

MEA Bargaining 2022-2023
Session #4

Thursday, August 4, 2022

Those present: Pat Barber, Tim Barger, Cory Bernaert, Ben Geiger, Helen King, Brian Kirchberg, Rob Lyons, Melanie Newhall, Bruce Proud, Marlyce Stringer, Bill Vogel, Doug Wagner and Dawn Walker.

Caucus began at 4:43 p.m. Meeting began at 5:07 p.m.

BV – From our perspective things are quiet. Ready for a smooth start. Reduced vacancies quite a bit. We're ahead of some other counties. Thank you for everything you're doing to get us off to a good start.

Minutes look good. Thank you.

Start with Summary. (Management handout.)

Getting pretty close to the end. Teacher salary. We're at 3-4-4-5. Evened up grandfathered (GF) effective (E) and highly effective (HE). Masters supplement agree. Proposal on supplements (attached). Picked up on what you recommended. Listed athletic supplements. Added NHS at 3 levels. Robotics at elementary. Went back and added Career and Technical Education (CTE) sponsors. \$500 for each chapter. Should be noted that when those teachers are in competition they have been getting \$15/hour. We would continue that practice.

DWagner – \$15/hour paid out of vocational money. When teachers go to official CTSO events after the work day they can put in for chaperoning students. We do that for our vocational clubs. Paid for out of grant from state that has to be approved each year. Done as a way to compensate for time. \$500 is not in lieu of that; \$500 is to say that's a start.

BV – Some other counties are lower than that. Should we decide on a higher rate would raise that rate also. Mentor teachers – excited about that. \$1366. ESSR funds. Would have to look at that on an annual basis. Have a revised cost of new supplements of \$251,000 without benefits.

BP – Does that include lacrosse, sand volleyball?

BV – Yes, that's the cost of this proposal.

BP – Not new money.

BV – Have to budget for all schools. May not have it but budget for it anyway. Longevity – same position. Willing to see if there is some mutual way to agree on some resolution to take to a third party to resolve. Those who are already receiving it would continue that. Looked at opinions but thought that would complicate things even more. Best way is to go ahead and say what's at stake is the payment of teachers that are on GF that are reaching 16 or 25 year plateau. Let's see if we can get a 3rd party to sign off. That's where we are. Set it aside if we could in some way. If there's a time lag will make it retro. We're on the same side of the table. We're just not comfortable with that language.

BP – You want to pay those on the performance and screw over the people on the grandfathered schedule?

BV – No, want to work with the association.

BP – So, you want to select the third party?

BV – No, we would select by mutual agreement through the grievance procedure.

BP - How do we grieve it?

BV - Association would file grievance. Superintendent. Strike. Go to arbitrator.

BP – Are you prepared to agree to current language?

BV – Want to be cautious on this. Don't want to put whole process in jeopardy. Open to suggestion you have to work through this. Need to work together. We have the same goal. How do we get there?

BP – So you want us to take the risk? How do we do that? It was your language by the way.

BV – We spent a lot of time with experts on this

Bp – Who is your expert?

BV - Leonard Dietzen, attorney in Tallahassee and Kevin Watson.

BP - No interest in our interest. Correct? He's negotiating for other contracts. Kevin Watson has no experience negotiating whatsoever. He's a legislative guy. Whose ideas was it to ask Kevin?

BV - Mine.

BP - No background in bargaining whatsoever.

BV - He works for FL labor relations service.

BP – Everyone is interest. No one really likes this provision. Trying to find a way how to do it. Dietzen told other locals he's waiting to hear from Manatee. I got another call asking if we got rejected.

BV - I've been very cautious. Didn't want opinions that were not going to be helpful to resolve this issue.

BP – You're asking us to remove our proposal and have no proposal on the issue without having any indication that the issue will get resolved. How do I talk to my 70 eligible members before they vote on ratification?

