

Ludlow & Union #39 Joint School Boards
Special Meeting
Thursday, May 10, 2007
7:00 p.m.
Ludlow Elementary School
Multi-purpose Room

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Present:

LES Board:	Beth Merrill, Angie Benson-Ciufo, Sue Barton
U39 Board:	Diana Chimbolo, Randy Bixby, Peter Girouard, Linda Guerrero
Staff:	Karen Trimboli, Jim Frail, Edie Lou Cole, Mike Tuomisto, Steve DeLisle
Public:	Ralph Pace

Ms. Merrill called the meeting to order at 7:01p.m.

II. MINUTES: November 14, 2006, Special Meeting
November 29, 2006, Special Meeting
December 11, 2006, Special Meeting
January 11, 2007, Special Meeting

Ms. Benson-Ciufo **moved** to have the LES board approve the minutes as presented. There was discussion about the boards approving minutes from joint meetings in a more timely manner. There were suggestions that the minutes could be emailed to members who could return corrections and then present a final draft for formal approval, or that the board could approve minutes from the previous meeting at each special meeting, or that the individual boards could tentatively approve the minutes as presented at their regular meetings and then compare corrections with a final approval at the joint board meetings. The board consensus was to approve the minutes of the previous meeting at each joint meeting.

The board made the following corrections: On the minutes of December 11, 2006, add Dave Slivka to the list of U39 members present; Add Section IV. Adjournment: to read "Mr. Slivka moved to have the U39 board adjourn. Mr. Pace seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Ms. Merrill moved to have the LES board adjourn and the motion carried unanimously. The boards adjourned at 8:20 p.m."

Ms. Benson-Ciufo **amended** her motion to be to have the LES board approve the minutes as corrected. Her motion carried unanimously. Ms. Chimbolo **moved** to have the U39 board approve the minutes as corrected. Mr. Bixby seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

III. BUSINESS ITEMS:

A. Joint Contracts

There was discussion that the boards had requested an updated job description for the computer tech position. It was clarified that the job description is included in the contract for the position. Ms. Cole reported that the computer tech position is a 50/50 split between the schools and Mr. DeLisle does his best to split his work evenly between the schools. Ms. Trimboli recommended that the split remain 50/50. Ms. Trimboli reported that she and Mr. Frail had discussed the computer tech contract and stated that they recommended a 4% salary increase and bring the health insurance premium coverage to 92% with the employee paying 8% of the premiums. It was noted that the current contract has a 95% premium coverage. There was discussion that the 4% salary increase recommendation was due in part to the decreased health insurance premium coverage. There was discussion that the last raise Mr. DeLisle received was at the start of the current contract.

There was discussion about the salary increase's effect on the budget. Ms. Merrill suggested tabling the discussion while Ms. Cole could calculate the effects on the budget

B. Maintenance Splits

Ms. Cole explained that the formula for calculating the maintenance splits is based on square footage and building usage. She reported that the split is currently 55% LES and 45% U39, noting that U39 pays for all the maintenance of the high school building. There was discussion about the LES building using more electricity due to the gym lights, the kitchen, multiple hot water heaters, and an older heating system. There was discussion that the splits are for salaries and benefits, rubbish removal, electricity, fuel, building and grounds repairs and maintenance, and water/sewer usage. It was noted that the supplies are split based on ADM, the schools each pay their own phone bills, the nurse is a 50/50 split and the crossing guard is split based on a modified ADM formula.

There was discussion about gym usage and about various electrical upgrades done in the past at both schools. Ms. Barton requested the formula used to calculate the splits be presented to the boards in writing so the members could review it.

There was discussion about possibly splitting the custodial staff, such as 2 employed by LES and 2 employed by U39 and a split of Mr. Tuomisto's contract. There was discussion that the LES budget looks inflated since LES holds the contracts and U39 reimburses LES for its portion of the services and expenses. It was noted that if the boards changed the contracts as suggested, they would need to consult an attorney and change the master agreement through negotiation. It was also noted that the current contract is through school year 2008-2009. In addition, to more fairly split the schools' expenses, some of the custodial staff may have to be shifted between schools. It was noted that even if the boards were to successfully end the custodial staff splits by employing only those custodians that worked in their buildings, several things would still need to be split using Ms. Cole's formula.

C. Shared Position Job Descriptions

It was noted that the job descriptions were included in the packets for board review since both boards use the services of those employees, however all of them are employed under the LES master contract, but the LES board wanted to have some input from the U39 board.

D. Joint Contracts (continued)

Ms. Cole reported that Ms. Trimboli's salary/benefit recommendations for Mr. DeLisle would have a net increase of \$401.50 on each school's budget. She explained that the 4% increase would be \$1782 and the savings on the health insurance would be \$356 and there was \$623 budgeted for his salary increase, which leaves \$803 more than the budgeted amount. When split between the schools, that reflects an amount of \$401.50 over budget.

Ms. Trimboli then recommended that Mr. Tuomisto also receive a 4% salary increase and have 92% health insurance premium coverage (down from 95%). It was noted that since his contract is held by LES (since LES owns the property), any changes to the contract would have to be approved by the LES board, however those changes would also affect the U39 budget due to reimbursements. Therefore the LES board wanted input from the U39 board. There was discussion again about the 4% salary increase recommendation being partially due to the reduced insurance premium coverage.

