

## **Minutes for December 4, 2023 Negotiations Meeting (District Team)**

Conference Room A at District Offices

Meeting began at 4:00 pm and ended at 6:04 pm

WEA Team Members Present: Mark Bullis, Molly Oscarson, Karla Hormann, Wendy Grundhofer, Wayne Trapp, Peter Brown, Drew Sodey, Roxanne Kuerschner, David Aeling

District Team Members Present: Enid Schonewise, Ra Chhoth, Lisa Olson, Dana Geller, Kelly Amott, Mick Waldspurger. Kelly Amott had to leave a little early.

The District mentioned that Conference Room A is needed by another group at 6:10 pm.

Meeting minutes from the November 20th meeting were reviewed and discussed. The WEA asked the District to make some adjustments to their November 20th meeting minutes.

The WEA asked about OPEB retirement incentives and for clarification on the OPEB report that the District gave to them.

The WEA presented their proposal (issues 1-21).

Both teams caucused at 4:35 pm.

The District provided feedback about changing their meeting minutes from the November 20th meeting. The District made two of the adjustments and emailed them to the WEA after the meeting.

A member of the District team explained how SOD is mandated and explained that they are operating within stringent guidelines and the school board is committed to getting the District out of SOD. An official letter from MDE was referenced.

The WEA asked for a copy of the letter and about the timeline to getting the 5% in our fund balance. The District said that they would start to focus on the fund balance once they are out of SOD. The District gave the WEA a copy of the MDE SOD letter after the second caucus of the negotiations meeting.

The District explained that they want to work together but that since the teams are so far apart, we have tough budget constraints with SOD, we haven't made much movement in the last six weeks, and the teams are not getting closer on financial issues, they plan to request mediation to have a professional help the teams try to resolve the issues and find some common ground. The District explained that they see mediation as a good thing and that the teams have spent a lot of time trying, but they're not making any progress. The District asked the WEA if they would like to jointly request mediation. The district also gave the WEA the option to continue with the Flex Learning days as has been in the past, so long as it is not tied to another negotiation issue.

The District asked that the WEA communicate their decision to them in the next few days about whether or not they would like to do so.

The WEA asked how the conversation with the school board went about working together on a 2 and 2 / 4-year plan.

The District stated that there isn't enough momentum, pointing to how far apart the two teams are at this point. (WEA brought forward 19 issues - 6 were Tentatively Agreed upon and 5 were withdrawn. The District brought forward 4 Issues - 0 were Tentatively Agreed upon and all 4 have been withdrawn.) The District stated that it does not have the resources to make an offer that they believe the WEA would accept. The District stated that they don't want to be disrespectful.

Both teams caucused at 5:27 pm

The WEA shared that they are disappointed at the District and shared comments related to SOD plans, non-Teacher employee pay rates, and budget cuts.

The District provided insight about the concerns and reminded the WEA that the total package increase that is on the table is a 6.05% increase. The WEA disagreed with the increased amount and the District reiterated that the increase includes salary and benefits.

The District again asked the WEA if they wanted to jointly go to mediation.

The WEA referenced the SOD letter and stated concerns about the past several years of negotiations and financial plans that were submitted.

The District referenced the letter from MDE and pointed out that the plan included ADM projections of 4000. The district pointed out that they can only move forward, not speak about past actions of previous Administrators. They stated that the plan that has been approved by the school board includes step and lane adjustments and that since constraints and parameters are so tight right now, there isn't a lot of movement.

The WEA asked about making movements/deviations as mentioned in the letter. The District stated that the State wants proof that we are making progress and part of the conditional approval was a submittal of ledgers and reports showing proof of adhering to the plan. District noted that on page 2 there is a sentence that states "**Deviations that may cause the district to increase the negative unreserved fund balance may affect the conditional approval of the SOD Plan.**" The district mentioned a positive comment from MDE acknowledging the current plan to be forthright compared to past SOD plans. The WEA asked who is setting the constraints and parameters and the District said that it is the school board.

The WEA stated concerns that not all groups took a hit with budget cuts. The District reminded the teams that we need to move forward. The District again asked if the WEA would like to jointly apply for mediation.

The WEA stated that it would like to jointly request mediation. The District thanked the WEA. The District said that there is a form that needs to be sent in order to request mediation.

The District stated that the teams don't need to have a meeting on December 18th as previously scheduled.

The teams talked about mediation schedules.

#### Homework from the December 4, 2023 Meeting:

Both teams will share their meeting minutes within 3 business days of the meeting.

The WEA will email its proposal from today to the District.

The WEA will inform the District of their Flex-Learning preference.

The District will reach out to the WEA about applying for and scheduling mediation.

The District will cancel the December 18th meeting.

#### Scheduled Meetings:

There are no scheduled meetings to take place at the District Office at this time.