

Firefighters still not part of union after vote inconclusive

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Northumberland Today

COLBORNE — A Wednesday vote among the Cramahé Township fire fighters on whether to unionize produced no clear consensus.

The vote was 10 in favour and 12 against, but in the balance hang an additional four contested votes. Those four votes will remain sealed until the process for dealing with this situation plays out, Fire Chief Jim Harris said yesterday.

A favourable — and conclusive — outcome would have seen the workers become members of the Retail Wholesale and Department Store Union.

When a union files an application with the Labour Relations Board for such a vote, they provide a description of which members of a labour group should be allowed to vote for or against unionizing. Those names whom the labour board agrees are deemed are the ones mutually agreed upon, and therefore the only ones qualified to vote on the matter.

The next step in the process is for the

lawyers representing each party — the union and the employer — to discuss if any of these votes are going to be allowed by mutual consent to be counted.”

Fire Chief Jim Harris

Sometimes the employer will disagree on whether an individual qualifies to vote and, in these cases, the votes cast by those individuals are segregated or set aside.

“The next step in the process is for the lawyers representing each party — the union and the employer — to discuss if any of these votes are going to be allowed by mutual consent to be counted.”

In the vast majority of cases, this is how the matter is decided, Harris said. In the event no mutual agreement can be reached, someone from the labour board will be brought in to make a binding final decision.

Once either of these scenarios plays out, the four votes (or any portion of them that are approved) will be opened and counted. What is required to join the union is a simple majority of votes in favour, which is 50% of the number plus one, Harris said.

At this time, Harris has not been told when lawyers might begin meeting in a bid to resolve this matter.

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■ WARKWORTH CHANGE OF COMMAND

New warden at Warkworth Institution

MARK HOULT
QMI Agency

WARKWORTH — “Sir, I assume command.”

With these words Ann Anderson became the 15th warden of the Warkworth Institution during a traditional Change of Command ceremony Monday afternoon.

Charlie Stickel relinquished the wardenship of the federal medium-security prison south of Campbellford in front of staff and a host of guests, including past wardens, Municipality of Brighton Mayor Mark Walas and Northumberland OPP Insp. Doug Borton.

Correctional Service of Canada Commissioner Don Head presented the key of office to Anderson and took

her oath before sitting down with the new and past wardens to sign the transfer of responsibility for the institution that houses 580 inmates.

Head said the Change of Command ceremony is a tradition revived a year ago to thank correctional service staff and both the outgoing and incoming wardens.

“The Change of Command ceremonies are also a renewed focus on pride and tradition within our organization,” he said. “This ceremony is a very important tradition, and it has been restored as a key symbol of change in leadership at our institutions, in our parole districts and at national headquarters.”

Anderson told staff and guests she was honoured to stand before them as the new

“I believe that the values and work ethic that my parents live by, taught me that respect, integrity and hard work will always hold you in good stead, no matter what the circumstances.”

Ann Anderson

head of Warkworth Institution.

She thanked “those who supported me in my journey” and talked about the values that brought her to the warden’s office.

“I believe that the values and work ethic that my parents live by, taught me that respect, integrity and hard work will always hold you in good stead, no matter what the circumstances.”

Anderson moved with her family to Campbellford when she was five. She started her

career with the Correctional Service of Canada as a term clerk at the Warkworth Institution in 1976, and held various clerical positions until 1989, when she was promoted to supervisor of pay and benefits. In 1993, she was promoted to staffing officer and, in August of 2006, became assistant warden management services. On Oct. 1 she officially took over command of the institution.

“When I received the letter of appointment as warden of Warkworth Institution I read it

very carefully,” Anderson said. “I was aware of the tremendous responsibility I was accepting and the commitment required to fulfill my duties.”

Anderson told The Community Press she is the second female warden at Warkworth Institution, following in the footsteps of Mary Dawson, who became the first female warden in Canada in 1980. She is also the first local person to become warden after working at the institution for more than three decades.

“I’ve worked at the institution for 33 years, so I’ve pretty much grown up here, and I’m very excited and pleased to be able to take the leadership here. And I’m very comfortable with the staff here in assisting me in fulfilling my duties, so

it’s an exciting time at Warkworth Institution.”

Anderson said her wardenship will be about commitment, consistency and fairness.

“Treating people with dignity and respect, that’s what it’s all about, just being fair and transparent.”

Anderson said the major challenge facing Warkworth Institution is the expected increase over the next three to five years in the number of inmates at the prison, the result of the passing of Bill C25.

“That will be a challenge for us at Warkworth, but I’m confident that with our management team and our union partners working together to strategize, we will manage that and ensure we maintain a safe, secure environment for both our staff and the offenders.”