

TEACHER BNC MINUTES  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2018  
GMTCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER

BNC members present: Sue Hamlyn-Prescott, David Whitcomb, Bill Sander, Katie Orost  
Others present: Charleen McFarlane, Deb Clark, Cat Gallagher

S. Hamlyn-Prescott called the meeting to order at 5:34.

B. Sander moved to go into executive session to discuss teacher negotiations because premature general public knowledge would clearly place the school board at a substantial disadvantage, inviting C. Gallagher, D. Clark, C. McFarlane and D. Griffiths to remain, K. Orost seconded, the motion was passed and the BNC entered executive session at 5:34.

The BNC consented out of executive session at 6:12 and recessed until the association came in at 6:23.

Melissa Greenwood suggested starting with language. She said they read the BNC proposal and have a question about the BNC's Appendix D counter proposal: Why the 8 hours?

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC is looking for equity across all schools. Some already have 8 hours. Students have a 7 hour day. Eight hour days for teachers would align everyone across the district. Teachers are considered exempt employees under FLSA. Most exempt employees are based on 40 hours.

M. Greenwood said the association has a couple of concerns. Teachers don't work 8 hour days. They work 10 hours, some even more. It's not a 40 hour work week; it's more like 50 or 60. But making it an 8 hour work day will take away from teacher mental health and self care. Teachers will have less time to go out and exercise to keep themselves healthy or to be with their families. It will not increase their productivity to have an extra 45 minutes or half hour added onto the day. The association will not accept the counter proposal regarding Appendix D. They want to stick with their proposal to make the teacher work day 7.5 hours. About 55 teachers would lose a half hour and about 40 to 50 would increase their day by 15 min. They thought that would be better than increasing teachers' work days by 15-45 minutes. Currently 2 schools (Cambridge and Johnson) have an 8 hour day. Three have 7.25 hours and Lamoille Union, the biggest school, has 7.5 hours. Carol-Lynn Willean said they thought it would be a reasonable compromise to have everyone go to 7.5 hours instead of going to the highest amount.

M. Greenwood said in the current Appendix D, 1, 2 and 3 under each school say pretty much the same thing but 4, 5, 6, and 7 have things specific to each school. We need to make sure those don't get cut out.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said it was the BNC's understanding that the association wanted to get rid of that whole section. We are looking to bring uniformity across districts and not have each school have individual differences. M. Greenwood said the association is striving for that but there are some pieces we can't strike out, like student maximums at the high school.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked which specific parts the association wants to keep. Does the association have a counter? M. Greenwood said they don't have a counter. They want to keep 5, 6, and 7 under LUSD. They didn't intend on those sections going away. They can caucus and get back to the BNC on what they want to stay for the elementary schools.

M. Greenwood said we were looking to make commonality across all schools and our proposal addresses the issue of making it clear enough for each school. We are trying to make it as open and clean as possible. M. Greenwood said the association wants that but each individual school has unique policies and procedures. We may not be able to just wipe it all away without considering those.

M. Greenwood asked why the BNC does not want to add sub duty and additional scheduled duties into the sub pay section. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said language in Appendix D ("Scheduled supervision shall be assigned by, and at the discretion of, building administrator") addresses that. M. Greenwood said the teachers would need to caucus on that.

M. Greenwood invited the BNC to ask questions first on salary. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC wants to find out the association's understanding of the minimum, maximum, and average dollar increase amounts under the association proposal and how many teachers are getting those amounts.

M. Greenwood said the total cost of the association proposal is \$12,117,388. It is a 4.81% increase.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said that is not what the BNC is asking. We are asking for the association's understanding of the minimum and average dollar amount increases a teacher is going to get.

M. Greenwood said the increase from the current base to the proposed new base would be about \$3300.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked if D. Clark could talk. M. Greenwood said that would be fine. D. Clark asked what the individual increase would be for the people on Step 1. M. Greenwood said we currently have 3 on Bachelor's Step 1 and 13 on Step 2. For the 3 on Step 1 their increase would be \$3,341. For those on Step 2, the increase would be \$2,230.

D. Clark asked, if the same calculation were done for all teachers, what would be the maximum and minimum increases? M. Greenwood said the biggest increase would be for Bachelor's Step 1. Those people would get \$3,351. The average increase is between \$1650 and \$1750. The only ones who will see more than that are the people at Bachelor's Step 1 through Bachelor's 4 or 5. C. Willean said those teachers in the first few years are the teachers we really want to keep and consistently lose.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said we are hearing the association is proposing a \$1650 to \$1750 average increase but that is not what we found when D. Clark did calculations. D. Clark said she finds increases ranging from \$4145 down to \$1474, with an average of about \$2,572. She shared a list of increases with M. Greenwood. D. Clark said on the association's proposed new grid the last horizontal increase only ended up being \$1700. She wasn't sure if that was intentional.

M. Greenwood said Suzanne Dirmaier did the legwork. She doesn't know if S. Dirmaier added \$1750 to each person's salary before or after repositioning them on the grid. She doesn't think she added it first but that is a possibility. In future years when using the new grid people will get step increases of \$1750 but when moving people onto the grid increases may be more than that. D. Clark said so the \$1750 per person doesn't apply to the transition to the new grid.

