

Glace Bay's Town daycare shut down by strike ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The president of Unifor local 4600 says only weather will keep the Town Daycare workers off the picket line Wednesday.

"The employer has not reached out to us at all (Tuesday)," said Susan Gill. "We'll be back out on the line pending the storm," she said.

"We're not going anywhere, we're not going to cave."

The union served the daycare board with a notice of strike action on Friday. The workers were in a strike position as of 7 a.m. Tuesday.

Union officials says the key issue is wages and the zero per cent now on the table is unacceptable.

Some of the 14 childcare workers, cooks and cleaners employed at the daycare have worked there for more than 30 years.

Union officials said the average wage is \$12.44 an hour and one worker makes minimum wage of \$10.40 an hour.

Gill said support Tuesday was incredible.

"We've got some other members here supporting us from Victoria Haven, some CUPE members showed up, the district labour council was here (Tuesday) afternoon,. We've got lots of support, it's great."

Gill said she was in contact with the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour on Tuesday as well.

"They want me to keep them posted over what's happening over the next few days."

Unifor local 4600 represents 14 daycare workers including the childcare workers, cooks and cleaners. Their contract expired in December 2013.

Lana Payne, Unifor Atlantic regional director, said it's been hard for these workers to withdraw their services.

"These highly-trained childcare workers love their work and deserve fair compensation for the vital care they provide to families in this community. This strike is their last resort."

Officials with the daycare's board of directors said at an earlier date they'd like to pay the workers more because they are worth it and deserve it, but the daycare has a deficit of \$100,000 and doesn't have the money.

Margaret Burke, executive director of Town Daycare, said no parents showed up Tuesday, which they credit to lots of awareness on the possibility of the disruption. She said about a dozen parents phoned to see what was happening.

"Hopefully it can be resolved as soon as possible."

In the meantime officials with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development are offering to help support families who need assistance in finding alternate care arrangements.

There are currently 84 children who are cared for at the government-funded daycare, some of whom have special needs.

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