BV – Show them the new clause. Tell them the Board has long supported longevity and continues to support it but because of new change reluctant to move forward with teachers on the GF schedule. They're willing to bear the potential challenge by continuing everyone who has already received it and looking for clarification. Call everyone together. Association has offered proposal. Board reluctant to accept. Whatever you think best way is. Have been very careful to not exasperate issue any more than it is right now.

BV - On paras we're in agreement. Tim has proposal to resolve issue, a couple of ideas.

TB – Spoke at end of last session. Like 2nd idea better.

BV – Can go ahead and deal with that. To me, we just accepted your initial proposal on that one in the best interest of all concerned.

On pay for no subs – new proposal. MOU is attached. \$20/hour rate for teachers, Know it's not daily rate. This year don't receive anything. It's a start. Good number. Money already out - we can work with association on how we want to give schools opportunity to use money for salary or bonus. MOU so we can start that right away.

BP – How does this work? Only if a sub has been requested for vacancies? How going to manage if a principal declines to submit a request for a sub?

BV – Was disappointed last year when I heard about that. Para (classroom sub) is supposed to be first call.

DWagner – We talked to principals. Made sure they know it's important to have subs. Talked to ESS. As long as we have notice that we can call sub we feel we can get subs. We raised rates. That's been a big deal. More competitive. Hope rates raising will be good. We have had people leave to go to other districts.

BP – We will discuss.

BV – Surveyed many districts. Transfers – all we would want is to change the timeline where principals have to agree. If you could give us any help we would really appreciate it. Curriculum pay - \$20/hour. No retro please. The cost of this . . .

DWagner – CTE we spent like \$120, 000 last year from that department (not MTC). That's just an example. Last year it was tough. COVID. People weren't going places.

BV – It is a cost factor. Wanted association to know that

BP – Would be happy to see data on what it costs. Need to compare. Simple math is that 8,333 and 1/3 hours in a year. How many people are actually working?

BV – There is a cost factor. Don't have data we would like to have. Outside experience - in agreement with 12 years.

TB - Benefit premium

Management handouts of pay schedules and deductions

DWagner – Other handout is 20 deductions. Updated with more information.

TB – page 11 – June 10th paycheck reference. Paying every Friday so should change. On page 47 – first paycheck in June but that's for pay that runs in May. Have proposed language to be more in line with what the pay calendar is. On the first paycheck after the last workday.

BV – Deductions come out of same payment as the mill. I think we fine tune to make sure there's no issues.

TB –Referendum payments start on 8/26 and run through May 19th.

BV – Increase in millage should alleviate concerns in almost every case. Additional dollars would offset. In some cases paras with the highest plans are most impacted.

TB – What I did with paras was identify who was on what plan. 10% on plan with most impact going from 22 to 20 deductions.

BV – Feel comfortable we have things wired in. Amar has assured . . .

BP – I'm just struggling with ridiculousness of 5 years of conversation about payroll. Back to talking about 20 deductions which was 5 years ago.

BV – The struggle is for next school year only have 4 days in first check but next year only provision for 3.

DWagner – For sure we would skip benefits. Would have to.

BP – It's hard to figure out what your proposal is. Language hasn't been modified in any way.

BV – When we take a caucus will try to refine. At this point we've presented our information now and we can refine what we have here. Hopefully getting down to a few of the main items.

BP – We had conversations about elementary team leaders. Didn't hear anything about that.

BV – No recommended change. Has to do with numbers.

BP – So tell me what the number is?

BV – 4 curriculum areas.

BP – 6 grade levels counting pre-k

BV – Major academic areas

BP – How does that work in elementary?

BV – That's how principals work it out.

BP – So allocated 4 team leaders?

DWagner – You're asking about academics, right Bruce?

BP – Team leaders

BV – Football coaches paid 37.5%, 37.5% and 25% for Spring. There are middle school intramurals according to information we received. Were told this is the way the football coaches wanted it. Sometimes people would start in the spring; that's the way they wanted it set up

BP – That doesn't show anywhere in your data. Shows fall and spring. No other payments.

BV – That's the way they're being paid according to payroll. Will get clarification. Have a list of supplements but don't have team leaders on this one. Doesn't have the numbers. Doug, it shows on here 6.

