

TEACHER-SUPPORT STAFF BNC MINUTES  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2018  
GMTCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER

BNC members present: Sue Hamlyn-Prescott, Katie Orost, David Whitcomb

Others present: Charleen McFarlane, Catherine Gallagher, Darcey Fletcher, Thad Tallman, Yvonne Heath, Santha Dahlin, Melissa Greenwood, Jen Myers, Carol-Lynn Willean, Nicole Chauvin, Cheryl Michaud, Judy Langlois, Pat LaClair, Gail Whitten, Lauren Welch, Brad Parker

S. Hamlyn-Prescott called the meeting to order at 5:49.

K. Orost moved to go into executive session to discuss teacher and support staff 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 5:50. The BNC consented out of executive session at 6:25.

Support staff and teachers came in at 6:31.

C. Gallagher started the negotiations meeting at 6:34. She introduced herself and BNC members. She said S. Hamlyn-Prescott will be the lead for the BNC and Melissa Greenwood and Darcey Fletcher will be the teacher and support staff leads. Teachers and support staff introduced themselves. C. Gallagher said Bill Sander is also on the BNC but is not here tonight and Chasity Fagnant may be on it.

C. Gallagher said this time she was asked to take some part in negotiations. The part she envisions taking is to be the person who reframes what the sides are saying if they are not understanding each other, asks clarifying questions, or probes to get at underlying issues. She is happy to do that if they are happy to have her in that role. She is sort of a neutral party.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the board feels having C. Gallagher as facilitator would be very beneficial. Darcey agreed. M. Greenwood said the teachers will converse and get back with a definite answer.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked if the proposed ground rules can be accepted tonight.

M. Greenwood said one thing teachers didn't do in the last round of negotiations was sign tentative agreements the night they agreed to them. They would like to do that this year. In #4, calling for TA's to be signed and dated by both sides, can we add "at the time of agreement" to ensure a TA will be signed the night we come up with it? It was agreed to add "at the time of agreement" to ground rule #4.

M. Greenwood said they need clarification on #5, which says each side reserves the right to withdraw any proposal until it has been signed by both parties as a tentative agreement. Can we nix that rule if we are going to sign TA's the night they are agreed to? Carol-Lynn Willean said they are concerned that, for instance, if the BNC is offering a certain percentage salary increase they might change to a different percentage.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said she recalls that at some point we withdrew proposals to reduce the number of proposals on the table at that time.

C. Gallagher asked if it is true that once a TA is made there will be no withdrawal and it will be signed. M. Greenwood said she believes a proposal couldn't be withdrawn once it was signed. So we wouldn't need this ground rule.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked, how would one side withdraw a proposal to make fewer proposals on the table then? C. Willean said the sides just wouldn't agree to it. It was agreed to leave the language as is.

M. Greenwood said they had a concern about the time limit put into #8, which calls for all proposals to be sent 48 hours in advance. There are many times a proposal is ready and then something comes in that would completely change your proposal. Some possible wording changes were discussed. D. Fletcher said she felt the suggestions were rather wordy. She suggested "All attempts will be made to have proposals and counter proposals in writing 48 hours in advance." That was agreed to.

M. Greenwood asked if we could not put an end date in #10. They don't want to get to March 1 and be close and have impasse declared. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said that is not the intent. We would like to have a conclusion to negotiations by March 1 as the goal. We are not saying it will end then.

C. Willean pointed out an extra word that needs to be removed in #11.

M. Greenwood said the association would like to add a rule #12 stating that there shall be no press releases or minutes released by either party unless impasse has been declared. They are not comfortable with minutes being public. They can be shared with board members. There is a court case saying this is not a public meeting and does not have to follow Robert's Rules of Order.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC would have to caucus about this one.

David asked to see information on the court case M. Greenwood referred to. She handed him a Supreme Court ruling.

K. Orost asked what language they wanted. M. Greenwood said: "There shall be no press releases or minutes published by either party unless or until impasse has been declared."

