



MEDIA RELEASE

On November 22, 2021, the USW Local 1-1937 members went out on full strike following almost a full year of negotiations with the Strathcona Regional District's Strathcona Gardens Recreation Complex.

Shelley Siemens, a spokesperson for the USW, said *"The Union has repeatedly asked the Strathcona Regional District (SRD) to come to the table and has been met with the SRD answering USW's question with another question. In fact, the SRD had in late October sent the USW a Notice of Lockout and then asked the USW - I quote, **"We ask the Union again if they will accept binding arbitration from a neutral third party? If your negotiating committee is not interested in arbitration, then please let us know so we can consider other alternatives"**.*

Siemens goes on to state that *"The USW know what the **"other alternative"** is. We certainly know that it is **not** collective bargaining, or they would be arranging for bargaining dates, so that box is ticked off. There really were only two possible options left at that time, which in our opinion, was a strategic move to lockout the members and publicly blame them for having to lock them out"*.

The USW has responded back to the SRD as far back as October 31st stating, ***"Following your recent notice of lockout from the employer and our job action email, I think it is quite obvious that we are both not interested in binding arbitration"***.

The employer is continually telling the public that the USW is not willing to negotiate, even despite the USW's repeated invitations to come to the table, and they state we have not answered them regarding binding arbitration, which we have dating as far back as October. The USW members want to exercise their right to fair and free collective bargaining 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.

The employer does not want to bargain a fair and equitable contract for their employees and instead suggested both sides farm out bargaining to an arbitrator for binding arbitration. If the SRD is not confident in their negotiator and feels they need to have a third party negotiate in their place, the USW bargaining team would be happy to meet with them in order to get a deal done.

It is time for the SRD to quit with the nonsense and come to the table so that we can get the kids and the hockey games back on the ice again. Christmas Holidays are around the corner and having the facility open again would be really great for the holiday season. You can help by contacting the Strathcona Regional District's Board of Directors and ask them to get back to the table and bargain a fair and equitable contract for our members. (A link is attached here to contact them) [Strathcona Regional District | Board of Directors - Strathcona Regional District \(srd.ca\)](http://Strathcona Regional District | Board of Directors - Strathcona Regional District (srd.ca))

At this time the USW members would like to send out a huge thanks to all of the facility users who have come to picket with us in solidarity and to all of the Unions and friends that have come to show us support and deliver food and firewood. We are extremely grateful to see you all and would much rather be serving you on the inside of the building instead.

Again, the Union is calling on the employer to return to the bargaining table and realistically address our members' concerns.

For further information please contact:

Shelley Siemens
Business Agent
USW Local 1-1937
Cell: 250-230-9004
Email: ssiemens@usw1-1937.ca