

MINUTES

Date: March 20, 2012

www.bweari.org

The meeting was called to order at 4pm. in room 205 at Guiteras School. A quorum was established.

ATTENDANCE: Jen Saarinen, Linda Bruno, Melissa Bernard, T.J. DelSanto, Al Rezendes, Keri Sloat, Greg Arruda, Susan Wiegand, Brian Leger, Jay Seals, Susan Cardente, Kate Barry, Robin Mello, Maria Camara, Mike DiRuzzo, Mike McGee, Wayne Lima, Brian Chidester, Dayna Achilli

Grievance Report:

High School & Middle School-

1. No news to report

Elementary-

1. Withdrawn grievance regarding temperature has been finalized.

New Business:

➤ **Pension Update-**

- Jen S. presented building reps with a summary sheet about the new pension system.
- Visit www.treasury.ri.gov to see the most up-to-date info on the Rhode Island Retirement Security Act, including a retirement age calculator and all info presented at the recent pension workshops.
- NOTE: When viewing the retirement info, make sure you are viewing the data for "teachers."
- FAQ section available for clarification.
- Some of the RIRSA is being challenged, but a decision is not anticipated anytime soon.
- Minimum age of retirement is dependent on years of service credit.
- Schedule A teachers will see a 1% change in the benefit accrual rate as of July 2012.
- Buying years of service have become very expensive; cost continues to change.
- NEARI is in the process of setting up regional meetings to clarify years of service information.

➤ **Contract Negotiations-**

- Jen S. shared the most recent info regarding where we stand with the contract.
- Contract proposal voted down by membership largely due to BEP issues and language regarding seniority, job fair, transfers, etc.
- Arbitrator will not hear articles based on BEP since it is currently being challenged (Portsmouth case). A decision in this case will dictate how our language will be written.
- We are moving towards a narrowed arbitration on discrepancies concerning HSA/HDP and non-tax dependent language.
- Provisions for members who fall into this category with health care will be dealt with in arbitration.

➤ **Action Group-**

- Anyone is welcome to join the next meeting on March 27th at 4pm at KMS in Jen's room.
- John L. will be there to answer any questions.

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- Group will be discussing BWEA's next steps.

➤ **BWEA Political Action Committee-**

- Jen S. presented reps. with possibly creating a BWEA P.A.C. to help in upcoming elections. BWEA has never had a P.A.C.

Motion: Al R. moved to form a BWEA political action committee. Seconded by Greg A.

Discussion:

- P.A.C money can be used to support teacher friendly candidates especially since there are SEVERAL school committee openings this year.
- Jen believes deductions for a P.A.C must be separate from the dues. That info can be clarified at a later time.
- Reps. questioned the charge of the committee and the amount members would be asked to contribute.
- Jen S. believes Tiverton's P.A.C asks for less than \$5 a year.
- A one-time yearly contribution may be possible.
- Wayne L. questioned if members could elect to contribute or if it would be mandatory.
- Other local unions and NEARI have members provide a written request to have contribution returned. BWEA could follow that protocol.

Motion Carried

Old Business:

➤ **Children's Fund-**

- Jen S. reported that \$300 was raised by the district. Thanks to those who contributed!
- Discussion centered on structuring the collection in a more organized fashion for next year in order to raise more money.

➤ **Concerns with the Director of Pupil Personnel Services-**

- Member concerns NEED to be documented.
- If there is a pattern of behavior that is in question, in order for anything to be done, there needs to be some form of documentation by anyone involved or a witness.
- One rep said members are afraid to come forward in fear of retaliation.
- Reps offered a solution of having a letter submitted as part of a group (i.e. *5 out of the 10 special education teachers at school XYZ report the following...*) or get a department to write the concern as a whole.
- If a member of administration was/ is present when this behavior occurs, that info should also be documented.
- Jen S. will need any letters to her prior to April 3rd and she will submit to Superintendent.

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Building Issues:

- Hugh Cole-
 - Susan W. was approached with a concern regarding PD day. People feel it is more curriculum writing than professional development.
 - Many ELED teachers are taken out of their classrooms during the school day when that could be accomplished instead on the allotted PD Day.
 - Some members are asking for a clarified definition of PD.
 - Some teachers felt the agenda for the day was not mutually agreed upon. However, some value the time given for curriculum.
 - Jen S. said she would communicate the discontent on the structure of the day with the Superintendent.
 - Other schools also voiced concerns that the PD elected for the teachers is not always focusing on the needs of our classrooms and that not all teachers and buildings have mutually agreed upon options.

➤ **Reports:**

- President – REMINDER – Delegate Meeting!
- Treasurer-
 - Looking for members to join the Scholarship Committee! Anyone can join – commitment takes very little time; no meetings!! Committee completes a blind selection electronically. Please email T.J. if you are interested or would like more info.
 - Application for students available on BWEA and MHHS websites. Deadline is April 13th.

Motion moved by Al R. to adjourn. **Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 5:50pm

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Bernard