into the evening if necessary to get the best agreement we can for our members and our families.

CONTRACT EXPIRATION:
Next week, Monday at midnight, our current contract will expire. This does not mean that management can suddenly change the terms of our employment without our agreement or vote. In fact, if they did so, it would be an Unfair Labor Practice under the National Labor Relations Act and we could sue them. In fact, when the contract expires, only two things change right away. First, we gain the right to strike for the first time! This will be the first time our contract expires as a non-profit health care institution. As public sector workers, we were considered “essential employees” under the law and did not have this right. As of next Monday, we will have the right to strike, but we can only do so if a super-majority of members vote to do so AND we would have to provide a 10-day written notice. Second, now, please make sure to file them this week!

VOTING ON THE CONTRACT:
Whatever we get from management as their final proposal on Wednesday, October 2, we will bring it back to the full membership for review and a vote. Members will have the right to accept or reject the offer. While we hope we will be able to bring back a great contract proposal we can all celebrate, the decision to accept or reject the offer will be one for the whole group to decide. We will make sure copies are available on the website and in paper copy at CRMC at least 3 days before the vote.

TENTATIVE VOTING DETAILS:
We plan to offer two full days for members to vote on the final offer we get next week on Wednesday, October 2. Here are the details:

Tuesday, October 8:
- Cornerstone Lounge: 6:00am – 6:00pm
- Breezy Point Clinic Breakroom: 7:30am – 9:00am

Thursday, October 10:
- Heartwood/Hallett Breakrooms: 6:00am – 9:00am
- Cornerstone Lounge: 9:00am – 11:00am
- Business Office Breakroom: 11:00am – 1:00pm
- Baxter Clinic Breakroom: 11:00am – 1:00pm
- Heartwood/Hallet Breakrooms: 1:30pm – 3:00pm
- Cornerstone Lounge: 3:00pm – 6:00pm

Ballots will be counted at 6pm.

In Solidarity,
Your bargaining team!