

July Agenda

Special Meeting of Trustees

A special meeting of the Board of Trustees of School District #35 has been scheduled for **Monday, July 23, 2007 3:30 pm** at the Gallatin Gateway School Library.

Call to Order

Public Comment- Non Agenda Items- Public Comment- Sign in sheet- (GGS Policy #1441)

Personnel

Hire- Certified Teaching Staff (GGS Policy #5120)

Hire- Classified Staff (GGS Policy #5120)

New Business

Gallatin Gateway Negotiating Committee and Gallatin Gateway Education Association MEA-MFT

- Master Agreement: Preamble through Article 32
- Master Agreement: Matrix/Salary Schedule – Appendix A

Adjournment

Open Session

DATE: July 23, 2007

TIME: 3:30 PM

PLACE: Gallatin Gateway School Library

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Erik Yager, Chair
Celia O'Connor
Nikki Robbins

MEMBERS

ABSENT: None

STAFF

PRESENT: Kim DeBruycker, Superintendent; Carrie Fisher, District Clerk; Deb Clark, Teacher; Nora Martin, Teacher; and Tom Vanderbeck, Teacher.

OTHERS

PRESENT: Ann Prescott

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:14 p.m. by Board Chair Erik Yager.

Board Chair Erik Yager explained the public comment process to be followed for addressing the Board in accordance with Gallatin Gateway School Policy #1441. He stated that prior to a vote the public may comment on agenda items. There will be time for public comment on non-agenda items. Public comment periods are not intended to be a question and answer session and may not include discussions of performance, evaluations or anything that may infringe on any person's right to privacy.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

PERSONNEL

A motion was made by Trustee Nikki Robbins to hire Bobbi Jo Gunderson, assistant cook for the 2007-2008 year beginning August 29, 2007 and ending June 4, 2008 at \$8.25/hour three days a week, pending acceptable background/fingerprint check and TB tests results. The motion was seconded by Trustee Celia O'Connor. For: O'Connor, Robbins, and Yager. Opposed: none. Motion passed unanimously.

Trustee Celia O'Connor made a motion to hire Lori Hicks, 1.0 FTE certified, pending adequate fingerprinting/background records and negative TB test for the 2007-2008 year. Trustee Nikki Robbins seconded the motion. For: O'Connor, Robbins, and Yager. Opposed: none. Motion passed unanimously.

Trustee Nikki Robbins made a motion to hire Amy Thomas, paraprofessional/classroom aide, at \$13.00/hour for the 2007-2008 year pending adequate fingerprinting/background check and TB test results. Trustee Celia O'Connor seconded the motion. For: O'Connor, Robbins, and Yager. Opposed: none. Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

The Board presented the Association members with a form to elect the accumulation and/or reimbursement of annual leave. Ms. Nora Martin stated that the association also created a form and presented it to the Board. She explained that the Association really tried to make their form more clear for teachers and for the business manager. Ms. DeBruycker

asked if the wording about paying leave out in June could still be included on the form. The association members agreed that leave would continue to be paid out in June. The Board and Association compared the two forms and determined that the District would use the one presented by the Association.

Mrs. Deb Clark stated that every year teachers are credited with 14 annual days of leave and noted that they could only accumulate 12. She wondered if it would be easier bookkeeping to allow teachers to accumulate all 14 days noting that it seemed like it was an accounting nightmare as it was right now. Ms. Martin noted that the teachers must take responsibility upon selves to track their used and unused days and then compare with Ken periodically. Ms. DeBruycker suggested that the District implement a process internally to give everyone a summary form of used and unused leave days at the beginning and end of each year. Ms. Martin welcomed the offer by the Superintendent. Mrs. Clark agreed and noted that it would also be more helpful to the business manager.

The Board presented wording to the Association for Article 8. The wording stated:

8.5 PIR Days

- a) *Seven (7) PIR (Pupil Instruction Related) days will be scheduled per school year. The Board shall establish an advisory committee to make recommendation to the School Board regarding the use and scheduling of PIR days. The committee shall include, but not be limited to, teachers, administrative personnel, and trustees. The majority of the committee shall be teachers.*

8.9 Early Release Days

- b) *A minimum of six (6) Early Release days will be scheduled per school year. On Early Release days, students will be released at 12:15. From 12:45-3:15 instruction related activities may include, but not be limited to, quarterly report card preparation, parent teacher conferencing, and administrative training.*

The Association agreed to the aforementioned wording changes to Article 8.

