

## General Membership Meeting March 21, 2016

The meeting of the General Membership was called to order at 4:15 p.m. in the RMCTC. About 90 members in attendance.

Purpose of the meeting is to have a question and answer session since last meeting. Thanked members for staying at the cafeteria for the rest of the meeting.

Trion-Marsh put together a fact sheet regarding benefits.

### Medical Insurance

- \$100 is per bargaining unit member only—not family members
- If you use maintenance drugs, then the \$100 isn't figured into it
- The proposal is for 100% coverage; that creates a lot of savings in the out of pocket expenses.

### Questions

- **Will they still do the two months in October and November for the wellness plan?** Yes
- **When will this go into effect?** July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- **What happens if members met the deductible already?** The deductible will be prorated if the prescription goes into effect in July 2016.
- **Will we have to pay the Cadillac tax?** John McKiernan said the REA will not absorb the Cadillac tax.
- What was paid under the old plan vs. what is paid under the new plan for family coverage is a little bit of savings.
- Deductibles—out of pocket maximum—now is \$150/\$300 if you meet the deductible you still have a 90%/10% out of pocket expense. With the new plan—once you meet the deductible you now have no out of pocket expenses, as 100% is paid, so potentially you could save more out of pocket.
- Out of pocket maximum--\$1500/\$3000—this is co-insurance. Now we have 90%/10% for co-insurance; with the new plan if it is covered at 100%, then there is no out of pocket expense.
- **What is the name of the plan?** Once it gets approved it will be RSD PPO Plan

- Trion-Marsh will be the broker—they will be handling the paperwork. Loomis does the paperwork but Trion-Marsh makes sure that everything is being done correctly. Reading pays the bills.
- No matter what we are still locked into the same pay rate into our paycheck.
- **What are the chances that we will be in the Berks County School Districts Health Trust PPO Plan?** Very slim chance; they didn't want us because we are too big.
- **Insurance is going to change but the problem is most people are thinking what will change later?** Will they take away dental and vision at a later time? Maybe.
- Vision and dental are staying the same under the proposal. The district can choose who they want to be the provider. Trion-Marsh cannot change any of our stuff, but they can change things for the district.
- The realistic start date is probably January 1<sup>st</sup>. Assume when you go to vote that insurance will start June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- **What are the numbers for individual?** \$25,000 employee only; would be \$19,000. Cadillac tax will be hit in 2020 for family and 2021 for individuals
- **If our spouse is offered insurance—can they decline theirs and take ours?** No they must take theirs and can be ours as secondary.
- **Did the district have the right to cross out United Concordia?** Yes they can; they have to provide dental insurance at the same level it was.
- Anything not listed on new proposal or in contract is not changing.
- **Can the district change the medical at any time?** No
- **With the flat rate we pay out of our pay check, the trend is to go to a percentage pay—did the district try?** Yes they tried for 14% of \$33,000. We fought for a flat rate, not a percentage.
- **Will they allow people to opt into insurance now or do they have to wait for open enrollment?** A new contract automatically allows for open enrollment.
- **What is considered preventative care?** Whatever it was before.
- The pharmacy can change if Trion-Marsh finds a cheaper pharmacy for the district.
- If member is on OTC preventive medicine—if you get your doctor to write a script for OTC medicine-get the medicine off of the shelf and take to the pharmacy along with the prescription and you are done—there is no co-pay.

- Our current plan is grandfathered; with the new plan then Obama Care plan kicks in and members can get what prescriptions they need.

