

Minutes for March 13, 2024 Negotiations Meeting (District Team)

Conference Room A at District Offices

Meeting began at 3:30 pm and ended at 7:06 pm

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

District Team Members Present: Enid Schonewise, Ra Chhoth, Lisa Olson, Kelly Amott, Mick Waldspurger.

The teams had discussion about working together, making proposals, budget numbers vs costing models, and their interest in moving forward. The WEA said that they thought everyone knew that they were trying to make proposals by asking questions and the District maintained that they didn't see their questions or requests for more information as formal proposals.

The WEA showed a spreadsheet on the projector that showed the past four years of district and state average increases as well as the next four years of projected state increases.

The WEA presented their proposal.

The teams had some discussion about the insurance advisory committee and the WEA asked questions about how we might be able to look at different insurance brokers.

The District asked for clarification regarding the term "windfall" mentioned in the proposal. WEA will discuss in caucus.

Both teams caucused at 4:08 pm.

The District stated that the WEA's new two year proposal puts the teams further apart than the prior one (roughly \$8M as compared with the District's at \$4.8M.) The District also reminded the WEA that they have explained that there was a budget of \$1.7M for the teacher group for the first two years. The District said that the new proposal is more than what they can afford. It once again reminded the WEA that the District is in SOD.

The District asked the WEA what they think the next steps should be since we are getting further apart instead of closer. The District again shared the option of interest-based arbitration and how it works. They offered to share information about interest-based arbitration in writing with the WEA.

The teams had constructive discussions about costing and parameters including the models and FTE count that has been used since we started last Summer. The District explained that they are confident in the numbers and costing models and they believe it is time to move forward.

The District asked WEA where they'd like to go from here. They shared their willingness to try whatever method might work to find a resolution.

The WEA shared their desire to try and use creative ideas to help us move forward and work to resolve differences. The District agreed that they would like to work around the issues.

There was discussion about: the costing of extra curricular coaches and sponsors, compromise and meeting in the middels as well as employees not eligible for step and lane pay raise.

The WEA mentioned possibly enticing members about retirement. The District said with the teacher shortage and since they have only \$1M in the account, it was not an ideal resolution,

As a way to generate ideas, the WEA asked what it would cost if the District gave the whole \$1.7M in year one. The District said that they would look at that during caucus.

Both teams caucused at 5:18 pm.

The WEA created a hand-written sheet that suggested where numbers are going for years one and two based on the current costing model. The District made a photocopy of it and gave it to both teams. The District said that they'd like to review the sheet in caucus.

The teams proceeded to have discussion about the compounding impact of increasing pay rates over two years. The WEA asked the District to plug numbers into their costing model. The teams disagreed with the other side's logic related to costing.

The WEA asked again what happens if the \$1.7M is frontloaded in year one. The District ran the calculation and stated that it is basically 2.5% in year one if year two is 0%. That it would be just over \$1.7M.

Both teams agreed that they need to work together to get to agreeable terms. The District suggested having a caucus so they could run numbers of the lower FTE and potential one time money and said they're willing to move that around if there are savings to realize.

Both teams caucused at 6:30 pm.

The District printed and presented the costing model that dropped to 259 FTEs which included the one time payment of \$500/person. It showed an additional \$55k in savings.

The teams agreed that they had constructive dialogue today and decided to schedule another meeting. The District again suggested the arbitration option which is binding on both sides, that it entails both parties bringing their final package offer and the Arbitrator picks one. The District stated that they wouldn't present a proposal that is lower than anything offered to date and that it is bound by law, both sides have to agree to it, but that they aren't pushing this option.

The teams agreed that this meeting included good discussion on both sides. The teams agreed that going back to mediation might not be the best option.

Both teams reviewed their calendars.

The WEA asked what the District feels the next meeting would consist of - bringing another proposal, for example. The District said that they think we can have more discussion at the next meeting.

The WEA asked if there was anything from today that the District can take to the board that they'd be interested in and suggested that maybe they have another closed session.

The District explained that the costing sheet reflects the money that they have.

The WEA suggested the idea that there may be other savings that can be added into the settlement.

The District said that it may be helpful if the WEA could determine what their major priorities are and that those things could help us when we get closer. Knowing where they want the money to go could be helpful.

The WEA asked how the Director of Finance and Operations leaving the District could affect this.

The District said that they will move forward as usual and that we just want to get to a solution. That it's not District vs WEA, we're all 110.

The WEA said that there might be some conversation with the school board about the FTE change.

The District stated again that they have set parameters that they can afford and that they're not trying to hold back and that the WEA can put the money wherever they want.

The District again explained the budgeting process including budget expenditures, savings, and paying down the fund balances to get out of SOD.

The District said that it may make sense to have someone who's not in the middle of this make the decision, suggesting arbitration.

The teams decided that they'll email after the meeting to choose a date. Based on schedules, it appears that the next meeting will be in early April.

Homework from the March 13, 2024 Meeting:

The teams will email about scheduling another meeting.

The District will send information about arbitration to the WEA.