BP – So you put us in a position of telling our elementary folks you get 6 and any additional you get nothing unless you put in waiver to diminish pay. People doing specials, ESE, PreK.

BV – Every school has a different model they want to use.

BP – You just want to ignore the issue.

BV – No, we don't but that's our proposal right now. That's what the matrix is.

DWagner - Whatever is on the matrix. What is the 6, what are you asking for?

BP – Want to have individuals doing the job in the meetings. You don't have specials, ESE and PreK. Going to make decisions without their representation.

DWagner – So it's ESE, specials . . . and PreK. So 3 more.

BV – The numbers are set but can look.

DWagner – Specials would be part of some of those teams?

BP – They do all grade levels. They would present their issues. They would know what's going on in the school instead of having someone from grade level telling them what happened in the meeting. That's an administrative function. So, administrators maybe need to have another meeting with other people which no one would like. So, end up doing waiver and getting reduced rate.

BV – We'll talk about it in our caucus

BP – Already have established practice of saying what it is at secondary schools. Think it ought to apply to elementary as well. If you need me to write it as a proposal I will as well. Rationale for not increasing other supplements is that you're not interested?

BV – Feel made strides this year in adding numbers

BP – So after 20 years of doing nothing you get one year of 10% and we should tell our people that's enough?

BV – Looked at other districts and we're doing well overall.

BP – Don't know what data you're looking at but it doesn't say that to me. In every settlement there is no one lower than your proposal.

BV – What districts?

BP – Orange. Lake.

BV – A lot depends on how you add, if you look at referendum that adds to salary. Orange settlement is baked in. Last year the offer was \$25 but went to impasse and got \$100. Ridiculous. Our proposal is – our funding source is one of highest in state.

BP – Less than 2% if what you have on table right now for teachers out of general fund. Not looking at right numbers. Almost all is Teacher Salary Improvement Allocation (TSIA). Don't see proposing much beyond TSIA. Unless you can convince me otherwise. Haven't provided information. I looked at your reporting process. Nowhere near spending 50% for classroom teachers in any category. Unless you're seeing what I'm not. Don't think you're using TSIA to its potential. Maybe you need to explain. I gave you my numbers. What are your numbers? Are we looking at apples to apples? Over \$10M in general fund reserve. Another \$8M last year. 2 years in a row additional in reserves. How do I explain to teachers that district doesn't have money? They're reserving money and don't want to give it to you. Not explaining how you're using TSIA in proposal. Need to put side by side to see what proposal really says in terms. Does the board and superintendent really know? In your or our proposal? Have you explained it to them? I take that as a no. Will review proposals. Need to caucus.

Caucus at 6:01 p.m. Reconvened at 7:36 p.m.

BV – Did some work in our caucus. Management handout.

TB – Regarding TSIA. Summary sheet. (Tim gave Bruce actual expenditure report submitted to DOE.) Preliminary report was due 12/21. Just audited by attorney general. No findings; we're in compliance. Also gave FAQ from end of July. Didn't think it was clear. Once we got to \$47,500 you're good. Can use money for teacher salary. If you exceed you're good. I think we're spending more. Teachers used to start at \$39000. Now it's \$46000. Every time we get a new teacher we're hiring at higher level. Still trying to chase down money. In year one we spent more than allocation by \$418,852. We've been moving toward \$15/hour in other position for a number of years. Big expenditure in '21-'22 carries over to '22-'23. 434 E. 237 HE. 2781 total. There were teachers in unsatisfactory or NI, so the number went down.

BP – Why is there 80 and 20% in '22-'23?

TB – Carries over from '21-'22. Recurring expense. If anything, it went up. Easiest way to get that amount.

BP – It wouldn't be the same; it would be additional.

TB – Would be for year 2, 3 . . .

BP – Ok.

