

City of Vancouver motion to become a Living Wage Employer passes unanimously

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VANCOUVER – The Living Wage for Families Campaign and the Metro Vancouver Alliance congratulate the City of Vancouver for its commitment to become a Living Wage Employer.

A motion introduced last week by Mayor Robertson to make the City of Vancouver a Living Wage Employer was debated today at the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services and passed unanimously. This is a welcome response to the growing income inequality in Vancouver. By adopting a living wage policy for its direct staff and contractors, the City of Vancouver is making it a little bit easier for working families to meet their expenses.

The living wage is a regional calculation that looks at the amount that a family of four, two adults working full year, full time, need to earn to meet their expenses. The living wage for Metro Vancouver is \$20.68/hr.

“\$20.68 is not just a number on a spreadsheet. It’s a crucial tipping point that affects every facet of life,” presented Vania Tse, CUPE 391 member and City of Vancouver employee. “I work more than 35 hours to make ends meet. What does this mean? It means more transportation time between jobs. More bus tickets per week to get to those jobs. It means I’m more tired and less able to commit time to see my family, exercise or further my own education.”

Prior to the most recent municipal election all Vancouver parties committed to explore becoming a Living Wage Employer at Metro Vancouver Alliance’s Municipal Accountability Assembly. The unanimous support demonstrates that the mayor and council intend to act on that public commitment.

“So many are struggling day to day to make ends meet with the ongoing stress this causes in families emotionally, spiritually and economically,” stated Rev. Margaret Marquardt representing Anglican Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Melissa Skelton, Diocese of New Westminster. “It is our responsibility to stand with those who are struggling and to show that we mean to do something about it. This motion on the living wage is a way towards this end!”

The next step for the City of Vancouver will be to draft an implementation plan to pay its direct employees and major service contractors a living wage. This plan will be reviewed and approved by the Living Wage for Families Campaign in order for the City of Vancouver to qualify as a certified Living Wage Employer.

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