

# Contract workers' protest stops services

**Adele Louw**

This week, some municipal service delivery was brought to a halt when contract workers protested for permanent employment.

The protesting started on Friday when the contract workers blocked the entrances to the Carletonville and Fochville traffic departments. Many of them had been employed as part of the government's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

On Monday, the workers blocked the Carletonville traffic department's entrance again, before being chased away. They then stopped municipal vehicles from leaving the municipal depot down the road.

On Tuesday, the protesters had allegedly changed some of the locks on the gates of these municipal facilities.

Once again, the vehicles could not leave and the public could not enter. This meant, among other things, that refuse removal trucks could not go on their normal routes.

"We have been working at the municipality for the past nine years and often have to do the work of permanent staff. We worked right through the lockdown and over



**The protesters being addressed by the mayoral council's portfolio head for Corporate and Shared Services, Ms Nozuko Best, who tried to persuade them to go back to work.**

Christmas, doing their jobs while they sat at home. Many times, we do not even get the proper PPE when we work.

The municipality advertised positions for general workers in November last year, but they are not filling them. We think some of the councilors want to keep them open for their friends or themselves if they fall out of council after the election," the workers told the Herald.

The newspaper asked the Merafong City Local Municipality about the issues they raised on Tuesday.

"The municipality advertised in Nov 2020, requesting interested people to submit their particulars for a database to fill vacant general worker

positions.

"No general worker position was advertised. The municipality is currently filling numerous vacancies to support the provision of municipal services to the community. They include general worker positions to be filled, among others.

"Some contract workers, whose contracts have expired, claim that they should be appointed without following proper procedure.

"The municipality is currently addressing this issue," a municipal spokesperson answered.

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On Monday, the protesters also complained that the police were treating them "unfairly" by shooting at them, despite them not vandalising any property.

"It is our job to remove people who obstruct the entrances to public facilities. They are also contravening the Public Service Act and the Disaster Management Act. We would not be doing our job if we just let this go," Col Abel Gasa, the head of the police in Carletonville Visible Policing (Vispol) section told the Herald at the scene.

By the time of the newspaper going to print on Wednesday, the protest continued.