

CUPE 855 begins strike preparations to protect public services

January 16, 2008

Lindsay, Ont. – Faced with an unyielding employer not willing to address issues of contracting out public services in bargaining talks, the union representing municipal workers at the City of Kawartha Lakes requested a 'no-board' report last night from the provincial conciliator, triggering a countdown to a lockout or a legal strike as early as the first week of February.

"Management showed no flexibility on our main bargaining issues during conciliation talks," said Lyn Edwards, president of CUPE 855. "We've been clear from the very beginning that our members are committed to protecting the future of public services in our community – but management is not willing to discuss or look at ways to stem the tide of contracting out of public services. They want to leave the door open for future privatization."

"Management is willing to jeopardize crucial municipal services by refusing to work towards a negotiated deal," said Edwards. "Instead, they want to erode and demoralize our membership by continuing their practice of farming out public services."

Low morale, unfair management practices and unhealthy working hours are some of the other issues facing the 400 municipal workers, who provide municipal services such as roads maintenance, snow removal, parks, water and waste treatment, landfill, accounting, administrative, library, customer service, by-law enforcement, social services and others. Mediation talks are scheduled for January 31 and February 1.

"All we are seeking is a fair contract that will protect the future of public services and provide healthy working conditions for us to deliver these services," said Edwards. "But based on what we've seen in conciliation talks, management is keen on pushing us into a strike situation."

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