Ms. DeBruycker expressed concern regarding student supervision on early release days and asked if there could be some assistance on the Association members present to convey a sense of awareness on early release days to ensure there is adequate student supervision after the release of students at 12:15 pm. Ms. DeBruycker noted that on a couple of occasions the past couple of years teachers have left the building to have lunch together and there have been situations where the bus driver didn't arrive on time or did show up at all and one or two people were left at the school to manage remaining students alone. She stated that she would be willing to commence trainings on these days at a later time if teachers need to stay longer to ensure all students were picked up and supervised. She just asked that the Association members present verbally agree to be flexible on these days and convey it to the other teachers on staff. The Association members present stated that they would be flexible and they would assist in spreading the word.

Ms. Martin stated that the Association considered the Boards recommendation to define seniority within the agreement. Mrs. Celia O'Connor asked where the Association would like it included. Ms. Martin recommended Article 31 or Article 32. Mrs. Clark stated that it would be best to define before Article 7, which mentions seniority, but noted that everything would then have to be renumbered. Ms. Martin stated that the Association would propose defining seniority as follows:

Seniority is defined by the length of continuous service. Seniority is broken by resignation, termination or failure to report in a reasonable amount of time (as defined in Article 8.4) after a recall.

The Board and Association agreed to add the proposed definition of seniority to the agreement. Mrs. Clark noted that the Board and Association may want to change the wording in Article 7.2 states the definition of seniority s defined in Article 7. Mrs. Nikki Robbins asked if seniority covered tenure and non-tenure teachers. Mrs. Clark noted that the last sentence in Article 7.2 differentiates tenure and non-tenure seniority. Mr. Erik Yager noted that the last sentence in Article 7.2 did not make sense to him. Mr. Tom Vanderbeck agreed and stated that it would be his impression that with the aforementioned definition of seniority it would be a "last one in- first one out" procedure. Mr. Yager noted that it would be in the Boards best interest to RIF individuals based solely on seniority. Ms. Martin agreed and noted that she'd hate to see someone come back to the Board and say "You RIF'd me because my eyes are blue." Mr. Yager questioned whether the last sentence of the Article 7.2 stating "In the case of non-tenured teachers, reduction shall be by Board decision, dependent in part upon recommendation of the Principal." Ms. Martin stated that the current wording puts the burden on the Board to decide who among non-tenure staff would be RIF'd. The Board and the Association agreed to leave the last sentence in the agreement, but thought it should be reviewed at a later time. In addition, the Board and Association agreed to add an new article to the Agreement right before the current Article 7 to define seniority. The Board and Association also agreed to reference the new article number in the current Article 7.2 and agreed to shift all Article numbers in the contract as needed.

Ms. Martin stated that the Association drafted wording to be included in the agreement regarding the placement of documents in personnel files as recommended by the Board. Ms. Martin proposed the following wording on behalf of the Association:

No document may be placed in a personnel file that is not signed and dated by the author of said document.

The Board and Association agreed to the proposed wording and agreed to create a new article prior to Article 9-Evaluation Procedures entitled Personnel Files.

Ms. Martin stated that the Association would like to evaluate the Evaluation Procedures throughout the upcoming school year and make recommendations for improvement during the next round of negotiations. The Board agreed- no changes will be made to the evaluation process for the 2007-2008 school year.

Ms. Martin stated that the Association reviewed the Board's proposal regarding reducing the number of steps in each lane as presented at the July 16, 2007 meeting. Ms. Martin stated that the Association would agree if the Board compressed the salary in each lane so that the current salary for the bottom of the lane remained the same, thus increasing/adjusting each step in between the bottom and top. In essence, Ms. Martin explained that the Association would like the current salary at the bottom to remain the same, for instance in lane one the last step is 12 years and she'd like to see the same salary if shorten to 10 years in the step for 10 years. Mrs. Clark used Ophir School as an example, noting that they have 10 steps in lane one, but the salary is comparable to where Gallatin Gateway School's current step 12 salary. Mrs. Robbins clarified that the association wants to make the step 10 salary equal to the current step 12 salary. Mr. Yager also clarified that the base would remain the same in each lane, but that the Association was proposing larger steps in between if the number of steps were lessened. The Board stated that they would need to research financial implications for the District with the business manager before agreeing to the Association's proposal.

