

Paramedics' talks stalled

VANCOUVER – Paramedics say their talks with the BC Ambulance Service are stalled. The bargaining committee for the 3,500 members of CUPE 873 met with the BCAS today for a response to a comprehensive union proposal (including monetary items) presented to the employer last week.

Ambulance Paramedics' spokesperson BJ Chute said that, "despite our efforts to get back to the table and stay there until we have a new collective agreement, the employer's bargaining team appears unwilling or unable to bargain." He added that, "they have declined to give a response to our proposals and have not presented a new package themselves – it takes two to negotiate."

The paramedics have been on strike since April 1 for faster ambulance response times, better staffing levels, wage parity with other emergency responders and a multi-year contract. The paramedics continue to provide ambulance services under Essential Services orders.

The two sides are slated to meet again tomorrow (Friday), but Chute says that is now in doubt "if the employers' bargaining team doesn't have a mandate to make even the simplest of decisions."

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