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PRESS RELEASE

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NSGEU Local 60A, Pictou County Planning Department Employees, locked out

Halifax – NSGEU members of Local 60A, employees of Pictou County Shared Service Authority, were locked out when they showed up for work this morning. Employees at the waste treatment plant and the office in Stellarton were faced with notices on the doors and padlocks on the gates.

“The way bargaining unfolded this weekend makes me wonder if the employer’s intention was to lock us out on Monday all along,” says Joan Jessome, President of the Nova Scotia Government & General Employees Union. “At 4:30 pm on Friday, with a strike deadline looming, the employer would not continue to bargain,” Jessome says. “They wouldn’t return to the bargaining table until 6pm on Sunday night and by 10pm they presented the NSGEU Bargaining Committee with their final offer and said “take it or leave it.”

“The employer’s offer included clawbacks in vacation, pensions, mileage rates and bereavement leave, just to name a few,” says Joan Jessome, President of the Nova Scotia Government & General Employees Union. “We are asking for an agreement that would mirror the existing one we have with the Municipality of Pictou (one of the signatory municipalities in the new Pictou County Shared Service Authority).”

“I am not sure whether the employer understands the impact a lockout could have on its ability to continue ‘business as usual’, says Jessome. “There are over \$25 million dollars worth of construction and development projects pending approval; large-scale projects pending, and \$13.5 million in new residential development at risk, as well as a waste treatment plant to run. It is important we get back to the bargaining table and negotiate an acceptable collective agreement.”

Members of the bargaining unit include administrators, building inspectors and development officers, lab technicians, waste treatment plant maintenance operators. These employees issue permits for the sub-division of land, issue building permits, do building inspections, and operate the waste treatment plant.

There are 13 members of the bargaining unit and this is their first collective agreement. They work for the communities of the Town of Pictou, the County of Pictou, New Glasgow, Westville, Trenton and Stellarton, which are all signatories to the Pictou County Shared Service Authority.

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The Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union represents over 28,000 women and men who provide quality public services Nova Scotians count on every day.

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