

Collective Bargaining

May 19, 2022

12:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Bitterroot Valley Education Cooperative

And

The Cooperative Employees' Bargaining Unit 4403, MFPE, NEA, AFT, AFL-CIO

Attendance for Union: Karen Gideon, Lindsay Davis, Erin Bauer, Rachella Moresi

Attendance for Management: Dr. DoBell, Dr. Moore, Ms. Woodard, Jenny Rammell

Other Attendees: Jill Reynolds, Chris Hughes

Start Time: 12.08 PM

Time Constraints: Dr. Moore and Rachella at 3:00 PM

Minute Taker: Jill Reynolds

Public Comments: Jenny stated no public comments have received.

Review/Approve prior meeting minutes: Jill reviewed the association edits to the draft minutes for April 26th to clarify the requested changes. Notes for April 26th will be updated and finalized. The notes for May 12th were reviewed. One edit is needed to who signed the tentative agreement for the Teacher Salary Matrix, it should be Lindsay and Dr. Moore, not Rachella and Dr. Moore.

Agenda Items for today:

- A. Management response to Association salary matrices counterproposal
 - a. Jenny reviewed the Management counterproposal to the Specialist, Mental Health Therapist and Salaried Behavior Consultant matrices
 - i. No change in the base salaries or the number of steps from the original Management proposal
 - ii. Step increments are now \$900 steps 0-9, \$1000 steps 10-19, \$1100 steps 20-25 for Specialist and Mental Health Therapist. Behavior Consultant step increases are \$567 steps 0-9, \$667 Steps 10-19, \$767 steps 20-25 which equates to 63% of the Specialist and MH Therapist. These changes were made to address the Association opinion that more tenured employees should receive a higher step increment.
 - iii. Management revised employee step placement in the counterproposal due to the Association rescinding the request to ensure new employees would not be hired at a higher rate of pay than an existing employee.
 - iv. In addition to these salary matrices changes Management is proposing adding longevity bonus payments when employees sign their 26th, 31st

and 36th contracts to recognize 25, 30 and 35 years of service with the Cooperative. Bonus amounts will be \$2500, \$3000, and \$4000 respectively.

- v. Jenny explained Managements concern with the Association proposal of step increments in the beginning years being so low. Management has an immediate need to focus on the lower end of the matrices for recruiting and retention. Erin asked to clarify if the stipend for employees whose salary is over the maximum step salary and the Longevity Bonuses were two separate payments or was it one or the other. Management confirmed it was two separate payments. Lindsay asked to clarify the longevity bonuses were each 5 years and there was nothing in years in between. Management confirmed the bonuses would be paid every 5 years. Jill clarified the Association base increase they requested for year 2 was 1% in the comparison file. The Association had not provided a percentage, this was the default chosen by Management. Hard copies of the comparison file were printed for review.
- vi. The Association asked for time to caucus and review the counterproposal. The Association returned and asked for the logic Management used in step placement by employee. Logic was explained as what the Association considered a fair placement and attempting to give most employees the same amount of increase. The Association went back into Caucus. The Association returned and stated they were in agreement for 2022-23 Management proposal but would like to see what 2023-24 would look like with a 1% increase.
- vii. Management went into caucus to discuss this and apply the 1% base increase to the management proposal for 2023-24. Association returned and the impact of the 1% base was reviewed. Karen asked what Management thoughts were on the 1% base increase for 2023-24. Dr. Moore explained Management had made their best proposal and could not agree to the 1% base increase for 2023-24. The counterproposal presented with no base increase in 2023-24 was Managements last, best and final offer. Lindsay clarified the Management counterproposal was less than the original Management proposal. Dr. Moore explained that it was because we did as the Association requested and removed the requirement new employees were not hired at a higher salary than existing employees, we adjusted step increments to give more tenured employees higher step increments. Dr. Moore repeated that the Management counterproposal was Managements last, best and final offer. Karen asked what Management would consider if the Association rescinded their request for the Health Insurance Contribution to increase \$50 in 2023-24. Dr. DoBell stated he understands the Association looks at this as a package deal, salary and insurance, but the counterproposal is

where Management is for salary matrices. The Association went into caucus.

- viii. The Association returned and accepted the Management counterproposal for 2022-23 and 2023-24 and they appreciated Management looking back at the original proposal and the changes made in the counterproposal.
- ix. The Association repeated their proposal for the health insurance contribution to increase to \$850 per month per eligible employee in 2023-24. Management does not agree to this as discussed two meetings prior due to the fact the \$800 per month/per eligible employee covers the cost of the majority of current employee's health insurance as well as deposits to HSA accounts. Dr. Moore explained our best offer is \$800 per month per eligible employee and our salary matrices counterproposal. Lindsay stated the counterproposal for salaries was \$34 thousand less than the original proposal and that would cover the \$50 increase. Dr. Moore stated Management understands but our schools are in trouble with large budget deficits and the need to look at every penny and that includes how much they are paying the cooperative.
- x. The Association tentatively agreed to the health insurance remaining at \$800 per month per eligible employee pending discussions on the remaining topics.