Ms. Martin stated that the Association would not agree at this time to starting new teachers on the salary schedule at a BA+3 because it discourages teachers from look at Gallatin Gateway School as a place for a career. She noted that the Association felt that many would stay for three years and leave and also noted that new teachers need a salary step each year for encouragement. Mr. Erik Yager asked if the Association really thought teachers would come for first three years and leave if they were started at the BA+3. Ms. Martin stated that the Association felt it discouraged them from staying at Gallatin Gateway School. Mrs. Clark noted that if the Board was trying to lure new teachers in it would be more effective to have a strong base and keep them moving up each year. Ms. DeBruycker noted that the Board was trying to consider other options that may be more cost effective to the District than increasing the entire salary matrix.

Board Chair Erik Yager called for a recess at 5:15 pm. The meeting resumed at 5:45 pm.

The Board proposed the following package to the Association:

- 4% increase to salary schedule
- Subtract one step from the first five lanes without compression because the Board felt that compression further removes motivation for teachers to move over a lane
- Leave the total number of days accumulated alone, but the Board would consider adding proportional numbers if the same was removed from the number allotted each year. For example, if the associaton wants to increase the number of days accumulated two days they would lessen the number days that could be accumulated each year by a proportional number.

Ms. Martin stated that the Association members present did not have enough experience with the number of leave days other schools had and until they could collect more information, she recommended that they leave this item alone until the next bargaining year.

Ms. Martin questioned the Board's position on the Association's proposal to the BA+3 recommendations. Mr. Yager stated that the Board agrees with the Association and would follow their recommendation.

Mrs. O'Connor asked the Association if they would also agree to adding the word "paternity" to the title of Article 15. The Association agreed.

Mr. Yager noted that in past years there have been different practices implemented for those individuals that are off of the salary schedule and that he recommended the Board and Association address the issue and discuss wording. Ms. Clark recommended using the same wording that was on the last contract, which stated: "D.M. is grandfathered into the old matrix this year and will receive a step in 2007-2008 and the percentage adjustment according to the agreement. (This salary will be based on the cell rate of 1.905 of the base salary). This grandfather provision does not apply to any other current or future staff of the Gallatin Gateway Public Schools. The intent of this language is to apply the same increase in pay to this employee as is applied to other employees and/or the salary schedule in the future unless the parties agree otherwise. This provision is subject to negotiations in all successor agreements so long as this condition exists."

Mrs. Nikki Robbins asked the Association members if they felt cutting the last step in the first five lanes was enough to motivate people to move over quicker. Mrs. Martin stated that she felt it was important for the Association and Board

to consider what the optimal teacher looks like—the primary goal is to employ good teachers and keep good teachers—need to look at the big picture of what motivates people and keeps them in the teaching profession. Mr. Yager commented that there were probably several things that motivated and retained teachers and he noted that it probably wasn't just money.

Board Chair Erik Yager called for a recess at 6:00 pm. The meeting resumed at 7:08 pm.

