

LAMOILLE NORTH SUPERVISORY UNION
BOARD NEGOTIATION COUNCIL
SUPPORT STAFF NEGOTIATIONS MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2017
GREEN MOUNTAIN TECHNOLOGY & CAREER CENTER

BNC members present: Bernard Barnes, Mark Nielsen, Sue Hamlyn-Prescott, Chasity Fagnant
Others present: Charleen McFarlane, Catherine Gallagher, Deb Clark, Suzanne Dirmaier, Ray Archbold, DeeJ Meegan, Nicole Chauvin, Santha Dahlin, Yvonne Heath, Cheryl Michaud, Darcey Fletcher

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. ***Call to Order and Approval of Agenda***

S. Hamlyn-Prescott called the meeting to order at 5:56.

2. ***Support Staff Negotiations***

M. Nielsen moved to go into executive session at 5:56 to discuss teacher and support staff negotiations because premature general public knowledge would clearly place the school board at a substantial disadvantage, B. Barnes seconded and the motion was passed. The BNC consented out of executive session at 6:24. C. Gallagher left.

3. ***Meeting with Support Staff Association***

Suzanne Dirmaier and 7 support staff members arrived at 6:31.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked what the association had for the BNC. D. Fletcher said some things have come up. They are discovering new things with Johnson coming in. Currently if Johnson support staff have unused personal days at the end of the year they can roll them into their sick leave. The rest of the support staff lose their personal days if they don't use them. They would like to keep that benefit for Johnson support staff. Johnson has a completely different pay schedule structure. They would like to keep the current structure. Their step increases are usually 5%. When the teachers negotiate an increase then the whole table is increased by that percentage and then each employee gets a step. They want to continue that. Our pay schedule is a mess. It's basically just for new hires. With the work done on the pay study they are realizing it's not good practice to start people at base. It is unfair. They want to continue the two side letters for Ray Archbold and Joe Garceau. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the association was supposed to provide copies of the two side letters. D. Fletcher said she has Ray's and the two letters are identical.

D. Fletcher said people have to use personal days when there is a school closing or 2 hour delay. Most people, like paras, have their paychecks pro-rated over 26 pay periods. If they are forced to have 2 hours taken out of their check it is taken at full pay, not the pro-rated amount. It can be a financial hardship and it is kind of a bookkeeping nightmare to take out 2 hours for everyone. They would like to ask that when there are 2 hour delays employees are paid for the 2 hours even if they are not here.

D. Fletcher handed out a healthcare proposal. She said it is exactly what the teachers proposed.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked if the association has any responses to our language proposals. Darcey said at this point no; they just haven't had time.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott gave the BNC's responses to language proposals.

We are in agreement about the change to 2.8 to reflect state law.

Regarding the proposal for 4.1.1, the BNC agrees to evaluation by 90 days. The BNC wants the probation period to remain the employee's contract year.

Regarding the proposal for 4.6, specifying that paras should get breaks, under federal labor law there is no requirement for paid breaks. The BNC would entertain language saying that breaks can be arranged with supervisors.

In 5.4, the language in the example reflects an 8 hour day. We can change the example to reflect a 7.5 hour day. We agree to change from 35 to 30 hours in 6.1.3.

We have already handed out revised appendices and updated the website, so she thinks we are all set with 7.2.

Regarding bringing Johnson employees into the contract, employees will be assessed as they are brought into the contract. More information will be available as wage proposals get finalized at a later date.

The BNC is interested in compensating employees to be competitive. That is why the BNC proposes hiring rates based on experience. We would consider language about hiring staff based on experience. We consider the IT people to be technology technicians. They go on our current salary grid. Based on reports from neighboring areas, our food service staff are fairly compensated and their benefits far exceed the benefits outside vendors provide. Boards have authority to approve pay above negotiated hiring rates.

In 7.1.1, the BNC previously noted that Class 2 is where Johnson participants would be placed.

Regarding the proposal about corrective lenses, HSA's or HRA's could be used for corrective lenses. The BNC does not wish to entertain that proposal.

The BNC agrees that employees that move to another location should retain their sick leave and vacation time. We agree that if an employee transfers they will continue to get the same salary unless they are moved to a higher wage or lesser wage position.

The BNC agrees to 3 bereavement days per occurrence.

Regarding personal days for full time Johnson staff, full year administrators get 3 personal days. Three days for Johnson staff is consistent and comparable. The BNC proposes that all staff remain at 3 personal days.

The BNC feels a sick leave maximum of 100 days is more than enough to cover the 60 day elimination period for long term disability. The BNC wants to leave the maximum at 100 days.

Currently administrators cannot carry forward vacation. It is consistent and comparable for support staff not to be able to. That is why the BNC does not want to entertain the ability for support staff to carry forward vacation or grandfather any ability to carry forward vacation.

