

Union Rallies for Raises

Hundreds of Portland city workers on strike for better wages

(AP) — More than 600 city employees in Portland, Oregon, walked off the job on as they went on strike for better pay.

Workers represented by the union Laborers' Local 483 have been without a contract since June. Negotiations over a new four-year deal broke down in December, Oregon Public Broadcasting reported.

Local 483 represents Portland employees who work in sewage treatment, street maintenance and park services.

The union and the city are at an impasse over annual raises and cost-of-living pay increases.

The union wants a 3.5% annual raise for all workers for the first two years of the contract, according to OPB. The city,



Union workers demanding better pay

meanwhile, has offered 1% annual across-the-board raises.

The city said it has also offered a 12% base wage increase by July along with a 5% cost-of-living pay increase. But the union wants to remove the 5% cap on cost-of-living raises in

order to tie them directly to national inflation rates, which are currently above 6%.

At a City Council meeting on Wednesday, union representative James O'Laughlen urged commissioners to agree to the union's proposal.

"We really need the city to live its stated values and provide our members with a fair contract so they can keep doing the essential work that the people of Portland need them to do," OPB reported him as saying.

City leaders generally do

not comment on ongoing labor negotiations.

In an emergency order to continue city services that was issued last week, Mayor Ted Wheeler said the city can hire independent contractors to replace workers who are on strike.



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