

General Membership Meeting August 31, 2015

The meeting of the General Membership was called to order at 4:15 p.m. in the cafeteria of the RMCTC.

Approximately 160 members in attendance

1. Welcome
2. Meeting Purpose
 - a. Negotiations and Contract
3. Introductions
 - a. Bob Kreveling, PSEA Eastern Region Field Rep.
 - b. Paul Gottlieb, Outgoing PSEA UniServe Rep
 - c. John McKiernan, Incoming UniServe Rep
 - d. Bryan Sanguinito, PSEA Eastern Region President
 - e. Lori Sherman, PSEA Eastern Region Vice President
4. Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)....Rik Immendorf, Chief Negotiator

State legislature refused budget. RSD took out a tax anticipation loan for 20 million to cover payroll. If state doesn't pass budget we are in trouble. Tom Caltigerone said he has never seen it this bad. We are struggling to get back to negotiating. We are dealing with a lame duck school board. Six positions are open.

Rik.....

Benefits, salary, language has to be cleaned up. We have offered to get back to the table but the RSD attorney has been the hold up. The board and superintendent are pressuring him to get back to the table as they feel he is playing games with both sides.

4 payrolls then we are in trouble--what does that mean? 4 payrolls gets us to the end of November then the district is out of money. We are good to be paid through the last pay in November.

How many other districts are in the same boat we are? Pretty much all of them. Without the state aid, the other districts will have trouble making the payroll, but may be able to go longer than we can.

Stephanie commented about Chester-Upland and commented that members needs to contact their state legislators to pass Governor's Wolf budget.

Mitch thanked members for holding up the signs at the meeting on Tuesday. Rik commented that it seems that the community has our back. We have some board members who are "lame ducks" and school boards that are lame ducks have the tendency to pass things to harm the incoming board. It seems like they would like to pass our contract.

Are they meeting with any other unions? No we are the only one they are meeting with. The other unions have to wait until our contract is passed.

If we get to the point that they can't pay us and members have to get other jobs to supplement their income, what will that mean for our jobs? The district can't require anyone to work without being paid. There is a concept of status quo. That means that contract is in place until we get a new one. If they run out of money what do we do? We have a few choices:

1. We can go on strike and they can't take our jobs away;
2. We can vote to work until we can't work anymore. This will change for members, as not every member has the same financial need.

The difficulty will be:

1. We are working really hard to push the legislature to get the stuff done and pass the budget.

Email all state reps and tell them to pass the budget

Bob Kreveling commented we could also take the stand of lockout and according to our contract, a lockout can allow members to file for unemployment. If the district can't pay, then that is considered a lockout and PSEA would help with filing for unemployment.

If the district runs out of payroll at Thanksgiving and we continue to work and the district passes budget by Christmas, will we get back pay? The district would have to take the state to court to get the money. Paul commented if you work, they owe you the money—eventually.

How long can the state go with an impasse on the budget? There is no sanction; the deadline was June 30, 2015.

If it comes down to that they can't pay us and we choose an option, how does that work? Paul commented if members vote to strike, there would have to be a vote of the general membership. What about lockout or work without pay? Those would be on the table and discussed. There would have to be a general membership meeting and someone in attendance would have to make the motion to be voted on.

If we go on strike or lockout we lose all benefits correct? The answer is if we don't work, we don't get benefits. But the district would be required to send members a COBRA notice regarding loss of benefits. COBRA is a federal benefit that says if you lose your health care benefits then the district must offer benefits for the rate it costs the district. The district is required to send you a letter stating that your benefits end on "this day". Loomis would be required to send a letter stating that members are eligible for COBRA and this is how many days you have to decide if you want it.

If we lose our insurance when does the Obama Care insurance come into play? Paul will get that information.

If it is a lockout is there a limit how long it can last and do those days have to be made up? There is no limit but the state law says that kids have to have 180 days of school. Generally lockouts don't happen in a public sector. Lockouts can go on for a long time frame. Paul doesn't know that would work because there is a conflict of laws regarding the number of days kids need to go to school.

What happens to benefits if we work without getting paid? Paul believes our benefits would still get paid.

How many years are we negotiating for this contract? Rik commented we are looking at 8 (the 3 that already happened plus 5 more). The district is looking at 5 or 6.

Is there any hope of retro pay? We haven't even approached that; but we will certainly bargain for it. Will it be a separate thing for horizontal movement and incremental or will it be all or nothing? We have to bargain for this. We haven't even talked salary yet with the district. We don't know how much money they are getting and they don't know how much money they are getting.

If there are so many districts across the state, then somehow in the near future the legislators will make a decision correct? Rik commented it is possible but no guarantee. If the legislators get backed into a corner then the budget will be passed.

At the end of the day it is not in our control until we pick up the phone and contact legislators or give to PACE.

DO NOT POST ANYTHING REGARDING 1081 DAYS WITHOUT A CONTRACT IN YOUR CLASSROOM. There is an REA bulletin board in each building. As far as Social Media, let REA officers take care of this.

Is the Superintendent a part of the negotiations? Rik commented he is not a part of the negotiations team, but he can push the board to get back to the table and negotiate.

We have a glimmer of hope, what is the plan if things don't get moving? Rik commented we need to plan for a strike or strike authorization vote when it benefits us most. We need to get through all the PD days. There are a couple of things to factor in—community backing. Rik's opinion is a strike authorization vote or a strike would shake the community. How long are we going to wait? Rik would appreciate if we could get past the November elections. The board is showing signs to get to the table. If they are willing to negotiate, then we shouldn't be talking about strike. When they refuse to sit at the table, then we should talk about strike authorization. Bob commented when we get back to the table, there are things like fact finding. Once we start negotiating, then we can go with fact finding. Hope there is not a budget tomorrow; our pensions are being held hostage. The Republicans are saying you give us pensions then we will give you some of the money you want.

Is there any way we can propose to the board and give them a deadline. Why can't we vote and say if board doesn't give us what we want by a certain date then we strike? Rik commented we can, but that would take the community against us.

There is a difference between taking a strike vote and the district doesn't have funds and taking a strike vote and the district does have the funds. We are all in the same boat—it is about money. This is about a party losing power to a governor so they are being vindictive. PSEA believes that our members deserves the pensions they have worked so hard for.

The last two years of budget money was put aside for raises; what happens to that money? It gets pushed into each year. No one has gotten a raise this year.

Is there a letter that is generated to contact legislators? PSEA has a letter format on the PSEA website—PSEA.org.

In Exec. Board opinion do you think we will have a contract by the end of the school year? If the state passes the budget maybe.

Can we get a list of our local politicians that we need to notify? It is on the PSEA card. Members need to look on the back of their PSEA card.

We have a defined benefit. You know how much money you will get when you retire. If they get their way they will have a defined contribution, it's like a 401k. These can be completely wiped out based on the stock market.

If the budget delay gets us past the golden window, what is a legitimate amount of time before we have to wait for the new board to get to the table? Rik is thinking it shouldn't take as long as it took this past board.

If the district runs out of money, would it be the entire district and not just teachers? If this happens then we would have a meeting to figure out how we go forward.

If the budget doesn't get passed, it would affect police and fire but they have a stipulation that they get paid no matter what.

Adjournment—5:19