



BARGAINING UPDATE

USW LOCAL 1-1937 AND STRATHCONA REGIONAL DISTRICT MEET BRIEFLY FOR BARGAINING, BUT WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE GOOSE IS NOT GOOD FOR THE GANDER.

October 26th, 2021 - Following almost a full year of negotiations the United Steelworkers Local 1-1937 members from the Strathcona Gardens Regional District Recreation Complex Met on August 31, 2021, to review and ratify a tentative agreement. The ratification vote was not successful and was largely voted down.

Shortly after that, the Union met with their members and after listening to the USW members it was determined that there were concerns of wage inequities and some language deletions.

On October 5th, the USW invited the Strathcona Regional District to meet and forwarded a new revised proposal to the SRD that addressed some of these concerns. The Strathcona Gardens did not make any attempt to sit down with the USW committee and try to address any of these areas of concern.

The Union was then left with no other option but to conduct a strike vote of the membership, where members voted 100% in favour of a strike.

Shortly After the USW served the 72 hours strike notice to the Employer, the head negotiator contacted the Union to meet. The Union was hopeful that this was a sign that the employer was willing to hear from the Union and to work at making some positive and fair changes for the membership, and that there was a willingness to get back to the table to negotiate with a counter offer.

Shelley Siemens, Business Agent for USW Local 1-1937, states that *"Yesterday (October 25th) the USW bargaining committee met with the Strathcona Regional District Bargaining Committee but instead of negotiating a fair deal for their employees the SRD chose to use this time to scold the bargaining committee for pointing out in a recent bulletin that the finances of Strathcona Gardens (available on their website) were healthy enough for the management staff to award themselves with wage increases far above the cost-of-living and made the excuse that they were deserving of their wage increases stating it was because they were left far behind in the past. Which ironically is what the Union Bargaining Committee is saying is happening to their members today, but I guess what is good for the goose is not good for the gander."*

The Strathcona Regional District Bargaining Committee did not want to hear or consider the differences and the inequalities in the jobs that were similar in neighbouring communities.

Siemens went on to say that, *"in some cases, these increases in similar facilities were so substantially higher, than the entry-level positions were higher than some of the lead hand's positions at the Strathcona Gardens Operations."*

The Union brought forward a fair proposal on October 5th, that included a cost-of-living clause to increase wages according to the cost-of-living. In some other areas that were "left behind," the Union proposed some dollar values because they are so far behind, that the minimum wage is almost caught up to them.

Since the time of signing the tentative agreement and due to the long delay in hearing back from the employer, the cost-of-living has continually risen and this posed to be of concern to our members and likely a lot of the reason that the Tentative Agreement did not get ratified by them. The Union Bargaining Committee felt that to mitigate the rising cost-of-living a Cola Clause was a fair way to address the increases.

The employer does not want to bargain a fair contract for their employees and instead suggested both sides farm out bargaining to an arbitrator and recommended binding arbitration.

The members just want a fair and equitable contract that addresses the rising cost-of-living, and treats them with the same dignity and respect that allowed the employer wage increases when it was them that was being left behind.

Again, the Union is calling on the Employer to return to the bargaining table and realistically address our member's concerns.

For further information please contact:

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