

SUPPORT STAFF BNC MINUTES
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2018
GMTCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER

BNC members present: Sue Hamlyn-Prescott, David Whitcomb, Bill Sander

Others present: Charleen McFarlane, Deb Clark, Catherine Gallagher, Darcey Fletcher, Yvonne Heath, Thad Tallman, Santha Dahlin

S. Hamlyn-Prescott called the meeting to order at 5:38.

B. Sander moved to go into executive session to discuss support staff and teacher negotiations because premature general public knowledge would clearly place the school board at a substantial disadvantage, D. Whitcomb seconded, the motion was passed and the BNC entered executive session at 5:39. The BNC came out of executive session at 6:26.

Support staff came in at 6:30

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said she thinks the association has already agreed on the BNC's proposal for 4.2. D. Fletcher said yes; we are agreed on that.

Sue said she didn't really match up the healthcare proposals but if the association is okay with what we proposed, she thinks the BNC and association proposals are basically the same. Darcey agreed they are the same. The association agreed to the healthcare and HRA proposals from the BNC.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said we stayed with the status quo on healthcare because the contract is only for one year and we feel there will be big changes next year.

Both sides agreed to a one-year contract.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said we can offer the retirement savings plan but we can't mandate that people sign up for it. That is the reason why the BNC proposes changing the language that says employees will be automatically enrolled to language that says they may enroll. It was also added that in addition to the 403(b) plan employees may enroll in the 457 Retirement Savings Plan. But only those in the 403(b) plan get an employer contribution.

D. Fletcher asked, the 457 plan isn't offered to Class 1 participants? S. Hamlyn-Prescott said she will have to clarify that during a caucus.

D. Fletcher said the VALIC person who deals with retirement plans was here today and he said the only way you can contribute to a 457 is if you have maxed out on your 403(b.) Charleen said that is not her understanding. She has both a 403(b) and a 457.

D. Fletcher said support staff were assuming people were enrolled in the retirement plan. A person last year found out they had not been enrolled because she hadn't signed the paperwork. It was found that people were not being enrolled at the time of hire. They were probably overwhelmed by all the paperwork and never enrolled themselves.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said we can't enroll them because they have to pick a company. Every year people are offered the opportunity. It is not a one-time opportunity.

D. Fletcher said she thinks people are not understanding. The association will get back to the BNC on that language.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said another language change proposed by the BNC states that any participant, not just a Class 2 participant, can make a written election to change the percentage of his pre-tax payroll deduction.

Another clarifying change is from "Contributions" to "Employer contributions" in the statement describing when employer contributions are deposited in employee accounts.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said a reference to the 457 plan was added to the VMERS section for Johnson employees hired before July 1, 2017.

The final change proposed by the BNC is elimination of "No employee shall be required to use his car in the course of employment unless the employer provides and pays for commercial automobile insurance." Our intent was not to provide commercial insurance but to continue allowing those authorized to use their own vehicles to be reimbursed for mileage. Many administrative assistants drive their cars to banks or other schools.

D. Fletcher said their worry is that without the language the BNC proposes to eliminate, supervisors might require employees to transport students or use their vehicles. One such case is Donna Ferland from HPES. She used her van to transport food to the Plaza and was reimbursed for mileage and when her van broke down she had to borrow other vehicles to transport food. It was a mess.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said it is never the intent that anyone transport students. That happens on very rare occasions. C. Gallagher said there are procedures that require checking the insurance, license, and driving record of employees who transport students. The vans should take the place of the need for that. We don't want the liability of staff transporting students. We all believe that employees should not be required to use their car to transport students.

D. Fletcher said employees could also be required to transport materials. That is done now, as in the situation with Hyde Park. Donna Ferland felt she had to find a way to transport food. Yvonne Heath said Donna was told a van was available but it wasn't and she had to use her own.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said her understanding is that it's not the intent that any employee's job is dependent on using their vehicle and that nothing in any employment contract says that is a requirement.

D. Fletcher said they understand that but supervisors are using "other duties as assigned." A lot of people are concerned that transportation could be added as an assigned duty.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC will caucus on this.

Darcey spoke about the association's proposals. One is changing the title of the "Wage Scales" title to "New Hire."

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC is fine with that.

D. Fletcher said when she, S. Hamlyn-Prescott, and C. McFarlane met they talked about eliminating the Mentoring Coordinator Position reference, separating the job Van Driver/Custodian to Van Driver and Custodian, removing language regarding agency fee, defining "two person" as employee/spouse or parent/child and removing the reference to a date in 7.15.

The association has a question. What does "same employer" mean? If someone from Hyde Park Elementary transfers to Lamoille Union, is that the same employer? This is in reference to the 10 continuous years with the same employer for the sick leave buyout.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC will discuss that in a caucus.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked if the language changes discussed in the small meeting, such as removing the technology coordinator position, need to be signed or can just be removed based on the conversation. D. Fletcher said they can be removed based on the conversation she had with Sue and Charleen.

