

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOMERSET
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Special Session Minutes
April 16, 2012

Board President Tim Witzmann called the meeting to order at 6.02 p.m., stating the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Employee Handbook.

Roll Call was taken. Board members present were Tim Witzmann, Brian Moulton, Catherine Cranston, Robert Gunther, Mike Connor, and Marie Colbeth. Marin Hansch arrived later.

Moulton moved, with second by Colbeth, to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

Witzmann turned the meeting over to Superintendent Randy Rosburg. Rosburg explained tonight's Employee Handbook (EH) as presented does not include the opt out, compensation plan or professional growth language. He stated the Board may insert options at this meeting and approve them at the 7:00 p.m. regular board meeting tonight. Rosburg explained if the board was not ready to make decisions on some of these pieces, they can do so without inserting the language at this time.

Witzmann stated the EH is replacing the majority of school employee contracts as stated by state guidelines, indicating the process has been reviewed and discussed nearly every Monday evening since October, 2011 by the Human Resources Committee with updates each month to the full Board. He also added that the HR Committee wanted to bring the three language pieces to the full board for consideration.

Rosburg reviewed the Opt Out language, stating it has been in place prior to his employment 20 years ago. He said the purpose of the opt out was to give families in the district the option to take health care or to receive compensation if they opted out of the health care. The discussion in the HR Committee has been that district employee spouses are receiving both the opt out and health care. Rosburg stated the board could review five different choices for a cost savings measure dealing with the health care and opt out for employed district spouses. Rosburg stated he sent an inquiry to the seven employed couples asking them for their opinion on the options. He heard back from five of the seven couple, who thought Option #3 worked well for them, though the decision was up to the Board.

Witzmann asked for shared thoughts from the Board. Some member said that, though they were appreciative of the options and the dedication of the teachers, the \$300,000 budget deficit was a concern and thought that Option 5 was a better choice. Other board members stated that teachers had to take cuts in pay last year and did not feel they should take yet another cut in their benefits. Some members felt this would be a "double whammy" for those families that have been asked to contribute more to health care and WRS, and then asked to take another hit. Witzmann stated that, although the administrative team has done has done some creative things to help balance the budget, district options are starting to decrease.

Witzmann asked teachers in the audience how they felt about not having the opt out available. Some of the teachers felt that married employees were being singled out, stating the opt out was an incentive to stay in the district for some of them. Some teachers felt that, since it was a lower amount then the actual health care insurance coverage, the district is saving money by some employees not participating in health

care. Some teachers wondered if this was ever an issue before and asked if this issue would be asked during employee interviews.

Cranston made a recommendation to go with Opt Out Option 3. The consensus of the board members was unanimous.

Rosburg then moved to the language for Professional Growth, and summarized those areas. Stating there were three areas here for board consideration. He also stated Graduate Credit cannot be part of base wage calculation according to WRC. Rosburg noted the third item for consideration is what the district's newer teachers have been asking for, which allows them to be compensated for completed Professional Development Plans (PDP's). Witzmann indicated that he has heard overwhelmingly about teachers not being able to afford graduate credits, and needing incentive for teachers to be able to pay for their credits. He added the language is not new, but are options to be able to make a decision. Cranston asked Rosburg how a teacher that has a Master's Degree would fall in to the options. Rosburg stated they would need to be pre-approved by the Superintendent as is current practice. RR said Item B on Page four shows that dollar amount is \$1,000 for every credit. BOE supports keeping 3.12 and adding option 3.03, which support the conversation the HR Committee members had, and is also comparable to other area school districts.

Rosburg then summarized the employee compensation piece, stating this is the language coming out of ACT 10 and WRC, section 7. Rosburg added the leadership piece is basically included, except for compensation for a chair person of a committee. He also noted that the bargaining topics have not been put on the table as that has yet to be discussed, and is not a part of this session. Witzmann stated that, since steps and lanes are no longer an option, the HR Committee tried to incorporate and review different models. Gunther is concerned that the CPI is higher by 1% than what they have discussed in previous meetings. Rosburg indicated the WRC is talking about establishing the CPI 180 days prior. Witzmann wondered if there was any clarification on some of the WRC rulings? Rosburg indicated the district had not yet heard anything, but that this proposal allows the district to maintain this compensation language. If the WRC changes the language, then the district will need to change their language as well.

Witzmann asked if Board members supported those pieces in Section 7? All members present stated, "yes." The Board agrees on to include Section 7 in the professional compensation plan.

Cranston moved, with second by Hansch, to adjourn 6:50 p.m.

Tim Witzmann, President

Brian Moulton, Vice-President