M. Greenwood said the association was trying to get rid of the indexing. She thinks both sides are in agreement that needs to leave or we won't be able to increase the base. She thinks we are close to having a salary proposal agreed on. It just needs clarification. She thinks we are not far apart in our ideas.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said what the BNC put forward was based on the assumption that the association was looking for everyone to get a certain amount.

M. Greenwood said the step amount they proposed is not necessarily the amount of the increase each person will get. It is not necessarily the maximum amount someone might get.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC appreciates the creativity. This is a one year contract. The BNC is proposing a certain amount for each teacher because based on what D. Clark put together for the BNC the association's proposal is more than we have available for this coming year. We are trying to recognize each person individually by giving a set amount. We are also increasing the base with our proposal.

M. Greenwood asked if it was clear how the association came up with their base. It was halfway between the current base and the LSSU base. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said we have to recognize that LSSU has 3 additional teacher days and they only get 3 educational credits per year. M. Greenwood said the association would agree that our teachers have monetary benefits that don't show on their paychecks but the problem is that we are bleeding teachers. Young teachers are going to nearby districts that are paying much better. They are trying to make it more enticing to keep them here. C. Willean said they didn't ask for the same base as LSSU. They asked for an amount halfway between theirs and ours, understanding that we have certain benefits they do not. And vice versa, said M. Greenwood. M. Greenwood said they proposed reducing steps and repositioning people so no one would be stuck at the top anymore.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said we are looking at a one year salary schedule and making some progress in terms of getting the base up and, if both sides agree, having D. Clark and someone from the association work on a template to look at a different type of salary schedule in the future.

M. Greenwood said morale of support staff blossomed when they heard a support staff contract had been settled. Support staff got 5.31% new money. The message they are getting is that the board cares about them, but is not willing to give teachers a decent increase that will cover a potentially large increase in health insurance. What kind of message is the BNC giving to teachers when there is an increase of 5.31% for support staff but only 2.8% for teachers? She thinks there is a meeting in the middle somewhere between the BNC and association proposals.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said she would like to caucus in order to respond in the most concise way. M. Greenwood said the association would caucus as well. S. Hamlyn-Prescott suggested a caucus of 10 or 15 minutes.

B. Sander moved to go into executive session to discuss teacher negotiations because premature general public knowledge would clearly place the school board at a substantial disadvantage, inviting C. Gallagher, D. Clark, C. McFarlane and D. Griffiths to remain, K. Orost seconded, the motion was passed and the BNC entered executive session at 6:55.

The BNC consented out of executive session at 7:15. The association came back in at 7:15.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC does value all of our teachers and wants to explain the support staff increase. There is proposed legislation that would raise the minimum wage to \$15/hr by 2024. The BNC negotiated raising our minimum wage for support staff to \$13.40/hr. That raised 43 people. In addition, we gave all hourly employees an 85 cent increase per hour. Employees got whichever was greater, the 85 cent increase or the increase needed to reach \$13.40. The average increase per person comes out to \$1150. The cumulative increase looked high but it was based on bringing 43 people up to a minimum wage. M. Greenwood said she had made that assumption.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said it doesn't mean teachers are any less valued. They are just as valued, if not more. The BNC thought the association meant to propose individual increases of \$1650 to \$1750. That was what the BNC proposal was based on. Only tonight the BNC learned from D. Clark that the association proposal calls for 172.5 out of 220 teachers to get increases of more than \$2K and the highest increase would be \$4155. M. Greenwood said that is correct. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC wanted to see if the BNC's understanding was the same as what the association understood.

M. Greenwood said the association took to heart the types of salary schedule proposals they were getting in the last round of negotiations. They wanted to honor that creative thinking. That is why they think the index has to go. She doesn't think \$1500 to the base is enough of an increase to attract new teachers and keep young teachers. Switching to a dollar increment and repositioning everyone allowed for a fair (not equitable) distribution of money. That might have been a miscommunication. Fair is not always equitable. It also allows us to add money faster. They know it has to go to the base, not just Bachelor's Step 1 but the base all the way across. Putting a chunk of money there will allow us to be more competitive. Why wait until next fall to make a change we could make right now?

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC recognizes the creativity. It is a complex issue and we really need to develop a template first so we can plug in different numbers. We won't have time to do it now for a one year contract. What the base is, how many steps there are and the difference between steps is complex. The BNC is looking to give everyone a certain amount of increase for next year as well as increasing the base. The BNC proposes agreeing on a dollar amount increase for next year but having ongoing work so when healthcare is settled by the legislature we can be looking at a 2 or 3 year contract with a new grid.

M. Greenwood asked what percentage of new money is on the BNC proposal. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said 2.86%.

The association left to caucus at 7:23 and came back at 7:27.

M. Greenwood said there are some extra meeting dates available now with the support staff negotiations already being done. Would the BNC be willing to use the dates the support staff didn't use to start having a conversation about the salary schedule?

