Martin Griffith, AP Business Writer 4:50 p.m. EDT June 1, 2014

The first freestanding boutique hotel on the Strip, The Cromwell only houses 40,000-square-feet of casino space.(Photo: Caesars Entertainment)

A strike at downtown Las Vegas casinos was averted as union negotiators reached settlements with several properties only hours before workers were scheduled to walk off their jobs.

The culinary and bartender unions announced Sunday that they struck a tentative five-year deal with the Golden Gate and will not picket there as planned.

On Saturday, the unions announced similar deals with four other downtown casinos: Four Queens, Binion's, Plaza and Las Vegas Club.

Hundreds of restaurant workers, hotel housekeepers, cocktail servers, bartenders and others had been scheduled to go on strike at 5 a.m. Sunday had agreements not been reached.

"We are pleased that we have settled new contracts with our major employers that will allow union members to have an opportunity to provide for their families through hard work under a fair contract," Geoconda Arguello-Kline, secretary-treasurer of the Culinary Union, said in a statement.

The settlements follow earlier deals with other downtown casinos, including The D, Golden

Nugget, Fremont, Main Street Station and El Cortez.

Workers are scheduled to vote whether to ratify the contracts next week. If ratified, the settlements would be retroactive to June 1, 2013 when previous contracts expired.

Among other provisions, the agreements call for raises, more flexible scheduling and keeping employees' health care costs from increasing. Details have not been disclosed.

"I feel great," said Doug Anderson, a bartender at the Las Vegas Club. "I like working downtown, and having a union contract means I will continue to have a good job."

Union organizers had been preparing signs, scheduling members to stand in picket lines and planning how to feed protesters in the event of a strike.

"I'm very happy," said Janice Thomas, a housekeeper at the Las Vegas Club. "Going on strike would have been hard but I would have to protect my health care, pension and benefits."

The latest settlements conclude the culinary and bartenders unions' year-long citywide contract negotiations for 44,000 housekeepers, cooks, food servers, cleaners, cocktail servers, and other hospitality workers at major casino-hotels whose contracts expired June 1, 2013.

The new contracts would expire June 1, 2018. However, a union spokeswoman said talks usually begin before then.

Big-name casino operators on the Las Vegas Strip, including MGM Resorts International, Caesars Entertainment, Tropicana, Riviera, Treasure Island and Stratosphere, previously reached new five-year deals with the unions.

Culinary Workers Local 226 and Bartenders Local 165 represent more than 55,000 workers in Las Vegas and Reno.

The last strike by hotel workers in Las Vegas occurred at the Golden Nugget in 2002 and lasted nine days.

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