## Negotiations

- **Longevity is \$1350; the next step is \$2700; if this contract is not ratified what happens?**  
We stay in status quo
- **The state recognizes BCIU as credits toward Level II. Why does the district not recognize that? Why won't the district support IU classes?** Traditional IU classes offered by IU cannot be used for column movement. The district will not reimburse IU courses or recognize them for pay increases. Reimbursement money is put in a pot and the pot is paid out according to the amount of teachers who submit for reimbursement. The IU courses do not have the rigor that college courses have. The status quo contract does recognize IU courses and will reimburse.
- The district does offer master classes.
- On the contract—2015 and 2016 says step and one column movement; the column is for those who qualified by taking classes.
- Members will only be getting back pay from this September.
- **If this contract is not ratified when will we strike?** There are things we can try but we have tried some type of unity moves and haven't been successful.
- **By agreeing to lose these steps doesn't that give district right to take away steps?** No it does not.
- **Why can't we authorize a strike vote?** It was discussed at General Membership Meetings. There is not a united front among the members. We need to have a "Work to Rule" where members work just contracted hours.
- **In Negotiations what did we get for giving up the status of Librarians?** When we went through the layoffs three years ago, they laid off programs. Specials were not eliminated because of the clause in the contract. Every other district in the state of PA eliminated specials in the Elementary Schools. What we got was lack of discrimination. There are many groups of teachers who are not protected like the librarians are. There are no clauses in the contract that keep Specialists. Eliminating this clause puts everyone on the same playing field.
- Everyone has to make an informed decision; coming to meetings helps this happen. Recommend a general membership meeting after this contract vote to have a strike authorization vote and see how many people attend the meeting.

- **Why didn't the district offer any money for those two years?** The district has no money. So why is there a push to do this now? There is a frustration to come to the meetings because we are told to wait and suddenly we are given a contract.
- This step movement is not a raise.
- The teachers who reach the top at year 15 will sit at the top without longevity until year 25. We asked for a third longevity section (20-24 years) and a 2% pay increase across the board.
- This is not our proposal, this is the district's proposal. The original proposal was 3 years of a pay freeze. Then we had issues with Karen McCree and Bob Heebner; then we had an ULP so we couldn't negotiate at this time; then there was a new attorney and a new board; then the cuts came and we lost teachers; when we started negotiating again the offer was 3 years freeze and \$500 per member; 2<sup>nd</sup> time—3 years freeze and \$1000 per member. The district is playing hard ball and Mitch let the district know members were upset and needed something to look at.
- At the end of the day and tomorrow what members need to do is vote their conscious. If you vote no, then write on the slip ideas for the contract. If you feel we need a general membership meeting, then the following Wednesday we can have a meeting and decide, as a unified group, what we want to do.
- **Do you think we would get a better contract if we vote no?** Rik's honest answer is he doesn't know.
- **Isn't the idea of negotiating to keep negotiating?** We have waited 4 years so why not wait longer.
- **What is the percentage of funding Allentown gets from the state?** About 50%. Reading's tax base can only generate \$33 million on a \$225 million budget.
- **Is there a way to send out an email for voting?** Based on bylaws member have to be here to vote.
- **If we say yes to this contract, is there no way to re-negotiate for those two lost steps?** Rik commented it is not impossible, but it is improbable.
- **How much money does the district need from the state?** \$70 million.
- If it is a yes vote then we start negotiating in January of 2017. We will only negotiate money and insurance.

### **Suggestions**

- Negotiate for back pay—not future pay!
- Take a strike vote at a general membership meeting

- Review Salary schedule since it hasn't been reviewed since 2008.
- Is there a possibility of the negotiating team to go back with the suggestion of approving the insurance and putting people on correct steps? If we go back, assuming a no, and say we will take insurance and move everyone to correct step and column, this will not help anyone at the top step.
- Rik posed the question to members not on top step: if they would agree to move to correct step and column with no retro pay. 32/54 members said they would agree to correct step and column movement with no retro pay.
- Members at the top—give members at top \$750 increase per year and willing to give up longevity.
- **What are we willing to give up?**—health and retroactivity pay.
- Parents have no idea what is going on so we need to get the word out through the newspaper or other media outlets.
- Longer term contract
- Get information out to news media and billboards. We are looking at getting 3 billboards—digital sign boards.

Meeting adjourned at 6:07.