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said she thinks it will take more than just a couple of meetings to make meaningful changes. And this is one of the busiest times for D. Clark because we are in budget season. She thinks it is unrealistic to add that to her plate now. The BNC would have to discuss it with her and C. Gallagher. We are looking at a one year contract. The BNC wants to see if we can come to agreement on negotiating a set amount of money for each person. According to C. McFarlane it does not appear that people are leaving to go to higher paid areas. C. McFarlane said the board asked her to look at steps 1-6 and the data did not support the idea that people are leaving for higher paid jobs. People left for a variety of reasons – better opportunities, moving, personal reasons, family reasons, etc.

K. Orost asked how much of an increase per person the association wants if the BNC sticks with the type of proposal it has suggested.

M. Greenwood started to explain how the association came up with \$1750. C. Willean suggested caucusing. The association left to caucus at 7:30.

The BNC consented into executive session at 7:30.

The BNC consented out of executive session at 7:36.

The association came back at 7:36.

M. Greenwood said there will always be budget season in November. There will be budget season next year. Their proposal is a fundamental change in the structure of the grid. It is not about giving everyone the same dollar amount. It is about increasing the base so we can attract new people. That being said, they are wondering what percentage increase the BNC would be willing to entertain.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked for clarification. Is she saying the association is not willing to look at the salary schedule the BNC put forward with an increase? M. Greenwood said that is right, because for the association it is not about giving everyone the same amount, it's about increasing the base.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said we are talking about a one year contract. Changing the salary grid is difficult with all the changes to healthcare and the uncertainty about the percentage of burden. It is hard to make huge changes in the salary grid that will have impact for years in the future for a one year contract. As soon as budget season ends, D. Clark would be willing to start working with the association on it.

M. Greenwood asked, there is not a percentage increase number the BNC is willing to go to? S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked what she is saying about the salary grid. M. Greenwood said the association isn't going to give up on its salary proposal. We need to put more money on the base. They are asking about the total percentage increase the BNC could accept because they want to play with the numbers more and possibly come back with a second salary proposal.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said she doesn't know if there is enough time if we want to settle the contract before the end of the year or in the beginning of next year. There may not be time to decide how many steps or how much difference there should be between steps without the template D. Clark was willing to work on to allow us to make changes easily.

M. Greenwood said the association disagrees. The contract doesn't have to be settled until June. We have time. S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked why it is important to do it right now for a one year contract. M. Greenwood said because we are making so few changes to the rest of it. So why not take some steps forward now? That is their rationale. We have the time. We can start looking at how we can change it.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said often times when we are changing a grid significantly we look at more aspects of the contract at the same time, such as the number of educational credits. It becomes a bigger issue. Things like the number of work days or number of sick days can affect how the board will look at putting together a salary proposal that will be carried forward for years.

M. Greenwood said she thinks we might be done for tonight then.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked if the association had discussed language. M. Greenwood asked if the association can get back to the BNC before the next meeting with a detailed list in writing of the pieces of Appendix D that need to stay.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked for a caucus to discuss that what will be discussed at the next meeting. She said the next meeting is the fourth one, the last time for new proposals, so it is a very important conversation, especially if it will revolve around salary schedules.

The association left at 7:45.

B. Sander moved to go into executive session to discuss teacher negotiations because premature general public knowledge would clearly place the school board at a substantial disadvantage, inviting C. Gallagher, D. Clark, C. McFarlane and D. Griffiths to remain, K. Orost seconded, the motion was passed and the BNC entered executive session at 7:45.

The BNC consented out of executive session at 8:02.

The association came back at 8:04.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said what the BNC is hearing is that if we built a salary schedule starting around \$40K that is something the association would be more interested in. M. Greenwood agreed. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the association's proposed salary schedule is way too expensive for the

BNC. If the BNC considered new salary schedules it would be the ones D. Clark came up with during the last round of negotiations that the association said were too creative. Is the association on board with looking at something like that?

M. Greenwood asked if the BNC would be willing to hear a proposal at the next meeting for a salary schedule with 3.8% new money. That would split the two proposed percentage increases down the middle. There could be creative collaboration between M. Greenwood, S. Hamlyn-Prescott and D. Clark or just M. Greenwood and D. Clark to come up with a proposal.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the association's proposed salary schedule is too expensive going forward into the future. M. Greenwood said that is why they want to consider what it might look like in year 2 or further into the future.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC is looking to extend the period for new proposals beyond 4 meetings. M. Greenwood asked if the BNC would agree, because a meeting was cancelled, to consider the next meeting the third meeting. S. Hamlyn-Prescott agreed to that. She said we can consider at that point whether to extend the period for new proposals further.

M. Greenwood said the agenda for the next meeting would include looking at innovative salary proposals, any new language the association wants to propose, and clarification in writing from the association to the BNC on Appendix D.

C. Gallagher asked if it is okay with everyone if D. Clark and M. Greenwood work together on a salary grid. The association and the BNC agreed. D. Clark said she and M. Greenwood both understand that nothing they discuss has to do with negotiations. They are just working on tools.

B. Sander moved to adjourn at 8:12, K. Orost seconded and the motion was passed.

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*