TB – Fund balance. We've been very transparent about the goal to add to fund balance. When COVID hit started getting ESSR funds (federal funds) of \$13M to jack up general fund. Transferred salaries. Going to have to make way back to general fund. Resistance to doing it this year. To offset potential for legislature not giving

additional funds, fund balance increase is intentional. Will draw down to 5% or below. At end of 6/30/23 is a draw down compared to June 2022. If we have trouble hiring those budgeted funds won't be spent on salaries and go back to general fund. ESSR and categorical flex are 2 biggest pieces.

BP - \$4,912,780 for year 3 – what's that for?

TB – E, HE positions, some might end up there. (referring to handout given to Bruce).

BP – Aren't these part of the 3?

TB – Those add up to 2781, lower number. Could be some shift.

BV – Data was updated with actual numbers. Trying to respond to amount of money this package has over TSIA money.

TB – Across all allocations. A big chunk is carryover from last year.

BV – Orange county – including referendum – E got \$1800. HE got \$2425. They only have a performance pay schedule. Got a cost of living adjustment (COLA). Raised them a little bit above our proposal. Last year \$100 COLA. \$200 for E and \$400 for HE. Huge issue over there. Lot of ground to make up. Starting is \$48,500. We are over \$55,000 now with our proposal. Lake was way behind. \$48,500 starting this year. Had a substantial increase in performance pay because so far behind.

BP – Without referendum.

BV – Correct. No district including Dade has a higher salary than we have at \$55,000.

BP - Not true. 7 counties are higher including Sarasota and Collier.

BV – That's the information I received.

BP – Both Collier and Sarasota are above anything we could ever do, with your proposal or ours.

BV – Made a good point about team leaders. 6 allocated to each school. Management proposal. "Elementary schools with 5 or more full time Special Area, ESE or PreK teachers will be granted an additional team leader supplement for that area." Hopefully that will address some concerns. Also benefit premiums – current contract language (CCL) on that one. We don't have to do any changes. We just wanted you to be aware of contract discrepancies. Can work on that another time. Would like you to give serious consideration to 20 model payroll.

BP – The size of the schools are completely different.

BV – Teacher retention longevity. Willing to do a joint letter requesting clarification. Was concerned someone else outside district was waiting on Manatee. Our language is different than other districts. You point that out. That's why especially after what I heard you just tell me we're doing everything to protect issue moving forward. Not adversarial issue. Want to get to where we both want to be.

Bp – How does that process work?

BV – It could work, our position is CCL but reluctant to give to teachers on GF schedule. Don't believe we can pay supplement because of the language change; therefore, you could file grievance. You could go to impasse but if it gets before the board the attorneys advise the concern then we don't get to where we want to be. Very delicate situation. Don't think that's a good way to go. Goes up through arbitration. Have had to do this in other places. Our language is unique to others, too. Found out on conference call. You can talk with your people, too. If you have different suggestion open to listening to any idea you have. Our concern is that you can go ahead and pay but you have to pay 150% higher than any other salary. That's the dilemma we're at. Best bet is an arbitrator. Then have your counsel and us respond. Really looking for clarification. Auditors don't know what to do. Can talk to DOE but avoided calling them also. I believe this language showed up last minute. Not where it should be in the law. Couldn't even place it. Your president and I have met with teachers to explain the situation. And so teachers understand the position of the board. It could be retro depending on the ruling.

BP – I appreciate your responses and data. Will look at where we are. And movement on team leaders at elementary level. Think that was an important issue. However, doesn't solve problem with supplements. Didn't address issue of service groups? Reason for not? Like Key club?

BV – No, focused on other areas. Depending on where we are we are always open to consider those. Reconsider. Focused on vocational areas.

BP – Also not ready to tell the rest of the supplements that we're done giving them increases after working for several years to get something. Talking about reducing it to 5% increase to supplements. Looked at your numbers. Probably half have already been paid. They're not new positions. Just including them in the contract for what you're already paying plus adding new positions that probably won't get added, but I appreciate efforts to go through all that. Adding the team leaders will add additional money.

BV – Special event coordinator?

