

SEIU Local 140 Newsletter 1.26.23

Bargaining Team Meeting

Bargaining delegates met last Saturday to review the results of the bargaining survey and map out a strategy for building worker power in order to win a strong contract. It is clear that wages and staffing remain members' top priority in addition to a long list of other issues needing to be addressed including but not limited to COVID pay, bi-weekly paychecks, hazard pay, and health insurance for part-time workers.

Last year, instead of bargaining a new three-year contract, the district only wanted to negotiate wages and extend our contract for an extra year. We fought for and won impressive raises by educating coworkers and community members, showing up to board meetings, and petitioning the district for livable wages. However, due to decades of minimal wage increases and accelerating inflation, Local 140 workers still don't make enough to afford the costs of living in Portland. This year we are bargaining a new contract which will include agreements on wages as well as almost every other aspect of our contractual rights.

Once bargaining between our union bargaining delegates and PPS management officially begins in early February, Oregon labor law requires a certain period of time of "good faith" bargaining before workers are legally allowed to strike. This includes 150 calendar days as well as a period of mediation and a "cooling-off" period. That means this fall we will have the opportunity to go on strike if we are unsatisfied with the district's final offer.

Along the way there will be lots of actions to participate in like petitions, attending board meetings, and holding rallies. We will need everyone's support in order to win a strong contract!

Let us know of any questions you have about the bargaining process! We hope to clarify what can seem like a complicated process and will keep everyone informed of the bargaining team's progress throughout.

Board Meeting Recap

Public comment at this week's school board meeting included criticism of district leadership in the implementation of changes in SE schools, examples of underfunded N Portland schools like Ockley Green, and [testimony](#) from Ryan Healy, an electrician with the District Council of Unions (DCU) about the need for the district to invest more in its maintenance department. Interestingly, board member Andrew Scott twisted Healy's words to advocate against cuts to "central admin," implying that the maintenance department falls under the same category as central office management staff. The district is already talking about how this will be a "really tough budget year" even though they do not yet have final data about enrollment and despite strong ongoing funding sources through legislation like Oregon's Student Success Act.

Portland Association of Teachers (PAT) president Angela Bonilla also [spoke](#) about inequities in the Southeast Guiding Coalition process as well as proactive steps for protecting the health and safety of students and staff given recent instances of gun violence on school grounds. She also advocated for a district-wide implicit bias training for educators and was interrupted repeatedly by board member Gary Hollands who seemed to place the blame for racial inequities on individual teachers rather than on district leadership.

Local Union News

Laborers' [Local 483](#) represents parks, environmental service, and transportation workers employed by the city of Portland. Having failed to reach an agreement in contract negotiations with the city, the union is set to go on strike February 2nd. The union [cites](#) inadequate cost of living adjustment (COLA) proposals from the city as reason for the failure of negotiations. Local 483 workers are planning a rally outside city hall this Saturday at noon at Terry Schunk Plaza to demonstrate their readiness to strike and inform the public of the reasons they are doing so. Show your solidarity with city workers and come out in support! We may very well be in the same situation later this year if PPS is unwilling to meet our demands in our own contract bargaining so we can learn from the organizing of our fellow workers at Local 483.

Coming Up

- Support the Laborers' Local 483 [rally](#) at Terry Schunk Plaza, Saturday 1/28 at noon
- Wear purple on Wednesdays to show our unity as workers
- Bargaining team has first meeting with management Friday 2/10
- Monthly union meeting Saturday 2/11 at 10am

Useful Links

[SEIU 140 union contract](#)
<https://seiu503.org/pps/>