



## MEDIA RELEASE

### USW LOCAL 1-1937 SETS THE RECORD STRAIGHT

### RE: ISSUES INVOLVED IN STRATHCONA REGIONAL DISTRICT STRIKE

November 4, 2021

The United Steelworkers began strike action against the Strathcona Regional District (SRD) on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, which came after an attempt by the Union to continue negotiations following the rejection of a tentative agreement by unionized SRD employees.

The employer was pressed to meet by the Union but refused to respond to the Union's proposal which set the stage for job action starting this week.

The Union's proposal at the last meeting was to negotiate a cost of living allowance (COLA) plus \$1 for the first year for employees whose wages have fallen further behind with the rising cost of living. The cost of living was at 3.5% at the time of the proposal and is increasing as time goes on. The remaining years, in the 4 year proposal, were 2%, 2% & 2.25% and included a cost of living clause to address any increases that inflate merchandise and housing in those years if the markets should become inflated again. COLA is based on market inflation that these members and everyone else is currently incurring.

Shelley Siemens, Business Agent and spokesperson for the Union, stated, "*This proposal was a starting point to try to bring the employees closer and to try to reach parity to the neighbouring facilities who in similar positions make \$5 hr more while working for the same employer*".

Siemens also noted, "*The employer is quoted as saying and I quote, 'The...union bargaining committee is now demanding wage increases that range from a minimum of 6.77% to 13.28 % in the first year of a new contract,' - which is the height of hypocrisy since management personnel (see table below) earned in some cases between 13.53% percent to as high as 48% increases from 2018-2019. Combined equating from 19.12% to a colossal 50.67% percent from 2018 to 2020 and this is when the cost of living was not inflated as it is today*".

*"To come out publicly and say that their employees now do not deserve a provision in their contract to protect against inflation when they, themselves, have earned a higher percentage with one increasing by thirty-nine thousand per year, is absolute hypocrisy at its finest".*

The graph below is snippets from the information you can go find on the Strathcona Regional District website in the Annual Reports section found here: <https://srd.ca/government/finance/financial-reporting/>

The USW Bargaining Committee has continually reached out to the SRD Bargaining Committee and is committed to continuing bargaining on behalf of its members. However, we have not been given any dates from the employer side to return to the table to address any of the employees' concerns.

Our members do not want to be inconveniencing the public, they want to be at work serving the public even though they are on the front lines of the pandemic like most public-facing servants. Their employer needs to recognize the inequities in their contract and get back to the bargaining table and work to solve this impasse.

<b>STRATHCONA REGIONAL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE ANNUAL REMUNERATION PAYOUT</b>							
TITLE	2018	2019 PAYOUT	2019 Percentage INCREASE	\$Dollar value INCREASE FOR 2019	2020	2020 PERCENT INCREASE	COMBINED YEAR % INCREASES
CORPORATE SERVICES MANAGER	\$117,844	\$142,229	20.69%	\$24,385	\$151,143	6.27%	26.96%
HUMAN RESOURCES	\$81,399	\$120,792	48.39%	\$39,393	\$123,552	2.28%	50.67%
FACILITY MGR	\$100,607	\$114,223	13.53%	\$13,616	\$121,995	6.8%	20.33%
CHIEF ADMIN. OFFICER	\$155,194	\$173,533	11.82%	\$18,339	\$186,203	7.3%	19.12%

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