BP – That's an elementary issue for people that have a desire to do more drama, music productions, art shows deepening on the school where they spend time outside the day coordinating events at that particular school. Some are during the day but many are outside.

Curriculum pay at \$20/hour in agreement that's a place to begin but believe it should be retro to first workday for teachers rather than no retro.

BV - \$20 will work with retro? We'll have to consider that.

MEA handout. Proposal 3.

BP – Reduced COLA to \$500. Supplemental differential pay includes new supplement and team leader. Estimated cost of \$331,000 based on data received, based on elementary schools received partial amounts. Going to have to look at the number of people at worksites. Have the data. Need to look at it in a different way. Not sure 5 is the right number. Not sure schools that don't have 5 specials. Have to check on ESE and PreK teachers.

BV – Not many schools have PreK

DWagner – Depending on school may not have 5, like Anna Maria.

BV – Concept is good.

BP – Included estimate of sub coverage over and above \$50. We'll talk more on longevity. Transfers issue struggling with this. Talking about future contract not this one. Teachers are already returning. Don't know whether there are really issues that occurred this year. Not sure of need to change if issue has not occurred this year.

DWagner – We are seeing teachers where someone goes to Sarasota or Hillsborough and a slot opens up.

BP – How many?

DWagner – I don't know; I would guess 20 probably? Maybe 40? Have to get real data. Every time they leave it creates a vacancy. Had some leave right before they came back. We understand why. They want to switch schools. Creates hardship for school. Now they're scrambling to post and get somebody in.

BV – Would like some assistance. Just because you haven't heard it's an issue doesn't mean it's not an issue. This language still does not stop them from transferring. If 4 weeks is too long we're open to another timeline that would be fairer for everyone.

BP – I know there's a lag form when they leave to when posted.

DWagner – Person submits a letter, position control, short posting, now 2 days, was 10 days, so lag can be 3 weeks before we can interview. Sometimes impacts Title I schools. Hate to have a lot of vacancies in Title I. As population continues to shift, something opens up, something closer to home. Would like us to do something to get those filled earlier.

BP – You're extending lag into June and maybe even into May. You're almost eliminating the opportunity to leave at the end of the school year by going to 4 weeks. Struggling how to do this.

DWagner – Maybe that's on us to start this earlier

BV – That was our starting point. Doug is learning quite a bit about HR.

BP – Don't have an issue with 12 years. Struggling with benefit issue a great deal. To shift from 22 to 20 deductions doesn't sound like much but it does for people who have to budget and juggle around these payment periods. As salaried employees, why can't it be 26? Why not smooth out deductions? Why can't we do in 26 pay as it was originally sold? They're salaried employees. You're asking salaried employees to adjust for hourly employees' needs. You sold that it would be better to smooth out deductions and pay and now you're telling us the exact opposite. Big struggle. If had not had so many payroll issues over the past 3 years it wouldn't be so raw. I don't know that we ever agreed that referendum would be paid in 20 pays. Management just did it. I think

we have the right to negotiate it. Not sure that's a good rationale. I think referendum should be spread out more all year so they get it in their pocket. The longer you have it, that money is in your pocket not theirs.

BV – If not smoothed out at least could be linked to referendum so people are getting more money when getting deducted.

DWagner – I hear what you're saying. Wasn't here to help design system. The referendum increase covers the difference.

BP – It doesn't cover the increase for paras.

DWagner – You're right.

BP – Going to impact paras as well. Going to get a reduced referendum increase because increasing premiums at the same time.

BV – Worked hard to move minimum rate up and other rates as well. Understand what you've been through. I talk to Pat every year about payroll. Something has happened every year. Now that Tim and Doug are on the job we're not going to have this problem.

DWagner – Why don't have referendum spread out? They get the referendum before the summer. They get benefit during the year.

BV – Need to get correspondence out that they're getting the referendum on 8/26. Tim has that.

BP – Can't change deductions until we have something ratified.

DWagner – Payroll deduction wouldn't change until January. Nothing changes now.

BP – Makes it more difficult for people to choose which payroll deduction when they have to change until end of next year.