The BNC still proposes that the healthcare buyout amount be \$2250.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott handed out a new healthcare proposal. The board agrees to continue current healthcare provisions through December 31, 2017. After that, the board proposes to convert its premium contribution to a dollar amount equivalent to 80% of the CDHP Gold premium, with future rate increases to be shared equally. The board proposes to provide the option of either an HSA or an HRA. The annual employer contribution to an HSA or HRA will be \$1750 for a single person plan and \$3500 for two-person, parent-child or family plans. The board proposes to pay administrative fees for HSA accounts. For an HRA, the employee's first out of pocket expense will be \$500 for a single person plan, \$700 for a parent-child plan or \$1000 for a family plan. Employees will pay administrative fees for HRA's. Benefits will be prorated based on full time equivalency and start date. Those choosing more expensive plans will pay the additional cost and those choosing less expensive plans will forfeit the difference in cost.

S. Dirmaier asked how the proposed equal sharing of future rate increases between the association and the board would be accomplished. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC will caucus on how to appropriately respond. She suggested a 20 minute caucus. S. Dirmaier and support staff left the room to caucus.

The BNC consented into executive session. The BNC consented out of executive session and support staff returned at 7:12.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott explained that the BNC's proposal is that future healthcare rate increases would be converted to a dollar amount and shared equally, fifty-fifty, to insulate taxpayers from future rate increases.

S. Dirmaier said what that really means is that if the cost of the employee's plan goes up the employee will be on the hook for the difference in cost. BNC members said the employee would just pay 50% of the increase. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said if there is a decrease in cost it would be shared in the same way.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said to be fair and consistent with all employees, on a delay day employees have the option to report to work at the regular time or use personal leave.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC's goal is to fully integrate Johnson employees into the contract without any special provisions. Johnson employees will be carefully assessed as they are brought into the contract and more information will become available at a later date as wage proposals are finalized.

D. Fletcher gave association responses to BNC proposals. They agree on 2.8. On 4.3, they would like to counter with 5 days.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked if they have decided whether they want a 2-year or 1-year contract. S. Dirmaier said she doesn't think they have a problem with multiple years when we come to agreement.

D. Fletcher said they agree on 4.5. They do not agree about vacation accrual in 5.4. Darcey said it is very difficult for her to take vacation time. Two years in a row she has taken work with her when she went camping. With summer work it is also hard for maintenance staff to take time off. That is their rationale for wanting leave that accumulates from year to year.

They agree on 6.1.3 F but they will not agree on 6.1.3 G. If someone is on long term disability they would need health insurance. They agree on 6.5. They agree on 6.10. They would still like Johnson employees to be grandfathered for 4 personal days.

S. Dirmaier said if we move to Gold CDHP premiums there will be a large reduction in the amount spent for premiums. When talking about total compensation, what is the amount the BNC is thinking of? She guesses a 2.5% wage increase comes to a little over \$90K. The association wants to know what the BNC is thinking about the amount of money available and how they want to allocate it. Or does the BNC not care that much about how it is allocated? The association is assuming the BNC wants to use some to reduce budget cost, some to salaries and some to insurance. Are they totally off base?

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC is thinking about healthcare and wages together as one bucket of money.

S. Dirmaier said there is a difference between current healthcare expenditures and the new amount. Will that go toward wages?

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said a lot will depend on how the healthcare piece comes to fruition. The association's proposal is still much higher than the BNC's. That holds us in terms of where we are with the wage proposal.

S. Dirmaier asked what the parameters are of what the BNC is talking about.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC's goal is not direct budget reduction based on negotiations.

S. Dirmaier said based on an 80-20 split the difference between what the board is spending currently on premiums and what will be spent under the new plans is around \$454K. The BNC initially offered \$500 to an HSA in the first year. That costs another \$51K. So there is still \$403K the board is not spending now. Is that amount up for discussion in terms of changing the reimbursement of out of pocket costs or changing wages? Does the 2.5% proposed wage increase come out of the \$400K savings?

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC needs to caucus to give an appropriate answer. S. Dirmaier and support staff left to caucus at 7:28.

The BNC consented into executive session. The BNC consented out of executive session and support staff came back at 7:41.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said we are negotiating this contract separate from the teacher contract. Some numbers S. Dirmaier gave sound like they are from the teacher negotiations. We just want to negotiate an agreement that works for both sides. We are not going to put out a specific bucket of money. The numbers include a lot of things, like 2-person dental and a buyout of \$2250. S. Dirmaier said premiums are the biggest chunk. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said we want a health care plan that will work for everyone.

S. Dirmaier asked if there is a reason the BNC is so interested in providing an HSA. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said with an HSA the employee has the ability to take the money with them going forward. They can even use it after retirement. It is up to them to choose an HSA or and HRA based on the healthcare needs they have that year. It has been shown that employees become more aware of healthcare costs and maybe shop around if they are using an HSA.

S. Dirmaier said with an HSA a set amount of money has to be put there. That costs the taxpayers more money than an HRA, which is like secondary insurance.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said we want this to be affordable for both sides but we also want to give employees a choice.

S. Dirmaier said this is interesting because this board is probably one of the first to offer both an HSA and an HRA.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott reminded everyone that March 23 is the next meeting date. Salary and healthcare will be on the agenda, as well as language changes.

D. Fletcher said she wants the board to know that the people sitting here want what's best for all. They are not trying to do something the BNC is uncomfortable with. Support staff are people who live in our community and send their kids here. They are not trying to be adversarial.

S. Dirmaier and support staff left at 7:47.

The BNC consented into executive session.

3. ***Adjourn***

The BNC exited executive session and adjourned by consent at 7:56.