

PESPA/Pinellas County Schools

Minutes

July 18, 2024

PESPA Building

Present: Paula Texel, Dena Collins, Nelly Henjes, Jamie Beck, Gary Jeppesen, Dave Richmond, Carly Spicer, Scott Barnum

Meeting began at 9:00 am

Paula Texel welcomed the group to the bargaining session. Introduction are made. Both groups have recently TA'd contract language and health insurance, and today's discussion is compensation. PESPA had previously requested a \$7.00 across the board increase to all hourly rates. When costed out by the district, the cost would be \$21 million or \$26 million with fringe in recurring dollars. Mr. Jeppesen had previously gone over funds available including new funds. Based on the current dollars available for all groups, the twelve million in new state dollars minus the increase from the additional costs in health insurance, there would be an approximate 2% increase in salary.

Since the previous meeting, EWBS met, and a recommendation was made and those are passed out to the bargaining teams. The increase in health care cost is a 7.36% increase, which equates to a \$10.5 million dollar increase. This is down from over 10% that was previously shared. The school board will pick up 80% of the increase and the employees will pick up 20%. For employees that are on the employee only plan the increase in cost will be on average \$7-\$8 per pay period and \$19-\$23 increase for the family plan. Our next board meeting will be closing of the budget. The district also looked at reduction in employees, as 85% of our overall budget is salaries. Fourteen million in unit cuts was secured. With the new dollars from the state, the allocation to support health care increases and the unit reductions, the district has approximately nineteen million for salary increases for all employees in the district. For our PESPA group we have approximately two million for salary increases. The school district proposes a 3% salary increase for the 24-25 school year.

Nelly asks about the district reserves, sharing the state requirement is 3% while the district policy is 5%. With inflation and the cost of living high, PESPA cannot accept a 3% increase. PESPA is asking for some of the fund balance to use for the employees. It is not a decision that the bargaining team can make, it is a conversation with the board. Paula addresses the reserves and the board policy that we have. The fund balance is not something that can be used as recurring. Any policy change requires two readings, the district has asked, and the board does not feel comfortable with changing the policy.

Caucus 9:32 am

Return- 10:00 am

Nelly welcomes the team back from caucus. PESPA rejects the district proposal of a 3% increase and instead asks the district for a 7% increase.

10:05 am caucus- return at 10:14 am

Paula thanked the group and informed PESPA the district is rejecting the 7% request as the cost out for 7% is approximately \$4.7 million which is double the available funds for the PESPA group. The district comes back with something different. Paula shares information about members of the bargaining unit. More than half of PESPA members are at the G levels in their pay grade- we heard about increasing as much as we can. You were at 7% and we are 3% and we might present something different to consider. The district did put a proposal together that is .60 cents per hour across the grid. A salary grid with .60 cents increased to all pay grades was shared. Data was also shared on the employees in each of the pay grades. The bottom grid shows percentages by pay level and pay grade. The increase shows a greater percentage for the lower pay grades and addresses the majority of the PESPA. All PESPA members would see an increase between 1.7% and 4.4% with adding an amount to each paygrade. The district asks if this something the union is interested in? PESPA asks for caucus.

10:23 am move to caucus.

10:36 am return

Nelly shares that she likes this way of looking at salary, better than percentage. PESPA is rejecting back the proposal and coming back with laying on \$3.60 on all paygrades. Jamie shares this would be approximately \$3,000 more per year for their employees.

Paula shares this is a 24% increase on the lowest paid employee. The cost of this proposal is \$13.4 million and reminds the group that the district has \$19 million available for all employees. The district rejects this proposal as it is not feasible. The .60 cent per hour increase is pushing what we have available this year. Nelly comes back with an ask of a \$1.60 per hour. The district costed out the ask from PESPA and it equates to \$5.6 million. The district rejects this, and Nelly asks for a dollar more an hour- and Paula shares, we originally looked at .45 cents and we came today at .60 cents. Jamie asks for the cost out if \$1.00 an hour was added for all PESPA employees. The recurring cost would be \$3.7 million. This is an increase of \$1.7 million from what we originally have.

Caucus- 10:45 am

Return 10:59 am

Paula shares we will continue the discussion with the dollar amount. The district will meet PESPA halfway with .75 cents per hour increase. We are hoping this is something you can agree- we pushed to go .60 cents- Mr. Jeppesen confirms this increase is something the district can offer. This is our stretch and our best. Nelly requested to go to .80 cents. The .80 cents would cost close to \$3 million.

Caucus 11:05 am

Return 11:15 am

PESPA accepts the increase of .75 cents per hour district proposal.

12:11 pm

Nelly speaks to the bargaining team. Parties have agreed to .75 cents per hour for all PESPA employees. Newly hired PESPA members will have an E added to allow for separation. We have agreed to full book language. We have agreed to EWBS and signing document for salary.

Paula thanks the team and look forward to getting this out to our employees.

Meeting ends at 12:15pm.