D. Fletcher said she wanted feedback before crafting language for the corrective action guidelines in Appendix A. Supervisors may just use the part of the contract that discusses the corrective action plan and not refer to the rest of the contract. Y. Heath said support staff want to make sure relevant pieces from other parts of the contract are also in the corrective action plan section.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked, isn't an evaluation different from a corrective action? D. Fletcher said corrective action is being used in evaluations. A corrective action can happen based on a previous evaluation and the employee can be evaluated on behavior that is being addressed in a corrective action.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked which piece from 9.1 needs to be included in the corrective action language. D. Fletcher said paragraph 3. She was thinking maybe the corrective action section could even just reference paragraph 3 of 9.1.

C. Gallagher said an initial advisory is not evaluative, so that separation needs to be made. D. Fletcher agreed. She said it has been her experience that everything that happens in a corrective action goes back to the evaluation. Currently an evaluation is coming to a corrective action. Normally evaluations look back on corrective actions. Support staff want to see more clarification for supervisors who are not dealing with this every day. It's not consistent and they want to encourage consistency by adding that language. C. Gallagher said it is not really adding language; it is putting different parts of the contract all together. Is that correct? D. Fletcher said yes, it is not adding anything. They just want to make sure people aren't only referring to one piece of the contract.

D. Fletcher said they also want to include language from 2.2 about having an association representative present.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC will look at that in caucus.

D. Fletcher said everything else the association proposed has already been agreed on.

C. Gallagher asked for clarification on what the groups will caucus about. D. Fletcher said support staff will talk about the retirement savings plan language – the “may enroll” vs. automatically being enrolled and the language referring to the 457 plan.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC will talk about the question of what “same employer” means for the sick leave buyout, the language about employees driving their own vehicles and the suggested addition of language to the corrective action section of Appendix A.

Support staff left to caucus at 6:57.

D. Whitcomb moved to go into executive session to discuss support staff negotiations because premature general public knowledge would clearly place the school board at a substantial disadvantage, B. Sander seconded, the motion was passed and the BNC entered executive session at 6:57. The BNC consented out of executive session at 7:36.

Support staff came back in at 7:37.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott clarified that in 7.6 the intent is just to add a new parent/child tier. D. Fletcher agreed.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the employer for the sick leave buyout is the district. D. Fletcher asked if that includes Cambridge. Sue said yes; all the schools are under one contract.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC would like to leave only “No employee shall be required to use his car in the course of employment” in 7.12(B), as suggested.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said in terms of the Class 1 participation we will come back with some language. Class 1 participants can participate in a 457. We will clarify that employees can enroll in both a 403(b) and a 457.

D. Fletcher asked if the 457 will get a match. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the contract says the employer match is only for 403(b). It will remain like that.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC is working on the language for the corrective action piece. We are in agreement with the concept of an employee being reminded that they can have an association rep with them during an initial advisory and we are also looking at where we could move paragraph 3 from 9.1. C. Gallagher said the BNC totally agrees with the concept but when you look at 2.2 it references fairly significant corrective action and an initial advisory isn't that so we need to reference the difference.

D. Fletcher said she disagrees a little about the initial advisory. If something is put in a file she assumes it should be pulled out during evaluation. Cat said in an initial advisory something should not go into a file. D. Fletcher said it is not going to central office said but it can go in the administrator's files. C. Gallagher said it should not. D. Fletcher said it's in a file and when evaluations happen often it is brought up. Support staff want to make sure the relevant language is reflected in both places. She feels some employees are not being fairly represented because administrators are just referring to the corrective action language.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked if the association's intent is just to remind the employee that they can have representation, not to put the whole of 2.2 in the corrective action section. D. Fletcher said yes.

C. Gallagher asked, if there is a sentence under Initial Advisory that talks about notification, does that serve your purpose? D. Fletcher said yes. S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked, but the language from 9.1 is a little different? D. Fletcher said yes.

D. Fletcher said everything else seems fine.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said for the next agenda the BNC is looking for wage proposals and bringing back the 457 language.

Thad Tallman brought up the retirement question. D. Fletcher said they understand about the "may enroll" change but they are asking, for courtesy, if information about the retirement savings plan can be in the packet. A new employee said when he was hired he didn't realize until the association started speaking about the 403(b) that it was an option. Robin Genetti goes over things but it would be helpful to have information in the packet explaining what the retirement savings plan paperwork is and what the employee needs to do with it. C. McFarlane said Robin Genetti goes through an hour long process where she walks the employee through everything. Thad said he has heard from people who said she basically hands them a packet. C. McFarlane said she would like specific names of those people. D. Fletcher said they don't think information is getting to the employee about the 403(b.)

C. Gallagher said the reason the BNC is looking for wage proposals for next time is because of budget development. That is the most responsible timing.

T. Tallman said now that the language about being automatically enrolled in the retirement savings plan is being removed he thinks it will take care of the problem. When employees read the new language they will see that they have to enroll.

Support staff left at 7:50.

The BNC agreed to meet on October 4.

D. Whitcomb said we agreed each side would have one spokesperson but the association had others talk. C. Gallagher said she thinks a message can be passed on to the association spokesperson asking to have the spokesperson be the only one to talk.

D. Clark said she might not be able to get to the October 4 meeting until after 5:30.

The BNC consented into executive session at 7:54. The BNC consented out of executive session at 7:55.

It was agreed to meet at 5:30 on October 4.

The meeting was adjourned by consent at 7:56.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths

