

Master Contract Negotiations Minutes

March 23, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Those in attendance:

County's Negotiation Team:

- Joshua Groat – Chief Negotiator/Employee & Labor Relations Manager
- Heather Kvokov – HR Generalist
- Sara Erb – HR Generalist
- Randy Bischoff – Chief Deputy Auditor
- Tony Hall – Purchasing Manager
- Patricia Cruz – Administrative Assistant 3/County's Note taker

Union's Negotiation Team:

- Gordon Smith – Chief Negotiator/Council 2 Representative
- Brian Rheingans – Local 1135 President
- Patty Bonner – Local 1135
- Mindy Ensign – Local 1553
- Cindy Thompson – Local 1553
- Nathan Lawless – Local 1553 (via Zoom)
- Sami Micke – Local 492-FC
- Tiffany Kinnick – Local 492-SP President
- Kelly Matthews – Local 492-SP (via Zoom)
- Heidi Bulkley – Local 492-J President
- Jaclyn Geurin – Local 1553
- Shaena Kimbel – Local 492 SP
- Jonathan Holden – Local 1135

Meeting called to order 11:04am

- GS: still object to posting minutes and proposals... request that we stop.
- JG: County will continue its current practice of posting both minutes and proposals.
- GS: passed out union's amended proposals
- GS: so you provided us with amended proposals and we have our response. So to your response to ours there were a few that were missing,
- JG: because we had responded to some of yours previous
- GS: so we added them back in to keep them whole

Prop #3- Medical benefits- County may offer additional plans during term of CBA, including retiree medical, but union wants assurance existing plans will not change.

Prop #8- bereavement... proposed adding domestic partner (in addition to spouse), under 10 day leave

Prop #10- observe Juneteenth as holiday, or an additional personal holiday- up to each local to determine how/when they want to observe it.

Prop #14- withdraw

Prop #16- holidays... “equivalent hours of pay as regular scheduled shift”

- Tony: can you clarify that you are withdrawing all of 14
- GS: yes that is correct

In response to County’s amended economic proposals... not much has changed since last written response. (passed out union’s response to specific items). Stand by 3/16 written response on all other items.

County econ prop #5- 15.6- appreciate County’s movement, but still need it to be more. Going from 1-2 is movement but we still need it to be 4

County econ prop #22- counter proposal... \$600 allowance every three years (vs. annual reimbursement)

22.7.1- could be a TA if County agrees to leave Assessor’s agreement status quo

- GS: Segway into your non-economic proposals – I sent you the responses last night
- JG – yes thank

County econ prop #20 - Shared Leave- did comparison between County policy & language. There are some small differences (e.g. increments in which time can be donated). Union is fighting to maintain status quo.

- GS – we did a thorough review of the language, half an hour in contract but hourly in the policy, for the shared leave. Or modify the contract language to mirror the policy, food for thought

Non econ prop #3- Percentage Employee’s- 5.7.5. Union willing to take risk of tying themselves to current policy language- if County offers something more favorable, they are willing to risk not receiving it.

Non econ prop #5- sticking to rejection

(discussion regarding negotiation of Juneteenth into CBA)

(discussion regarding frustration on both sides regarding lack of movement)

- GS: County needs to do a better job of “buying” some of the CBA language being proposed on employer side.
- JG: we’re making attempts to address some needs. What we’re hearing from union.... Reject, reject, maintain status quo, reject.
- HB: feels the same way when County rejects Union’s proposals.
- JG: time off with pay- County made big movement on non-econ prop 5.
- GS: limiting it to one person doesn’t work for the union

- JG: why not come back with a counter, rather than reject & maintain status quo. County is trying to show we're willing to respond. Trying to start dialogue, but union just says no- don't want to make any changes.
- GS: feeling the frustration, too.
- JG: what is Union willing to give up... they expect County to buy everything.
- TH: just want to have a dialogue
- Brian R: Is County's idea of dialogue to propose a bunch of reductions?
- HB: if County shuts down on 6/19, no one in Juvenile, some employees in the union and some not. What happens with new people if Juneteenth isn't included in the CBA? Can't use vacation time in first 6 months....
- JG: Juvenile is essential service- won't be shut down.
- HB: on probation side, they shut down when Courts shut down. They have so many new members in the union- what happens with them?
- GS: proposal dealing with personal property- gave JG a list of items from 1135 supplemental. Would proposal have any impact on tools?
- JG: no... no impact.

Caucus- 11:29am.... Check back at 1pm.

Reconvene 1:15pm

- JG- Provided Union with the County's Amended Non-Economic Props

While we may not agree, we think there are the bones of a good package in there. Maintain proposal, for union security, the shared policy proposal doesn't has a change.

- GS- if it just references a policy, the County can make changes to that policy along the way. Union wants certainty of existing policy for life of CBA.

5.7.5- withdrawn addition of "pro-rated benefits"

- GS: will they still get the language? Why withdraw the language.
- JG: just back to status quo language
- JG: maintain union security, change without pay to with pay, but with one people, so we would like to have conversation on what you would like, ive us something back,

Non-Econ Proposal 5-

7.3.1 looking for counter proposal from union

Non-Econ Proposal 7-

Could be TA is we could get off proposed bereavement proposal.

Non-Econ Proposal 8

No changes

Non-Econ Proposal 9-

2 main issues separating us- union's expanded bereavement leave proposal & County's proposal regarding County shutdown. To clean up Prop 7 & Prop 9, we will withdraw our proposal under 13.3 if Union withdraws bereavement proposal.

- HB: legally a domestic partner is considered a spouse... what is the rationale for treating them differently than a spouse?
- JG: can't speak for how current policy came to be. Doesn't have an answer.
- Jacquie G: could JG look in to and get back to union?
- JG: will look into... may not have an answer.

Non Econ Prop 11- still haven't been presented anything from union showing differences in seniority in various supplementals.

The rest of Non Econ Proposals remain unchanged

- JG: any chance for union to review the new article proposed regarding Review Probationary Period?
- GS: will caucus first.
- JG: if there are changes, please propose alternative language.
- GS: significant change under promotion review period. Right now, promotion probation employee can revert back – is county's proposal to make them at will?
- JG: when employee's make a move, 30 days is ample time to determine if new position is a good fit. During first 30 days, employee can revert or up to 60 days if position is still open. If position has been backfilled, don't want to have to displace new hire.

(clarifying discussion regarding promotional review period).

(question regarding impact of Civil Service rules regarding promotional review period).

Amended Economic Proposals:

Prop 1- unchanged. Asking union to put together package proposal for Juneteenth. County put out 2 non-econ packages. Union said they were unacceptable and wanted status-quo. Now hesitant to put another package out there. Requesting proposal from Union (aside from just granting holiday).

Prop 2- heard there is a strong desire to keep everything the same; union wants certainty. What we've agreed to elsewhere is to keep out of pocket maximums the same for the life of the contract. Even if there are plan design changes, the out of pocket cost to employees will not increase. Should give the union confidence that County will not make sweeping changes. This is language we've agreed to with other bargaining units.

Question- with option of looking at other plans... if County switches from Premera, what if an employee's doctor does not fall under the new plan?

- JG: has happened already (e.g. Rockwood under Kaiser)- we don't have a choice, up to the providers
- Patti B: does this prevent County from raising co-pays, etc?
- JG: no- changes could be made, but out of pocket will remain the same.

- HB: if co-pay increases from \$30 to \$45, it's a significant increase- impacts some employees more than others. Specially with this 1% offer of increase.

Any questions from union?

- GS: could we just say we'll follow the law?
- JG: want to make it clear we're going to follow the law; if everyone is on the same page we can look at modifying the language.
- GS: union will discuss further.

Props 3, 4, 5, 6- no changes

Prop 7- need feedback... what is so different in supplementals? 492SP has specific language about having to use 20 hours of comp time as time off. We're questioning if that's legal to force employees to take it as leave.

(discussion about differences with 1135 comp time)

- GS: need to pull language from each supplemental and do a hard comparison

Props 8, 9, 10- no changes

Prop 11- we understand the concern union has, but find it hard to understand why union is against advanced step placement of current members upon promotion.

(discussion about union's position that step 1 should be a competitive wage for everyone; discussion about impact to current employees when person from the public is hired and leapfrogs other employees.)

- JG: constraint of current CBA language when employees promote. Moving forward, want ability to grant current employees same benefit as new hires. There needs to be a point when things change moving forward, vs. proposing a change that requires re-evaluation of all members.
- CindyT: keep talking about new recruits, new generation- forgetting about employees who have been here. (discussion about implementation of classification study... if implementation was to maintain employees at their current step, leapfrogging wouldn't be an issue. Would show employees appreciation for having worked all through pandemic. 1% COLA proposal is insulting.)
- JG: the way we have proposed to implement, is how it's been implemented across the County.
- CindyT: it's been 3K+ hours ago that union employees missed out on (going back to July 2020 implementation of comp study)

(discussion about County's policy regarding compensation)

(further discussion regarding leapfrogging)

- JG: one more proposal on safety shoes. Heard and are responding to what was heard last week- 1135 has ability to get \$600 for custom footwear. County proposes if employees currently have custom boots, they are eligible for \$600 reimbursement every 3 years. County will continue to honor. Any new or current employees who do not have custom footwear and aren't medically required to have custom footwear, will fall under the "up to \$200 per year".

22.7- maintain proposal. Still evaluating and re-evaluating whether it would apply to Assessor's Office or not

- HB- if you drive a County vehicle there is a gas card. If employee drives personal vehicle, why do they not get a gas card?
- JG: fuel cost is included in the mileage reimbursement.
- Nathan Lawless- a lot of work they do involves idling... could be in car 8 hours/day and not drive hardly at all. In town, not driving much in terms of mileage. If idling 3-4 hours/day, mileage reimbursement doesn't add up.

Caucus 2:04pm

Reconvene 3:28pm

- GS: Thanked us for our patience. Have been trying to play the packaging game.... Can live with County's bereavement language, but it's going to cost more than the package proposed by County. Union will agree to withdraw bereavement changes if County agrees to remove proposed changes from 13.3.3, 5.3 (NEO) and Art 7 – move % to flat number of 3. Also request rest of changes on page 6 be dropped.
- JG: Clarify.... For the union to agree to status quo on bereavement, the County needs to agree to remain status quo on 13.3.3, 5.3, and basically all of Article 7 (except for 10%, make 3)?
- GS: Correct.
- JG: We'll take a look at it... done for today.

Next meeting 3/30.

Adjourned 3:35pm