

Nashua School Board Regular Meeting
Monday, February 22, 2016
Nashua School Library
6:00 PM

1. Call to Order: Board Chair Dale Pugh called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Roll call: Joe Laumeyer, Cole Sibley, Greg Nybakken, Joel Novak, Dale Pugh, Linda Parpart. Also in attendance were Mrs. Cole, Ms. Flint, Ms. Hoeksema, Mrs. Hoyer, Ms. Walls, Mrs. Wersal, and Mrs. Peterson.
3. Public Comment: none
4. **Determine Negotiations Strategy:**

Dale stated that board members received an email on February 4th from the Nashua Education Association giving notice of intent to negotiate. The hard copy letter was received in the office on February 8th. Dale read section 19.2 Renewal and Reopening of Agreement from the 2015-16 Master Agreement:

“Said Agreement will automatically be renewed and will continue in force and effect for additional periods of one year unless the Association gives notice to the Board or the Board gives notice to the Association, not later than January 20, prior to the aforesaid expiration date or any anniversary thereof, of its desire to negotiate and start negotiations over the terms of these provisions within 20 days.”

Since notification was dated February 4th, the January 20th deadline was missed. District legal counsel was consulted as to how to handle this situation. They strongly recommended the board not enter into negotiations due to the missed deadline.

Dale stated there are several options; the board can choose to open the agreement in its entirety, the board can use Memorandums of Understanding to agree to negotiate only certain areas, or the board can choose not to negotiate.

Joel stated that he understands the deadline was missed and didn't realize there was another process of only looking at particular areas. He feels it would be detrimental to both sides not to at least look at certain areas. He has some specific items but left his notes at home. Dale said we will come back to him while he thinks about it.

Greg said his problem with only opening some parts of the agreement is that it is not truly collective bargaining. He is concerned about the teacher evaluation section needing changes.

Cole stated that this is a difficult situation. His initial reaction was to keep it closed but has been rethinking and doesn't have a problem with opening the agreement. He has no particular items for negotiating other than maybe the extracurricular stipends since he is not sure we got that right last year. He could be swayed either way, but thinks in the long-term, it is best to open the agreement.

Joe said his first thought is that two wrongs don't make a right. There are two new co-chairs for the NEA who are learning. He doesn't feel it is right to not have a little forgiveness in our heart and compassion for them since they are learning. If we do open the agreement, he wants to make it known that this will never happen again and this is not setting a precedence. Items he would like to address are the elementary lunch duty language from the recent MOU, the evaluation section, updates to language in section 5.5 Association Use of School Equipment to eliminate mention of items no longer used, and extracurricular stipends.

Joel said the discussion reminded him of his items for negotiations which include the evaluation section, extracurricular stipends, and elementary lunch duty.

Dale stated that if we decide to open the agreement, there will be language in the response to the NEA stating that this does not set a precedence. His term on the board is up in May, therefore, he will not be involved in negotiations since his future on the board is unknown. He feels we should not open the agreement, and also feels that the evaluation tool does not belong as part of the agreement.

Joe asked if there are items that were mentioned, aside from salary, that really require negotiation.

Cole doesn't necessarily see the need to negotiate these items, but also feels we should recognize the teachers union.

Greg stated that if you care about your employees, you want to work with them. He asked if we would be having this meeting if the NEA had not missed the deadline. Dale answered no, we would have entered into negotiations. Greg reiterated that if we only open the agreement for a few specific items, that is not collective bargaining. If only bargaining for money, it is not worth opening the agreement since we only have what we have.

Dale asked for comments from the audience.

Mrs. Peterson stated that she kind of takes responsibility for this. When Mrs. Hoyer asked her when she should send the letter, Mrs. Peterson replied that she did not know, but she usually sent it in December for review at the January board meeting.

Ms. Walls stated that there is a morale issue in the school. This was an oversight, not intentional. This discussion is saying that morale doesn't matter. This mistake will compromise how far we have come in the past couple of months and will not help morale.

Ms. Hoeksema pointed out that morale isn't just about pay. There are other things inside the contract that they would like to have a say about. Shutting it down is not good for morale. There is an incredible morale issue and allowing employees to have a say in their benefits and what goes on in the building is important.

Dale stated that the board could have simply sent a letter saying they were not going to negotiate. It is not the intent of the board to shut the teachers down; we wouldn't be here if that was the case.

Ms. Walls stated that opening the agreement shows good faith. But only looking at part says sorry, you have no say. This will impact morale.

Ms. Flint understands that bargaining is not everyone's favorite thing. Based on board comments, there seems to be a perception that the NEA will take advantage if the agreement is opened. That is not the NEA's intent. If you go into the situation expecting to get frustrated, you will get frustrated.

Ms. Walls said that it is encouraging confrontation if we are only allowed to discuss certain things. If you go into this thinking it will be confrontational, then it will be confrontational. If you go in thinking this will benefit the teachers, the district, and everyone involved, that will be better.

Mrs. Hoyer stated that she takes full responsibility for the oversight. When she realized her mistake, she asked the NEA members what they thought and it was agreed to send the letter anyway. It has been a rough year for everybody, not just the board. She feels like the past couple of months we have been moving forward, but maybe not so much. She understands that the board is under no obligation to negotiate.

Motion by Joe to, as a sign of good faith and good will, negotiate with the NEA and open the agreement in its entirety.

Second by Joel.

Vote: 4 -1 Passed,
with Dale voting No

Dale stated that since the agreement is being opened for negotiations, we need to discuss that the board wants to negotiate. The following items were identified:

- Section 5.5 – update wording to remove obsolete items.

- Section 10.3 – Need clarification as to whether days are business or calendar days. Agreed that days should be business days and 7 days should be changed to 10 days. Also look at changing Step 1 to be superintendent since there is no other supervisor for teachers.
- Section 11 – align to new evaluation tool.
- Section 14.1 – incorporate elementary lunch duty language from recent MOU.
- Section 17.1 – there is an MOU for an additional health insurance contribution. This will need to be looked at once budget is known.

The meeting was recessed for a break at 7:08.

The meeting resumed at 7:16.

Dale asked for volunteers for the negotiations committee. Greg and Joel volunteered and Joe will serve as an alternate. There was discussion with NEA members present and a meeting was set for February 25, 2016, at 5:00 p.m.

5. Adjournment:

Motion by Cole to adjourn the meeting.

Second by Joe.

Vote: 5 - 0 Passed

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Chairman

Clerk

Date: _____