

MEA Bargaining 2024-2025
Session #1

Thursday, July 11, 2024

Those present: Rick Bailey, Pat Barber, Silvana Ianinska, Derek Jensen, Helen King, Brian Kirchberg, Gina Malinak, Donna Peregoff, Bruce Proud, Joe Ranaldi, Sharon Scarbrough, Rachel Sellers, Jon Syre, Evelyn Townsley, Bill Vogel, Dawn Walker and Jason Wysong.

Meeting began at 4:08 p.m.

BV invited everyone to negotiations.

JW – Greetings. Has been busy on their side. Hope everyone has had a chance to rest. 1 year ago our team was smaller. Derek wasn't here yet. Joe was in different job. Good to have full team in place. Great school year last year. Pleased with academic outcomes. Expect good news from DOE in July and August. Anxious to get under way and hopefully get it done expeditiously. Look forward to the conversation. Thrilled Dr. Vogel is back for another year.

BV– please stay for introductions. Pleased to have them on the team this year.

Dawn is again the official note taker.

Teams introduced themselves.

BV distributed an agenda.

MOU – August 9th skinny check

BV – Dr. Wysong has had conversations with Pat about pay schedule. We talk about it every year because of the way the calendar changed. I believe we agree to an MOU so we can have teachers paid on the 9th.

PB – There are 2 MOUs – one for teachers and one for paras. And one for the work year because the calendar does not match what is in the contract.

Budget

BV – Every year when the legislature adjourns we hear how much money is available then when we dissect we see how it affects the district and how much money is available. Every year it is less than what we hear from Tallahassee. All of the money received has to be shared with charter schools which are increasing in enrollment. And state voucher program takes money away from us. Your state president has made comments about budget also.

RS – Handout from Budget workshop at end of June. Last year was much better year. Categoricals 3.47M. each category has to be supplemented by district funds because state funding is not enough. 3rd page – reserve

percentage of general fund. Last 5 years – ESSR funding gave district opportunity to increase general fund in a way district had never seen before. That is reason for influx. Staffing change at 10-day count. Try to keep track of why changing from what was budgeted. Assigned fund balance is not arbitrarily made up. Money has to stay in particular pots for particular reasons. Presentation is on tape if you want to watch it.

BV – Total teacher and para FTE you needed, Bruce. Hand out to Bruce. 2992.6 teachers and 788 paras. Want to make sure we use same numbers. Benefits went up to 22.78%. We appreciate MEA understanding percentage last year was 22.47%. Rachel has tentative good news. Not final.

RS – Millage - the instructional increase of 1.174 using count rounded up. 2,223 teachers increase is \$1175 to supplement. Total would be \$9537. Last year it was \$8362. For paras – 788 paras. Increase in supplement is \$736. New amount is \$3598. Last year was \$2862. 25.7% increase for paras and 14.7% increase for teachers.

BV – Fortunate property values going up but not going to be this way forever. Again this is tentative. Last year did not sign off until mid-august.

BP – I don't like that. If you have numbers we are supposed to get the numbers. You are supposed to provide data in written form. When is it going to be done?

BV – Right now

BP – When are they going to be finalized?

RS – The last payroll just closed. Last thing to officially close before June. By next week.

BP – August 16th is not the schedule. If you have the data, they actually give the supplement to employees in August. This is a real problem.

BV – It's not August yet

BP - When will they receive it in payroll?

BV – We're here working with you, trying to get ahead . . .

BP – Other districts already know when to receive it.

RS – They may not be including carryover.

BP – I know when you're supposed to get it in July. I don't think employees need to wait for information or the money. In past years it was further delayed.

BV – I don't understand; we're doing an excellent job getting information to you. They are working day and night.

JR – Yes, they are.

BV– We’re trying to provide information.

BP– When Pat’s phone stops ringing I’ll stop asking.

RS – It’s a good will issue.

BV – It would be nice if you showed some appreciation for what we’re doing.

Health Insurance Update

BV – The next item is health insurance update. Handout. The health insurance committee (HIC) made recommendation to teams that there was a minimum of 9% rate increase with some plan changes. We asked Aon to give a review. Frankly, plan changes presented we were not happy. Asked Aon for additional changes that might be more favorable. It’s our plan. We’re self insured. No reason not to provide best rates for those that work in the organization. We all have an interest in the plan being successful and sufficiently funded. The decision was made that we wanted to have a plan so families that may not be employees would be able to participate at reasonable rates. Unlike some districts that have an inexpensive single plan, our plans subsidize those families. We’re in alignment with the association on that. Try to provide plan options that will make our plan meet state requirements and provide reasonable costs.