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked why. M. Greenwood said if minutes are published it could inadvertently create a problem with community members having too much input. They would like negotiations to be between staff members and the board.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC will have to caucus. M. Greenwood suggested that both sides caucus. S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked them to talk about meeting dates. The BNC is looking at Thursdays. They are looking at meeting with each group once a month starting as early as September 20.

M. Greenwood asked if there is any interest in talking tonight about the length of the contract. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said she thinks that should wait until next time.

The teachers and support staff left to caucus. The BNC discussed how to respond to the association's proposal for an additional ground rule. The teachers and support staff came back in at 7:13.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the BNC is a committee of the board. They agree to no press releases. But they had minutes last time for both groups that were on the board website and they never received a lot of comments about them. They are unclear why they would change that since it didn't seem to be an issue last time.

M. Greenwood said they are okay with adding a line about press releases and not using the minutes part.

It was agreed that ground rule #12 should be "There shall be no press releases unless impasse is declared or an agreement is reached."

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said we will change the title at the top to say Board Negotiation Council instead of just Lamoille North Supervisory Union.

Meeting dates were discussed. Teachers agreed to meet September 20 at 6:30. Support staff agreed to meet September 27 at 6:30.

M. Greenwood asked, since the teachers are meeting with the BNC on September 20, both sides would have proposals on September 18, correct? S. Hamlyn-Prescott said that is correct.

M. Greenwood asked who the association should send proposals to. S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked her and D. Fletcher to send proposals to C. McFarlane. C. McFarlane will send BNC proposals to M. Greenwood and D. Fletcher.

Teachers agreed to meet October 11. Support staff agreed to meet October 18. Teachers agreed to meet November 1 and support staff agreed to meet November 8.

M. Greenwood asked about the date for last proposals. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said tonight's meeting does not count as one of the first four meetings after which no new proposals may be introduced.

Teachers agreed to meet November 29 and support staff agreed to meet December 6. Teachers agreed to meet January 10 and support staff agreed to meet January 17.

D. Fletcher said there is a conflict on November 8. It was agreed that support staff would meet November 15 instead.

It was agreed that all meetings will start at 6:30.

C. Willean said November 29 would be the fourth meeting with teachers and the last opportunity for proposals to be introduced. S. Hamlyn-Prescott agreed.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the final thing to discuss is the health reimbursement agreement for January 2019 to June 2019. The reason we had a side agreement that only carried through until the end of December was that we didn't know what the legislature and the governor were going to do. To finish out the current contract we wanted to do a side letter regarding the HRA. She handed out copies of the proposed agreement. It mirrors the current HRA side agreement with two clarifying pieces. One is the addition of "monthly per person" to "administrative fee." And for teachers, the out of pocket amount for the family plan is shown as the first \$3,800 based on the contract with the teachers.

The teachers and support staff left at 7:25 to caucus. They came back at 7:27.

M. Greenwood said one issue when we switched to DataPath was that suddenly the employee had to pay the provider. That has been a fiasco. DataPath is now adding an option for direct payment to the provider. They want that language added in.

C. McFarlane said that is our goal. VEHI is looking at options. Some who provide direct payment to the provider don't do employer first dollar. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said that is why no name is attached. C. McFarlane said they are now switching the plans over to employer first dollar. They hope to be completely done by mid September. FSA's will be reimbursed for employees who paid first dollar.

They associations agreed to sign the side letter. *(C. Gallagher left at 7:30.)*

D. Fletcher said she had talked to C. McFarlane last year about maybe trying to get some of the outdated language cleaned up in a smaller group. To move the process along she would like to have a small group do that. Nothing would be agreed upon until we met as a group.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked if the intent would be to meet with one BNC member. D. Fletcher and M. Greenwood said yes, and with C. McFarlane.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked, and if there were any questions it would come back to the BNC? M. Greenwood said nothing would be agreed upon except by the big group.

The BNC agreed to the small group meetings and agreed that S. Hamlyn-Prescott could be the person to meet with the small group.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked, the goal is to have just one meeting? D. Fletcher and M. Greenwood said yes.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott thanked everyone for coming. Teachers and support staff left at 7:34.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35.

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*