BV - \$331,000 on supplement – all funds?

Bp – Additional new money? Your number includes people already getting paid. That's not new money.

BV – How much is team leader?

BP - \$137,000. Yours says \$251,000. Calculated \$61739 is difference between reduced team leaders and paying them all the supplement which don't think will happen because will be hard to reach with ESE and PreK because we don't know many schools who may have those. May be wrong but will look.

BV – Benefit will be to special areas?

BP – Will reduce number of waivers asked for. Will be paid regular instead of reduced rate. I want to see how many people will complain because they don't have 5.

BV – If 2 PreK teachers at a school. That’s an individual school decision.

BP – There are a lot of small and mid-size schools. ESE not that many students that would have that many ESE teachers. Some may have none even though they have ESE students.

BV – Supplements outstanding. Reduced COLA. Addressed sub. Considering transfers. Curriculum ok but want retro. Payroll issues still going to discuss. Getting close.

BP – Yes. Wanna caucus or schedule another meeting?

BV – We’ll talk.

Caucus at 8:33 p.m. Reconvened at 9:56 p.m.

BV – Thank you for hanging in. I know it’s been a long day. Thank you for your proposal, and thank you for reducing COLA. We’re over our authorization right now but in interest of wrapping things up we offer \$150 COLA. It would go on every step of salary schedule. Supplements – could go with 2% across the board in addition to what we’ve already proposed to help us get to the finish line. In the future, we might want to add a little something to it so we don’t go so long without it. Would like to go to 20 deductions but open to discussing that. Know there’s frustration. Curriculum pay \$20 hour. You want retro we don’t. If you’ll give us help on transfers; it doesn’t have to be 4 weeks. So, I think we’ve accomplished a lot. If we can finish up and get ratified we can get raise and retro by October 7. Go to Board September 13th. We’ll be ready to roll.

BP – I don’t know whether it’s possible without having another conversation about longevity and how to do that. Not at same spot at COLA as you are. Will need to see resolution to para schedule issue before we reach agreement. Payroll deduction issue is one we don’t want to have conversations with employees again in ratification conversation. Not enough money to overcome that issue. Get the issue of referendum being added as part of whole design and softening of that but we’re already seeing market values changing. Don’t want to talk about how wonderful the referendum is when next year it doesn’t look very positive. Already started publishing reversal in valuations and market value. I could be wrong about where see things starting. As you’ve said, maybe we need to wait a year. Have a conversation next time to have conversation about payroll deduction. So many changes occurred already. Snowball effect of minor issues becoming major. Might be a good year to have minor issues. Appreciate movement on COLA. Will have more conversation. Not in place where we say we can agree. Definitely appreciate movement on several issues today. Think we made good movement but don’t think we are at a point to wrap up today. Couldn’t even tell you that a caucus would help at this point. Would encourage district to have conversation with folks like Jim Boyd who is advertising his desire to increase teacher pay. That’s an open door to say what you’ve done and it basically is nothing because it’s already been done and doesn’t make it available. Based on what you gave me there is nothing available other than to maintain unless I read the information wrong.

TB – 3-4-4-5 costs are part of that too.

BP – What is the distribution of expenditures between the general fund and TSIA?

TB – Combination of general fund and TSIA. What we committed to last year was more, that was more of an accelerated effort. It's a continuing cost.

BP – That's what I think they need to know.

TB – That's what we need to get data for. That's what no one is talking about.

BP – Maintenance is more than what you get from people retiring. Not much lag. So hopefully your groups can be having those conversations with legislators in addition to absurdities of formulas.

BV – Statewide issue; everyone is struggling. Sumter just got to \$47,500 and submitted to DOE and it got rejected because not formula-driven.

BP – Maybe some districts will have to take DOE to task for doing that. Not sure DOE has the authority. Maybe there needs to be more pushback. Not that I think DOE wouldn't overstep authority. I've seen that many times as well.

Could take short caucus but can't say we'll be ready to wrap up.

Caucus at 10:11 p.m. Meeting adjourned.