

Paramedics reach new agreement with DSB

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The Recorder

ESPANOLA—Paramedics with the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board (MSDSB), represented by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), have ratified a new collective contract agreement with its employer after two days of voting on the agreement, April 2-3.

“Yes, the paramedics have ratified the collective agreement,” said Fern Dominelli, CAO of the MSDSB last Friday. “It is good news the new deal has been ratified by the paramedics,” he stated, noting the MSDBS board had approved the new contract agreement this past February.

Chris Gillis, of the Espanola station and president of the paramedics union told the Recorder, “our members have voted to ratify the four year contract, although a year on the deal is already gone, so it is actually a three-year deal going forward.”

The deal was ratified by both parties after having gone through talks with a conciliator. “These negotiations

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seemed to drag out for some reason," said Mr. Gillis.

The MSDSB paramedics are made up of 120 members, and almost 90 percent voted in favour of the agreement, said Mr. Gillis. "We're a pretty big group, we have members in Espanola, Manitoulin Island, Massey, Chapleau, and Killarney. In actuality, we cover an area of about 50,000 kilometres with 13 ambulance bases in the

area."

Of the 120 members about 55 are full-time employees, said Mr. Gillis. "This is a good contract," he continued. "There were some small improvements made in wages and benefits for members, and mostly language in regards to scheduling and hiring part-time personnel," he said. "It will help in regards to recruiting and retaining personnel to some of the areas we cover."

Blair Pitfield, paramedic

staff representative with OPSEU, also confirmed, "the members have ratified a new contract agreement with DSB. This was a good offer put on the table by DSB, especially in these current economic times. But yes, it was a long bargaining process."

Mr. Pitfield explained the contract is for a four year term, to expire as of December 31, 2015. "I can provide you with the monetary gains the employees have received. In the first

three years the employees will receive a two percent salary increase in each, and a two and a half percent increase in salary in the fourth year."

"There has also been improvements to the drug benefits conditions," con-

tinued Mr. Pitfield. He added, "there is good language in the agreement, call-in procedures to make it fair for everyone, for instance regular part-time employees."