

Toronto, largest union back at bargaining table

Unions representing inside and outside workers in a position to go on strike, or be locked out by the city, as of midnight June 22

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Editor's note: An earlier version of this story stated incorrectly that the two sides would resume bargaining next Monday.

The city of Toronto and its biggest civic union returned to the bargaining table on Monday, ending an almost week-long impasse.

The city and Local 79 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, which represents 18,000 inside workers, last week lobbed mutual charges of “bad faith” bargaining, with both sides filing complaints with the Ontario Labour Relations Board. At the request of a provincial mediator last Friday, the two sides have withdrawn the accusations.

The city is seeking changes to sick leave policy and other benefits but Local 79 refused a request by city negotiators to explain their proposal.

Meanwhile, the city and CUPE Local 416, which represents garbage and other outside workers, have been in daily bargaining, including all last weekend, on a new contract to replace one that expired last Dec. 31. Local 416 leaders have listened to the city's sick leave proposal but, like Local 79, whose members include daycare workers, is opposed to changes in the current policy.

So far, no wage proposals have been tabled, but leaders of the two unions cite recent settlements of three per cent a year at several city agencies and jurisdictions outside Toronto.

The two unions are in a position to go on strike, or be locked out by the city, as of midnight June 22, with talks moving slowly according to those at the bargaining table.