

For immediate release

November 28, 2016

MAUDE BARLOW, PAUL MOIST, CUPE 1002 & MAYOR TO SPEAK AT PORTAGE NOV. 29 TOWN HALL Union urges residents to ask questions, get the facts on Wastewater P3

Portage la Prairie – The Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1002 is urging residents of Portage la Prairie to attend a Town Hall meeting tomorrow evening, to discuss City Council’s plans for the municipality’s wastewater treatment facility.

After a surprise September 12, 2016 vote by City Council to move ahead with a public-private partnership (P3) for a major plant upgrade, Terry Thompson has more questions than answers. Thompson is President of CUPE Local 1002, the Union that represents City workers, including those working at the wastewater treatment plant. The City’s decision to use a P3 model for the upgrade to the City’s Water Pollution Control Facility extends to the design and building of the \$110 million upgrade, as well as financing, maintenance, and operations for 30 years. A “value for money” report was made available publicly, but omits key data. The City promised to protect jobs for City workers, but the Union is unhappy with the process so far and is concerned about the impact of a P3 on public water, accountability and costs.

“The Union was not consulted for the report to Council, and there was no real opportunity for public consultation,” said Thompson. “The people of Portage and local industry will ultimately be on the hook for any problems resulting from using the P3 model, yet the public report on the P3 plan does not include any detailed numbers or the risk factors used to justify the City’s plan.”

A FIPPA request filed by the Union turned up nearly 1,500 pages of documents, but did not provide answers. Thompson has questions about the lack of public consultation, other options for funding the project, and about the objectivity of the value for money report that prompted Council to choose the P3 model. CUPE will get some help from panelists at the Town Hall, including water advocate **Maude Barlow**, author of *Boiling Point – Government Neglect, Corporate Abuse and Canada’s Water Crisis*. Portage Mayor, His Worship Irvine Ferris, has also agreed to speak at the event.

Other guest speakers on tomorrow’s panel include:

- Jeff Sing, CUPE Local 1002 member
- Paul Moist, Research Associate with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- Jim Holmes, member of Regina Water Watch

WHO: Portage Water Watch Committee and CUPE Local 1002
WHAT: Community Town Hall Meeting on P3 project for wastewater plant upgrade
WHERE: MNP Building on Island Park, Portage la Prairie
WHEN: Doors open at 6:30 pm, Event starts at 7:00 pm
WHY: Discussion and questions about Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade

“The City has been one-sided in supporting P3s,” said Thompson. “We want the City to consult the public and look at other models more carefully, especially because P3s promise a lot but don’t deliver.”

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For more information or to arrange an interview with CUPE Local 1002, Maude Barlow or other panelists, please contact:

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Terry Thompson, CUPE Local 1002 President, at 204-856-3463
Maude Barlow, Council of Canadians, at 613-882-4487

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