

LAMOILLE NORTH SUPERVISORY UNION  
BOARD NEGOTIATION COUNCIL  
TEACHER/SUPPORT STAFF NEGOTIATIONS MEETING  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2016  
GREEN MOUNTAIN TECHNOLOGY & CAREER CENTER

Present: Charleen McFarlane, Deborah Clark, Catherine Gallagher, Pietro Lynn, Bernard Barnes, Mark Nielsen, Mark Stebbins, Chasity Fagnant, Katie Orost, Matt Mitchell, Sue Hamlyn-  
Prescott, Suzanne Dirmaier, 20 teachers and support staff

**Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.**

The meeting started at 6:00.

C. Gallagher introduced Pietro Lynn and everyone else introduced themselves to him.

P. Lynn said there is a meaningful distinction between bargaining sessions and strategy sessions. Clearly we would be put at a significant disadvantage if we discussed strategy in open session. He feels comfortable being in executive session during strategy meetings. Bargaining sessions generally have been in executive session almost as a matter of course. But open meeting law has changed. He recently filed a lawsuit in a case where the board involved insisted they couldn't find any significant disadvantage to being in open session. The law insists there can't be an executive session unless there would be a significant disadvantage to the district from discussion in open session. (*M. Mitchell arrived at 6:04.*) He feels it is hard to support having bargaining sessions in executive session. C. Gallagher agreed. She said she thinks bargaining in open session is useful because we need to be open and transparent with our communities. P. Lynn said he thinks it is helpful to have each proposal be in the meeting minutes that are posted online. Then there can be no confusion about what the proposals are. In his experience it leads people to be serious about their proposals if they will be out in the open.

**M. Nielsen moved to go into executive session at 6:08 and the motion was seconded and passed.** The committee consented out of executive session at 7:00.

At 7:00 Suzanne Dirmaier and 20 teachers and support staff came in.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott greeted everyone. Introductions were made.

P. Lynn said this is a session where we hope we can reach agreement quickly on ground rules. The goal from the BNC's perspective is to get through the process as quickly and fairly as possible. We are not going to spend a lot of time on language issues because we need to get to challenging financial issues. The goal is to have people come to sessions fully prepared. We will come with language changes and red-lined deletions for our changes and we hope the association will as well. The goal is to move as efficiently as possible.

The BNC's proposed ground rules were shown. S. Dirmaier noted that they were different from the ground rules C. McFarlane had previously provided. C. McFarlane said they were modified tonight based on suggestions from BNC members.

P. Lynn said the BNC would like to limit caucuses to 30 minutes. However, if there is some very complex issue that requires more time, it won't be an issue. His experience is that people will use all the time they have. If they have an hour, they will use an hour. S. Dirmaier asked if the 30 minutes is cumulative. P. Lynn said no.

S. Dirmaier said they would like to have an understanding that both sides will come prepared to meet at the appointed time and that meetings will not start with a caucus. P. Lynn said he thinks the BNC will be fine with that.

S. Dirmaier said they may have a problem with agreeing to limit negotiations to 5 sessions. What happens if we need more than 5 sessions? P. Lynn said he thinks the BNC agrees that if at the end of the fifth session we are very close we can have another session, but he hopes the proposed structure of 5 meetings makes people as efficient as possible.

S. Dirmaier said they aren't going to be able to agree to ground rule #12 (that both sides agree to go right to fact finding if impasse is reached.) P. Lynn said if we are very close and mediation makes sense the BNC will agree to it. S. Dirmaier said they will always entertain discussion about which process makes sense.

S. Dirmaier said one thing they think would be important to move negotiations along would be to have an agenda for each future meeting, rather than just planning a meeting without discussing what the focus of that meeting will be. P. Lynn said he thinks the BNC is open to anything that gets the process open and streamlined.

The BNC showed proposed potential meeting dates. P. Lynn said we will stick with the previously-discussed October 24 date for support staff and November 9 for teachers.

S. Dirmaier, teachers and support staff left to caucus at 7:18.

The BNC discussed the association response to the proposed ground rules.

S. Dirmaier, teachers and support staff came back in at 7:38.

S. Dirmaier said they can agree to the first 6 proposed ground rules. They would like to agree to dates for the next 3 meetings – for support staff, October 24, November 30, and January 24 and for teachers, November 9, November 29, and January 26.

Last time written proposals were to be provided at least 48 hours in advance of meeting. They would like to have that in the ground rules. And at the end of each meeting they want to make sure we have agreement on an agenda for the next meeting.

P. Lynn asked if S. Dirmaier is saying they will agree to 5 meetings without deciding on all the dates yet. S. Dirmaier said they are not limiting themselves to 5 meetings but they are not precluding having just 5. They are just suggesting that we agree to these dates now and agree to schedule more meetings as needed later.

P. Lynn said he thinks the BNC is very committed to the concept that the issues we have to discuss can be covered in 5 meetings. We can defer deciding on specific dates but we want an end date. It is important to the BNC not to be engaged in something where valuable time is wasted.

S. Dirmaier said she is hearing P. Lynn say the BNC is suggesting that we agree to 5 days and if at the end of those 5 meetings we have not reached agreement we will be at impasse. P. Lynn said if we get to the end and we are very close no one wants to go to mediation or fact finding if we could have one more session and get done. But if we create a structure that gets everyone focused, he thinks that is to everyone's benefit.

S. Dirmaier said scheduling meetings in February and March is difficult and they are not willing to agree to have only 5 meetings. They cannot agree to that ground rule and they will not agree with ground rule #12 (about going to fact finding rather than mediation) either.

P. Lynn said the BNC would like to caucus. S. Dirmaier, teachers and support staff left at 7:46.

**S. Hamlyn-Prescott moved to go into executive session at 7:47, M. Stebbins seconded and the motion was passed.** The BNC consented out of executive session at 8:03.

S. Dirmaier, teachers and support staff came back in at 8:03.

P. Lynn said the BNC is willing to accept the suggestion that proposals be shared 48 hours in advance. We agree there ought to be an agenda for upcoming meetings agreed upon at the close of a bargaining session. We are agreeable to the 3 scheduled bargaining sessions proposed. But the BNC is not agreeable to not having a specific number of meetings. The BNC is insistent on having 5 scheduled meetings with negotiations concluded by March 30. We will agree to delete the ground rule about fact finding.

S. Dirmaier, teachers and support staff left to caucus at 8:05. They came back at 8:11.

S. Dirmaier said they fully understand the position of the BNC and they disagree. Either we agree on ground rules without #7 (limiting the number of meetings to 5) or we have no ground rules and they will see us again on the next agreed-upon dates.

P. Lynn asked for a brief caucus. S. Dirmaier, teachers and support staff left at 8:13.

**The BNC consented into executive session at 8:13.** The BNC consented out of executive session at 8:27.

S. Dirmaier, teachers and support staff came back in at 8:27.

P. Lynn said the BNC cannot agree to ground rules without the ground rule limiting the number of meetings. We will move forward with meetings on the dates we have discussed without ground rules. The board is committed to doing negotiations and quickly and efficiently as possible and we will hold them to that.

S. Dirmaier confirmed that they plan to meet with the BNC again on October 24 and November 9. S. Dirmaier, teachers and support staff left at 8:28.

The BNC scheduled its next strategy session.

The meeting was adjourned by consent at 8:32.

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*

UNAPPROVED