Ms. Martin stated that the Association was impressed with the Board's desire to support teachers and noted that it was very exciting that the Board was looking at the big picture. She noted that the base salary has historically been based on the average of the base salaries of Ophir, Monforton, LaMotte and Anderson because they are of similar size and caliber of Gallatin Gateway School. She further explained that the average base of these schools is currently \$27,333 and if the Board accepted the Association's proposal of 6% base salary increase it would only be \$26,083.09. Ms. Martin also commented that the Association would like the Board to reconsider their offer for the base salary increase in an effort to show the Gallatin Gateway School staff how much they are valued and prove the best educational program for the students of Gallatin Gateway School. Mr. Yager questioned if the other school districts that the Association was referring to incurred similar costs and were operating under similar budgets. Mrs. Robbins noted that the Gallatin Gateway School may offer a lower base salary, but the number of annual leave days allotted is higher than most other Districts. Ms. Martin stated that she believed Monforton teachers could accumulate 100 days and were allotted 12 annual days each year, so there were some differences because Gallatin Gateway School can accumulate less days. Ms. Nora also noted that it would be in the best interest of the District if base salaries were increased in an effort to gain on other schools each year rather than catching up all at once. Mrs. Robbins noted that even though Gallatin Gateway School has a lower base there are other benefits to teachers such as a 45 minute duty-free lunch—she asked if the Association was willing to negotiate fewer minutes in an effort to catch up in the area of salaries. Mr. Vanderbeck asked how the duty-free lunch was tied to salaries. Ms. DeBruycker noted that decreasing the number of minutes in a duty-free lunch could lower costs in other areas, thus freeing up money for a higher salary increase.

Board Chair Erik Yager called for a recess at 7:32 pm. The meeting resumed at 7:40 pm.

Mrs. O'Connor noted that Gallatin Gateway School is much larger than LaMotte and Anderson and Monforton budgets are much larger, thus leaving Ophir as the District that is most comparable to Gallatin Gateway. However, Mrs. O'Connor noted that Ophir has other funding sources such as their endowment fund that allow for salary increases and other benefits to teachers. The Board proposed a 5% increase in the base salary. Mrs. Robbins stated that the Board felt it would still like to remove the last step of the first five lanes in an effort to motivate the current staff to move over and it does not currently adversely affect anyone. She also noted that with a 5% increase in the base salary Gallatin Gateway School will be within \$300 of Ophir School's base salary and noted that at a certain point the Association will need to consider getting rid of the duty free lunch period. Mr. Yager noted that the duty-free lunch period is a benefit due to the lagging salaries, but as the District catches up the Board and Association need to balance benefits and salaries.

Board Chair Erik Yager called for a recess at 7:45 pm. The meeting resumed at 7:53 pm.

Ms. Martin stated that the Association members present felt that the current bargaining process has been very rewarding and felt that the Board's offer was fair. She stated that the Association would like to accept the Board's proposal for a 5% base salary increase contingent on approval of Association members. Mr. Yager asked the Association what they would like to do about individuals that are currently off of the matrix. Mrs. Clark recommended that the individual receive the increase on base, stay in the same lane, but not receive a step increase. Ms. DeBruycker stated that recommendation would mean that the individual currently off of the matrix would have a salary of \$49,219. Mrs. O'Connor stated that since the Board could not individually negotiate salaries and wondered what the other Association members present felt about Mrs. Clark's recommendation. Ms. Martin stated that she felt it was fair and asked if the wording at the bottom of the salary schedule would need to be changed to reflect the recommendation. Ms. DeBruycker clarified that the recommendation was to receive the 5% adjustment but not a step adjustment and stated that the only thing that would need to be taken out is the wording "a step in 2007-2008 and" so that the first sentence reads: "D.M. is grandfathered into the old matrix this year and will receive the percentage adjustment according to the agreement. (This salary will be based on the cell rate of 1.905 of the base salary)." Mrs. Clark clarified that in order to calculate the salary for this individual one would take the base and multiply it by 1.905.

Mrs. DeBruycker asked if the Association would consider rounding all figures in the matrix to the nearest dollar in an effort to simplify. The Association agreed to the proposal to round all figures in the matrix to the nearest dollar.

Mr. Yager asked if there were any other things that needed to be discussed before finalizing the agreement for the 2007-2008 year. Ms. Nora offered to make changes to the agreement and distribute it to the Board and Association members

present for review. Mr. Yager stated that the next Board meeting was on Monday, August 6 and that if it wasn't already approved by the Board before then he'd like to ensure that the agreement is finalized at that meeting. Ms. Martin stated that she would be out of town the following week, but could make changes and email early the next week. Ms. DeBruycker stated that she would notify the business manager of agreements and allow him to make budget adjustments for the Board's approval on August 6, 2007 at 7pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Erik Yager, Board Chair

Carrie Fisher, District Clerk