

**Collective Bargaining**

**April 20, 2022**

**4:00 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, Jenny Rammell

**Other Attendees:** Jill Reynolds, Chris Hughes

**Start Time:** 4:13 PM

**Time Constraints:** Erin Bauer 5:30

**Minute Taker:** Jill Reynolds

**Public Comments:** Jenny stated no public comments have received.

**Review/Approve prior meeting minutes:** Jill corrected the error on the next meeting day where it had Tuesday, 4/20/22 and should have been Wednesday, 4/20/22. There were no other changes requested by any attendees. Minutes approved as written with the day/date correction.

**Agenda Items for today:**

- A.** Opportunity for association to respond to management proposed matrices and present association proposals – Karen presented the association response to management matrices proposal and the association counter proposal.
- The association agrees on the base raise; happy to see the Mental Health Therapist Schedule comparable to the Specialist schedule; also agree with the new base salary for Teacher.
  - The association feels the \$1000 increment for everyone on the Specialist and Mental Health Therapist is not fair and too drastic of a change and would like to see the same increment percentage for everyone versus the same dollar increment.
  - The association presented their concerns with the management placement on schedules that would give some employees larger percentage increases than others and feels that is not fair. See attached management proposed salary schedules.
  - The association is proposing a 2% increment on the Specialist, Mental Health Therapist and Salaried Behavior Consultant matrices, with the same base increase and number of steps management proposed. They feel this evens out a

whole lot better and is fairer. See attached association salary schedule proposals.

- The association proposed targeting a 6% range increase for everyone with the 2% steps on the Specialist schedule.
- Discussion was had on calling it a step if it did not reflect years of experience due to changes in schedules over the years. A new name will be discussed as part of bargaining.
- Dr. DoBell asked what assumption was used in placing employees on the association proposed matrices. Karen replied they looked at putting everyone at closest step to 6%-7% increase over prior year.
- More discussion on using the term step for the increments. Suggestions were made to use placement. A new name will be discussed as part of bargaining.
- Dr. DoBell asked about the placement of other employees on the association matrices and if the same rationale was used for them as was used for Specialist. Karen replied she would be covering that with the review of those schedules.
- The association did not change placement of Salaried Behavior Consultants versus the placement proposed by management, but they did propose 2% increments versus dollar increments.
- The association proposes a new teacher base salary of \$39,000 with 2% increments laterally and vertically.
- Dr. DoBell asked about year two proposals. Karen asked if she could get to that in a minute? Agreed to let her finish with thoughts on the first-year matrices.
- The association proposes no new employees will be placed on the salary schedule at a higher salary than existing employees. The association recommends the current agreement to honor seven years' experience for Specialist be changed to three years and that the Mental Health Therapist be changed from three years to two years.
- Dr. Moore asked to clarify the association is proposing that no one is ever placed at a higher level than an existing employee, even if they have more education and experience than the existing employee? Karen replied yes, they were.
- Chris asked if the association proposed schedules ensured that a new employee hired using existing limits on years' experience would not be hired at a higher dollar amount than existing employees. Karen replied that might have been lost in the process.
- The association proposes the language on sign on bonuses be changed from "up to \$2500" to "up to \$5000".
- Dr. DoBell said sign on bonuses are normally an MOU and expire after a year. Discussion around our current MOU and had we been resigning it every year. We have not. Further discussion will be had regarding this as we bargain. Dr. DoBell asked if the decision on the amount was left to the Director. Yes, that is the current wording in our documents.
- The association proposes the stipend for employees over the cap be 2% on value of the highest salary in their matrix versus the \$1000 management

proposed. Feels \$1000 is not fair. The association presented longevity amounts paid by other districts in Montana that are higher than management proposal. Jill asked if they had the maximum salaries paid in those districts as compared to the proposed cooperative matrices. Karen replied they did not have that information.

- The association is proposing a 2% base increase on all four salary matrices for 2023-24 school year.
- Dr. DoBell and Dr. Moore both stated it would be easier for them to see the management matrices proposal versus the association proposals if they are side by side in one file with increases for both and future impacts. Lindsay will send Jill the association file and Jill will compile one file with the comparisons requested.
- Dr. Moore stated that management looks at both the bottom line and what is affordable and Dr. DoBell agreed that both are important.
- There was discussion on looking at the impact of salary schedules on future budgets, the time it takes to recoup the one-time large base increase in 2022-23 if it is approved, the impact of flat dollars versus flat percentages.
- Rocky presented the union proposal for the health insurance contribution. The association is proposing no change in the \$800 per qualified employee per month for 2022-23 but changing 2023-24 to \$850 per qualified employee per month. The association stated the health insurance contribution has traditionally been the same as the highest premium amount for an individual employee from the plans offered.
- The association proposes language in the agreement to state insurance coverage stops the last day of the month an employee resigns or is terminated. The association is proposing an employee who completes a contract year but does not sign a contract to return the following year, be covered by insurance through August 31 and receive the \$800 per month health insurance contribution.
- Dr. Moore stated that the timing of termination and coverage is an employee handbook item and not bargaining agreement language. There was discussion on language using "plan year."
- Karen will send out the association language proposals.

At 5:15 PM, bargaining topics stopped so that we could set up follow up meetings due to hard stop at 5:30 PM.

**Next meeting** is scheduled for Tuesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 4PM to 6PM in the BVEC Conference Room. Another meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 9-Noon in the BVEC Conference Room.

Dr. DoBell addressed the group to tell them he had some topics he wanted to discuss with management, and we would be going to caucus. Everyone can stay, he is just letting everyone know his intent. Association members left.

**Meeting adjourned:** 5:26 PM

Management was in caucus until 6 PM.

Monica 4/26/22

Jenny Rammell  
4/26/22