RS – For June 30, 2025, and for premium to break even we would need a 21% increase in calendar year (CY) 25. District is planning to contribute \$5M at year end. \$5M = 9%. Looking at a 10.9% premium increase with no plan changes as long as \$5M is put in the fund balance. In HIC, we proposed no lower than 9% with no plan changes. This is improved over last year. This is broken down differently within each plan. For employee only in bronze it’s a lesser amount. It shows how much district enhances the split. With 9% increase would need to have \$1.1M in plan savings if we don’t have plan changes. It wasn’t something that the employees would want to pick up. For employee only in bronze would see increase of \$1.96 per paycheck. Whether 10.9% or 9% increase would still need to have \$5M contributed by the district to get approved by the state in September. \$1.8M savings – originally provided by Aon to HIC. An alternate proposed plan design change would yield \$1.1M in savings.

BV – Hopefully we presented some options that are reasonable. Wanted to bring this as soon as we could. Just got it from Aon over the weekend.

BP – To clarify, the change in plan design – for an inpatient procedure they are responsible for the first \$2500 as deductible on bronze. So that’s if it was a \$10,000 bill, they would pay 30% after deductible. They would pay 2500 +2250 before insurance covers remaining amount of a surgery of 10,000. That’s \$4750 out of pocket as opposed to old plan. That’s a \$1950 difference for an in hospital procedure.

RS – Right if we didn’t want to do that we would go with the 10.9% premium increase.

BP – Surgery plus? What does that mean? What do they do for employee?

JR – There is a short list of doctors, the way it has been marketed to us, if they use surgery plus it's 100% covered and zero deductible.

BP – Is this only in case of surgery?

If hospitalized doesn't apply. It's not surgery.

An employee that doesn't have surgery is out of pocket \$1950 more. Shifting burden onto employee for an inpatient stay for 2-3 days for \$10,000. The effect is shifting money onto employees who use the plan.

JR – This allows us to bring the premium increase from 10.9% down to 9%.

BP – I'm not sure any of these people (MEA bargaining team) can explain it that way and not have someone get mad at them.

RS – If they don't want to do that for that one employee they can raise it to 10.9% for the whole group.

BV – Surgery plus is a good addition to this.

BP – Isn't that something we could do anyway? I don't see that as something the committee could say no to. The proposal is to shift money to employee who is hospitalized to shift money from the plan.

RS – Last year when we increased the premium 25%, Medicare's increase over the last 4 years had been 25%. This past year Medicare increased another 6%. Even Medicare is increasing rates on a regular basis.

BP – I'm pretty familiar.

RS – I was informing the rest, not you.

BV – In other places in the state when they don't make changes they find out they have to take drastic action. I emphasize it's our plan.

BP – Has the committee seen this?

RS – No, we just got this from Aon.

Bruce – probably a good idea to go to HIC.

RS – We will have a meeting this month.

BP – Has anyone projected what the impact will be from people changing plans?

RS - Only 58 people went off the plans completely when we increased premiums last year.

BP - Did they shift plans?

RS – Not many shifted. Can get information.

BP – Is there any other bargaining going on with other bargaining groups? AFSCME?

JR – Haven't started bargaining with AFSCME yet.

BP – My concern is that if we didn't have to come to different agreement with different bargaining units. That's why you have the committee. That's why we usually go to impasse.

BV – Felt that would be a better option.

BP – Is this the district's proposal?

RS – Yes.

BP – So we could negotiate over plan design? We're perfectly fine negotiating plan designs here since they were not negotiated in the committee.

BV – The committee wasn't excited about the original proposed plan design changes.

JR – Between '23 and '24 of the medical subscribers -267 last year. Projecting a loss of 2 in each category. That's Aon's projection. Anticipating a total loss of 4 people. They have not projected the movement.

BP - A loss of 267 subscribers is a lot. My experience tells me that those are people who are not using the plan and are likely to be healthy individuals. As changes are made healthy people leave the plan and the plan suffers. The actual cost per user increases. I get that this is not an overwhelming increase but it may cause people to move from one plan to another or drop the plan for some plan members who may be healthy. It may hurt the plan more in the long run. That's what has happened in the decade I've been involved. Subscribers have gone down as the district grows.