B. Association response to management retirement proposal

- a. Karen stated it was awkward for her to discuss this topic feeling she was specifically used in an example calculation at the last meeting. She will be addressing the retirement proposal for everyone, not fair to use her as the example. Dr. Moore explained that was not the intention at the last meeting, Management was only using the highest salary in order to look at the maximum impact of the Association proposal.
- b. Karen reviewed School District proposals from districts in the Cooperative and Hamilton, the variances in caps on accumulated sick leave, different rates of pay used. Dr. DoBell identified an issue with the information shared regarding Lone Rock. Lone Rock payout is based on the sub pay rate which is currently \$75. Karen stated the Association does not accept the Management proposal of a tiered retirement payout. The Association feels their proposal is financially viable with limited impact based on the few employees who will retire in the coming years. Karen shared the Association counterproposal (see attached).
- c. Dr. Dobell explained he sees both sides as he has bargained as a teacher and now as Board member. As a Board member the impact of the Cooperative match is difficult to agree to without finances to cover the costs. Karen stated the Association feels this is not a huge risk due to savings of hiring new employees at a lower salary. Jenny explained the current work shortage issue and that is only if we are able to fill the position.

- d. There was group discussion on how you could pay the incentive without it being considered Term Pay which would require the payment being made to the employee several months after retirement. Karen stated she personally would not choose that option as she would want as much of the payout as possible be included in her TRS benefit. Dr. Moore asked if Dr. DoBell or Ms. Woodard had any questions they wanted to ask. There were none. Management went into caucus.
 - e. The Association returned and Dr. DoBell provided Management response that upon discussion Management would propose we maintain the current agreement and address this in the next bargaining session. The Association asked to clarify if we meant we were proposing keeping our counterproposal from prior meeting or rescinding that proposal and maintaining current bargaining language. Management went back into caucus as they had forgotten the counterproposal from the prior meeting. The Association returned and Dr. Moore presented the Management counterproposal for a tiered retirement payment based on years of service in addition to our current bargaining agreement with the limit of 87 days accumulated sick leave allowed, 25% of accumulated sick leave, paid at the employee's daily rate of pay. Karen stated the Association had concerns with the language not guaranteeing the tiered payments, that it was only if the Board found it financially viable. Dr. DoBell explained that was not the intention of the language in the Management counterproposal. The intention of that language was meant to clarify the number of employees that would qualify for the retirement payments would be a Board decision.
 - f. Dr. Moore edited the Management counterproposal language and reviewed this with the group. The revised language for Management counterproposal is as follows.
 - i. One retirement incentive will be available in a fiscal year. Any bargaining unit member who elects to retire effective at the end of the school year who has 25 or more credible years of service under the Montana Teachers Retirement System, at least 15 of which have been with the Cooperative and who has notified the Cooperative in writing by March 1 during that same school year, will receive a total payment as scheduled herein. If more than one application is received the incentive will be awarded to the person with seniority in the Cooperative.

25 years of service	\$2500
26 years of service	\$2600
27 years of service	\$2700
28 years of service	\$2800
29 years of service	\$2900
30 years of service	\$3000
- The Board may elect additional retirement incentives at their discretion. In the case that more apply than the Board feels it can afford, the

applicants will be ranked on order of seniority in the Cooperative, with the most senior being the first qualified.

The Association agrees the language changes address their issues and they agree to accept the Management counterproposal.

C. Language discussion

- a. Insurance – Jenny stated Management agrees to the Association language change to extend the Cooperative health insurance contribution through August for employees eligible for insurance through August 31st of the current year if the eligible employee completes their contract in that year.
- b. Workday/Work Year – Jenny explained Managements view that workday and work year are a managerial issue and should remain in policy versus adding this to the bargaining agreement. Jenny reviewed Managements proposal for new language in policy to include the current mechanism in place for an employee to request flex time when a circumstance out of the employees control leads to a longer day (see attached). Management does agree to remove the requirement for an employee to get preapproval for this time since it is not always possible to get preapproval as meetings may go longer than planned or there could be an emergency with a student. Karen stated the Association had talked and agrees to Management proposal to add additional language to the policy but would prefer it be part of the bargaining agreement. There was discussion regarding the fact it is in some district agreements, wthey that might be, issues it can cause within a district. Lindsay stated the Association agrees to the revised language in policy, but they will continue to bring this up in future bargaining.

The following topics were not discussed as it was now 2:55 PM and we had a hard stop at 3 PM. These topics will be discussed at the meeting on June 1, 2022.

- c. Transfers-
- d. Sick Bank Access

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 1, 2022, 2 PM to 5 PM in the BVEC Conference Room.

Meeting adjourned: 3:00 PM

Attachments:

Management Counter Proposals 5/19/22

Association Counter Proposals 5/19/22