There was discussion about the board not having the necessary documentation (with figures and calculations) to make informed decisions. Ms. Barton noted that if the board can't have that documentation that they shouldn't be holding a meeting. Ms. Barton **moved** to have sufficient documentation (with figures and calculations) for any financial business presented to LES board members at least 1 week prior to any LES meeting at which such financial business is to be conducted. It was noted that the business office has been extremely short-handed. Ms. Barton **amended** her motion to have sufficient documentation (with figures and calculations) for any financial business presented to LES board members in their packets prior to any LES meeting at which such financial business is to be conducted. Her motion carried with a vote of 2 in favor and 1 opposed.

Ms. Cole reported that Ms. Trimboli's salary/benefit recommendation for Mr. Tuomisto would have a net increase of \$107 on each school's budget. She explained that the 4% increase would be \$1629 and the savings on the health insurance would be \$356 and there was \$1059 budgeted for his salary increase, which leaves \$214 more than the budgeted amount. When split between the schools, that reflects an amount of \$107 over budget.

There was discussion about what expenses in the budget could be reduced to cover these increases. Ms. Cole noted that she felt confident that she could adjust some expenses to accommodate the increases.

Ms. Benson-Ciufo **moved** to have the joint board enter executive session to discuss personnel and evaluation. Ms. Chimbolo seconded and the motion carried unanimously. The joint board entered executive session at 8:05 p.m.

The board returned from executive session at 8:17 p.m. Ms. Merrill reported that the consensus of the boards was to not make any decisions on the contracts at this meeting. However they will schedule a meeting for June 7, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. before the RWSU meeting to make these decisions. She requested that Ms. Cole present documentation with salary increase calculations and their effect on the budgets of the schools, along with updated joint contracts to the boards prior to the meeting. It was noted that the board would need a copy of Mr. DeLisle's contract since it includes his job description. It was also suggested to have some research on individual raises of non-union contracts in the past as well as information about salaries for similar positions in other area school districts. It was noted that the board's concerns did not relate to job performance, only to the effects on the budget, including the associated accounting questions.

It was noted that the most recently updated job descriptions will be brought back to the next LES meeting for finalized updates and approval. It was also suggested that, once approved, the board should add revision/approval dates.

E. Security Upgrades

There was discussion about the Labor & Industry Board's recommendation that the schools install a new voice evacuation system. Ms. Trimboli reported that her primary security concern is her ability to lockdown the building with the push of a button, since she wouldn't be able to reach all of the doors quickly enough in a lockdown emergency. Mr. Frail suggested that since the board has now identified some of the security issues as deficient, the school may now be held liable for the updates.

There was discussion about the schools not receiving the state aid requested for the upgrades. Ms. Cole reported that the process was moving forward with efficiency, to the point where she was slated to speak with the bond attorney. When she returned from her vacation, she found that the application for state aid had been denied. There was discussion that the denial may have been due to a moratorium on new capital construction aid and that the state is already behind on such aid payments. It was also noted that this project was fairly small in scale and the state re-prioritizes its aid applications annually. There was discussion that the boards would like the principals' recommendations on what is absolutely necessary.

There was discussion about there is no homeland security grant money available for this project, as was reported by the security consultant the schools hired. It was also noted that there is no appeal process for the denial. There was discussion about the boards' response to the voters since the state aid was anticipated (and stated as such on the ballots). Mr. DeLisle suggested that it would be best to do a partial job completely rather than the full job partially. He also suggested "piggy backing" a security network on top of the existing network. The boards requested that he present them with new recommendations and estimates.

Ms. Barton suggested that the supervisory union try to contact the Commissioner regarding the denial to try to appeal the decision. Ms. Cole indicated that the decision is not open to appeal. Ms. Barton requested a copy of the letter for her review.

It was noted that both Mr. DeLisle and Mr. Tuomisto should present their updated recommendations and estimates to the board for review at the next regular meeting.

F. Crisis Response Team

Ms. Merrill reported that there is some grant money available through homeland security to help fund crisis response teams, particularly to schools that have had security issues, such as multiple bomb threats. There was discussion that Ms. Trimboli and Mr. Frail will be meeting with Ron Bixby and others to go over the schools' crisis plans. They will also schedule drills for the next school year.

G. Survey Follow Up

Ms. Merrill reported that there is still a lot of work to be done regarding the survey results and that they will be discussing some of the options with the Mt. Holly board.

H. Committees

Ms. Merrill reported that the superintendent search committee is still working with the candidates. There will be a committee meeting on May 14, 2007 to discuss reference checks and make recommendations for the board to consider. She stated the board would hold its interviews at a special meeting on May 16, 2007 at 5:30.

Ms. Merrill also reported that the teacher negotiations committee is still working toward a mutually-agreeable contract. There was discussion about the progress of the committee, however the committee members would not say how far along the negotiations are at this point. It was noted that the committee has guide-lines to not discuss negotiation progress in open session until the work is complete.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Girouard **moved** to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. Ms. Guerrero seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Wilson
Board Recording Secretary