

JRA workers still aggrieved

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South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) accused Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA) of not attending to their grievances and demands which resulted in a protected strike, but the agency refuted the claims.

Greater Johannesburg Region, Samwu deputy chairperson Vuyani Singonzo accused the agency of not resolving the issues raised by the employees during the Local Labour Forum (LLF) last year, although the agency had agreed to do so.

Singonzo said instead of implementing the resolutions of the forum, the union were informed that the JRA board wanted to engage the City of Joburg about the issues, as ultimately JRA was an entity within the City of Joburg.

“While we were waiting for the feedback, the employer [JRA] informed Samwu that they will no longer implement the issues agreed upon and no reasons were provided.”

However, JRA managing director Skhumbuzo Macozoma said the demands submitted by Samwu through the LLF structure of the agency were considered by the agency’s executive management team (EMT), and the utility’s position on the demands were relayed to the union.

Macozoma claimed that Samwu was not satisfied with management’s response and thus instituted a dispute process through the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

“On 12 January, Samwu served the JRA with a notice of intent to strike on 27 February 2015,” said Macozama. “In this notice there were 15 demands. Management expressed shock at the receipt of a notice to strike as negotiations had not been exhausted. The EMT instructed management to reconvene the LLF and reopen negotiations with Samwu.”

Macozoma said the forum meeting was unfruitful and Samwu staged a walkout. He said he convened three more meetings in an effort to find consensus on the matters in dispute.

“Of the original list of 15 demands, this process reached consensus on 12 matters and only three matters remained,” said Macozama. “With regard to the three remaining matters, management is of the opinion that they did not warrant strike action as management had tabled clear processes that are in place to address these matters, and had invited Samwu to join these processes in order to oversee the execution and ensure that processes are concluded.”

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