

General Membership Meeting May 10, 2016

The meeting of the General Membership was called to order at 4:15 p.m. in the RHS. About 100 members were in attendance.

Purpose of the meeting:

- **Mediators Proposal**

- Role of the mediator

- Not common for mediator to issue a report. They are assigned from the state and work with police officers, townships, and teachers. What the law says is that active mediation needs to begin by Feb. 25th. When your contract is going to expire you need to have contract negotiations by January 11th of that year. By Feb. 25 of that year a state appointed mediator must attend the meeting. They are there to try and resolve the situation. If contract is settled then mediator moves on.
 - Mediators don't have absolute power; what they like to do is sit in with both parties and take notes; they do not share notes with either party and these notes are not available for subpoena;
 - They try to facilitate the meeting by bridging gaps. They sit quietly and listen to both bargaining teams. They sometimes can find a common point; the mediator we had is Robert Brinbrauer. John only worked with him for about 1 ½ years. ;
 - After the negotiation meetings, he, himself, stepped up and said he wanted to try and propose something. He used notes and information but he did not hold any meetings. John spoke with him on occasion to give suggestions. The bargaining team received the proposal May 4th and today we are here to go over any questions.
 - We can take this mediators proposal and throw it away; we can vote for it; we can take parts of it; mediators cannot tell us what to use in the proposal. It was his good faith attempt to find a resolution.

- We do not know the school board's response of the mediators report, but they were not happy with the 2 step proposal.

- **Tentative Agreement Proposal with Mediator's changes**

- The term of the contract stay the same; the wages and economic benefits change (this one is retro to May 1st). He took away the retroactivity but members would move a step. Longevity would be recognized but no retroactivity.
 - In 2016-17 everyone would move two steps; between now and August you would move three steps; the language states that if we have no budget adopted by the state, then members wouldn't get their two steps until the budget is passed and it would be fully retroactive to the beginning of the school year.
 - The bonus would not be included in the base salary; it's not added to the base salary.
 - Tuition language was added to state a list of schools would be agreed upon by the superintendent.
 - Return from child rearing leave does not have to coincide with beginning of marking period.
 - Delete the \$100 deductible; same plan as Berks Health trust minus the \$100 deductible.
 - Premium share for insurance would increase beginning July 1, 2016.
 - Changed the wording from Physical Plant to Safety. We work under Commonwealth of PA, not OSHA (we could contact the Labor of Industry if there are issues).
 - The language of Library classes was restored.

- Increase in deductible with insurance based on the Trust Plan. Maximum out of pocket now is \$800/proposed plan is \$700; co-pays change.

- **Questions/Discussion:**

- **Have any districts been asked to give up step movement completely?** Yes many schools were frozen for a half year or one year. **Is that time then made up?** It can be bargained; but not many districts have been able to make that up.
- **Were those freezes by choice or forced upon them?** Both. Mifflin did a three year contract that freezes them on the third year; other districts have gone through the process and have not been given retroactivity, which is essentially a freeze.
- **Budget for the RSD? Do we know how much they ended up with for this school year? They will be proposing their budget for next year the third week of May. Are we premature for making decisions?** They were scheduled to get \$5 million more in funding than last year. The belief is that the Planned Funding will be restored; but it has not gone through. If the \$7 million is restored and we get the \$5 million more then we would have a surplus. They are either \$5 million in the good or \$2 million in the rears.
- **Is this the most up to date information regarding the district and the budget?** Yes this is; the district has to put through their budget without knowing how much they are actually getting from Harrisburg.
- **Longevity Pay—does the longevity increment years still count with the proposal?** Yes; the people who qualify for it will continue to get it. If you just hit the longevity marker and you didn't get it in Status Quo, you would then get it with the new contract.
- **If this proposal is not approved and next year is someone's 30th year, would they get the bump?** No, they would continue to get the smaller increment.

- **Insurance Dental Plan—before we had United Concordia; is there a change with dentist since United Concordia is crossed out.** This language states they have to stay with United Concordia; with the proposed plan, they can switch dental plans.

- **Why are we only doing a 5 year contract? In one year we will be re-negotiating again? If we don't get retro, then the board does not have to give it to us.** The way the funding is for our district is bad and not equitable; if the funding is changed to be made more equitable then we would be in a better state. To go further out, the school board will be looking at the same stuff and saying no to the same things. John is hopeful that the state will increase the funding in the school districts.

- **PSEA email that said we were getting more funding in the state of PA. Is the salary schedule information passed on to the mediator? In our budget there is much money budgeted for teachers; what happened to the money that was saved from the teachers who left?** The information was shared; the district has put money in the fund balance but they say they are still short money. The mediator is aware of how many teachers are employed by the district; this is part of the argument going into the Fair Funding Formula. This year the district was hiring for positions to get back some numbers.

- **How was the prorated formula developed?** It is based on school days. Take 188 and divide by salary; take the number of days left and use the formula.