BV – That's an unfortunate trend. We only raised rates once. For those on bronze, it's just \$1.96 a paycheck.

BP – But then it's \$2200 on the back end. No plan changes may be the better option.

RS – HIC is looking out for the self-insured plan. Fully insured would be a lot more expensive but would be less headache for us.

PB – No, it wouldn't.

BV – I don't know if you have a proposal. Might be a good time to talk about priorities.

Discussion of MEA and Board priorities

BP – I don't know if we're prepared to give you proposals. Have ideas, thoughts and concerns. Some specific to a few people and some specific to bargaining units and how they work. In the past we used performance pay (PP) and highly effective (HE) and the grandfathered schedule (GF) and level movement processed based on the salary schedule (SS). It's problematic by many particularly those new to the district and haven't moved out of the base rate. It's a significant number that grows every year. Shift moving quickly to over 200 people a year.

Vast majority are on PP schedule and vast majority are at the base. So it may be a time to change to different model and be similar to other districts who have gone away with the salary schedule. Individual model for pay. Negotiate over increase based on individual amount. We know that this is happening in other districts, that they have done away with SS. Have done away with anything other than a hiring schedule. I wanted to make sure we had a conversation first rather than try to bring a proposal that was drastically different if the district wasn't open to the discussion. We wouldn't talk about cost of living adjustments (COLAS) or level changes. But talk about HE % and % of current rate. That would require some communication about what the current rate is and to know what the new rate would be. Particularly since everything has been rolled into the general fund. Looked at options to figure out compression and ways to get around it but I think that's a complicated process without a lot of result. Particularly with the number of people at the base rate. That's one issue.

BV – Sarasota was recommended to go to a salary schedule.

GM – We have to submit salary schedules.

BP – We would have a hiring schedule. Everybody else would be on an individual rate.

BV – That was the goal of the legislature back in the day.

BP – I know that was the intention, and it looks hard to get out of. That is one issue. Another issue with the schedules is with 11 month employees is that they are being paid at an daily rate less than 10 month employees which doesn't seem to be a fair and equitable system. Penalty for working more time. That was an interpretation of how the law worked when the SS was created. Not sure it was required by law, but I think there's a lot. If we stay with the schedule it needs to be resolved and even if we don't it needs to be resolved. Interested in continuing with teacher retention. After serving 10 years there should be additional recognition, some additional funds. The 1st year would be a number of people between 10 and 16. After that it would be a continuation and anyone moving into that. Supplements – hear from people that we need more money for that. Didn't receive data for athletic and other positions.

BV – I think we're waiting for final payroll?

RS – It should be available now. Payday is tomorrow.

BV – We will make a note of that one.

BP – Those are teacher issues. May be some I missed. May be a stray issue. For paras, obviously step advancement is an issue. Don't believe there is anyone at the top anymore. Dealing with compression there as well. Real concern that we haven't recognized experienced folks. Always talk about across the board as opposed to the percentage increase and that affects people at the top differently. Since we look at the bulk of bargaining unit at TA 6 average salary is under \$24,000 and need to have a living wage so those folks can pay for health premiums and hospitalizations if they need it and not have to pay the district to work. Close to having proposals on all that. Wanted to see if you have any strong objections to any of that.

BV – Talk about your first thought. It's a tight budget year. How would you restructure that?

BP – Could use 5%/4% model or 6 and 4 or 7 and 5. Haven't seen how many have HE evals. 200 people at beginning of SS that probably didn't have evals. Not everybody is part of the costing factor. Have to think about how you cost that or maybe not.

BV – Take whatever percentage and use the same split and apply to each step?

BP – Would apply to their current salary.

BV – It could be costly.

BP – How would it be more costly? Don't know that percentage is more than when we do levels. Each level is a little more than .5%. Percent goes down as you go up the schedule.

RB - Or those who don't move.

BP - 1400 people are at the base, or more. Those have no prospect of moving.

BV - Willing to take a look at it. Other areas. Open minded to look at the other areas.

BP - Do TSIA calculations of what's charter, benefits, maintenance, new money so we have clarity.

BV – I will leave you with one thing, I think it's important to look at concepts together. Was disappointed to get off to a bad start. We were trying to provide you with information. If we're going to work with new concepts hope we're able to do so in a collaborative manner. If you or I get upset with something I hope we can move forward with new concepts

Bruce – noted.

Meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.