- **Teachers can end up losing money with regards to health insurance and step movement; was raising the premium ever discussed?** John commented raising the premium shares was never discussed. The mediator is trying to take the money out in other ways. The premium share is pre-tax; it is not an actual amount coming out of check. On average \$100 premium share is costing \$75.00.

- **Has a cost of living increase been considered?** This was not added into the salary schedule.

- **Has the district said anything about the Cadillac tax?** The Cadillac Tax is says that when you have a health care plan that is considered more than \$27,500 for family, it would be taxed at 40%. This was the money that would be used to help subsidize individuals receiving Obama care. John doesn't know if this will ever come to fruition. For the family plan, the \$2500 would be taxed at 40%, so language has been added into districts contracts saying that half the Cadillac tax would be given to the employee to pay. This issue came up during bargaining and John said he wouldn't allow the district to discuss it.
- **Why won't the district recognize BCIU courses?** This is something that John doesn't understand why the district won't recognize these courses.
- **How many teachers do we have that will be moving 3 or more columns?** Mitch commented we have 105 members that will be moving one; 12 will be moving 2 or more columns.
- **The sticking point is money.** John commented that the number one issue from members was money; number 2 issue was the correct step and column we should be at. If we get one step and one column this year, we are getting less than \$200 this year. Going forward we will begin moving towards the correct step and column.
- **This isn't a 5 year contract, this is a one year contract. Just the fact that they couldn't come up with a new salary schedule tells us that we aren't worth it.**
- **Did the district take into account that assistants got a raise? Why aren't we following in their steps? We are lowered paid than custodians; why did we let this happen?**
- **If this proposal is shot down, has the negotiation team discussed next steps yet?** We have...
 - fact finding

- ❖ Fact finding is the next step. We sit down with a state appointed fact finder who is paid half his rate by the state and half by the district and REA.
- ❖ We both discuss our financial facts
- ❖ he issues a report within 40 days
- ❖ we have 10 days to bring it to membership to vote
- ❖ If either party votes no then the report is made public for 5 days and the party who voted no has to vote again.
- ❖ If we do fact finding now, the 40 days would occur right around 4th of July. Doing fact finding now isn't fair to members.
- ❖ The majority of whoever shows up votes and it is binding.
- ❖ Discussion was have this report back by late August, early September.

➤ Mediation

➤ Strike

- **Can we negotiate while fact finding?** It won't be easy to get the district to move; but we do continue to bargain through the fact finding process. The way the report is issued, that is it; sometimes we get good reports; sometimes we get bad reports. If it goes against us, then the district has the power. Fact finding report could be similar to mediator report or different. They come up with what they think it is fair.

- **What happens now that Rik has resigned?** He officially resigns as of June 10th. Mitch will appoint a new chief negotiator. This is an appointment and approved by Rep. Council.
- **Voting day is Thursday.** It was going to be at RHS but there is no available space. Voting will take place at RMCTC beginning at 3:00 pm. Members must have REA or PSEA card to vote.
- **IF this does get voted down Thursday, will we start using media?** Yes we will. Billboards will be up until the end of June.
- **Have we heard anything from the community about the soft picketing?** Yes we have gotten positive feedback from the community.
- **Has the school board said anything?** Yes, they are getting phone calls.
- **If this gets voted down, how soon will we get back to negotiating?** We will have to sit down and begin with fact finding. We will have to force the district's hand.
- **Members were outside the school board meeting and vocal. Through the window of the administration building, someone flipped the members the finger.** It was before the meeting, a floor below.
- **Members need to be outside their buildings and on the bridge to keep the momentum going.** Wally will send out the schedule for which schools will be represented at the school board meetings. Other members may show up if they wish.
- **At what point can we get a concerted effort to unite; get a message from the top officers stating for everyone to be in one place? What would Mitch suggest?** Keep doing what you are doing at your buildings. Don't let kids hold signs, but parents can stand with you. Signs can be given to businesses.

- **We need to know what is going on at different buildings or different places so we can support other buildings.** Remember there are three different schedules and individual buildings are doing what works for them. NWMS—it gets to the point when it's individual choice. When you tell members it's a coordinated effort, then members must be there. It falls on the individual member, not union leadership.

 - **Members don't know what all buildings are doing and what days/times they are soft picketing or showing solidarity. Mitch needs to coordinate times when buildings are doing their soft picketing.** He has emailed union reps for their information and is getting no response. He will ask building reps again; but there has been issues with lack of responses from building reps.

 - **Building reps are not conveying information to building members.** Now that we have home emails, information can be sent to these emails. Send Pricilla emails if your building is doing something particular and she will do an email blast to membership.

 - **Traveling teachers do not get their information at building level.** If members feel there is lack of information being sent then let Mitch know. If members feel their building rep is not doing the job, then let correct VP know.
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- **Meeting adjourned at 5:45.**

Respectfully submitted,

**Deb Redcay
REA Secretary**