

**SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
SPECIAL SESSION MEETING
November 4, 2024**

The Board of School Trustees of the School City of Hobart met in regular session on November 4, 2024, in the Board Room at Hobart High School, 2211 East Tenth Street, Hobart, Indiana.

ROLL CALL: President Terry Butler asked Board Members to log in. The following Board Members and Administrators were present or absent, as noted:

Board Members Present:

Terry D. Butler
Rikki A. Guthrie
Sandra J. Hillan
Frank Porras
Donald H. Rogers
Stuart B. Schultz

Administrators Present:

Peggy Buffington
Christopher N. King
William J. Longer
Jonathan Mock
Tim Krieg

Board Member Absent:

Karen J. Robbins

Administrator Absent:

Bob Glover

EXECUTIVE SESSION: No executive session was scheduled.

CALL TO ORDER: President Butler called the meeting to order around 4:02 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Terry Butler led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

AUDIENCE: Janice Hamady, Chief Negotiator of the Hobart Teachers Association (HTA), was present in the audience.

PRE-RATIFICATION PUBLIC MEETING: Discussion of Tentative Agreement of Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement: Superintendent Peggy Buffington welcomed Janice Hamady, the HTA chief negotiator, to the meeting. Dr. Buffington reviewed the terms of the tentative agreement with the Hobart Teachers' Association, noted that tentative agreement had been reached on October 16, 2024, and said the tentative agreement was posted on the district's website.

Dr. Buffington indicated that last year was the first time that a single year contract had been done in many years. Last year, the base teacher salary was increased \$3,000.00 with \$2,000.00 for the first year and \$1,000.00 for the second year. Instead, it was negotiated that the teachers would receive the \$3,000.00 last school year with a reopener for salary for this year depending on the ADM count. In addition, the school district's contribution to the employee insurance premiums was increased \$2,500.00 more for a single plan and \$7,000.00 for the family plan. As always, Dr. Buffington said if the district had more funds, she would have given more towards their salary.

This year, Dr. Buffington noted that this year ADM was down 51 students, and the \$250,000.00 anticipated new revenue from the state for this school year has now been reduced to approximately \$24,000.00. In addition, there was a 15% increase for health insurance, and because of an excessive amount of claims paid during the summer months, the self-insurance fund was almost depleted. Dr. Buffington indicated they were able to cover the claims because of their cash balance. The HTA was aware of the situation and knows the district would not be able to do this again. If it would happen again, a plan redesign would have to be discussed with the HTA. Because of all these factors, there were no monies available for a salary increase. Dr. Buffington noted that insurance was a benefit that could be negotiated and said tentative agreement was reached for the school district to contribute \$11,439.00 of the single premium and \$30,841.00 of the family premium. This was an increase of \$1,439.00 for the single plan and \$3,841.00 for the family plan.

In addition, Dr. Buffington commented that the legislators do not realize the difficulties in building a budget when you do not know your enrollment. She commented the teachers were doing good things with their students.

Dr. Buffington asked the Board to ratify the tentative agreement at their next regular session meeting this week.

President Terry Butler asked for public comment. There were no comments.

In the discussion, there were various questions and comments about the insurance plan and declining enrollment, as follows:

- Married staff members and their plans.
- The three different plans (different deductible amounts).
- Porter County Insurance Trust (United Healthcare not willing to accept us).
- Insurance plan over the percentage allowed by the state (will get a letter from the state about this and may have to consider going on the state plan).
- The percentage increase was determined by the claims from last year, and next year's percentage will be based on this year's claims.
- Reducing costs (using current programs such as RX Protect and Brickie Clinic) and the need to lower the claims (anticipating that they may drop due to less staff).
- A plan redesign if costs are not reduced.
- The need to generate new revenue.
- Lower enrollment, especially at the lower grades.
- Kindergarten enrollment this year is 238, the last three years enrollment was around 360, and prior to that it ranged from 280-300.
- Considering open enrollment for grades K, 1, and 2 to increase enrollment to around 4,000 students.

Janice Hamady indicated there has been good communication between the administration and the HTA. She appreciated having the three different plans that gives staff members the opportunity to choose the plan that best meets their needs. She appreciated that both sides were working together and noted the HTA wanted to help wherever possible. She told the Board that they were "in this together" and asked that they be informed about changes with insurance. She wanted them to know that HTA wants to be of assistance to the administration so they do not "have to take on everything" in resolving any issues that may arise.

President Butler indicated that ratification of the collective bargaining agreement would be considered at the regular session meeting on November 7, 2024, at 7:00 pm in the Board Room at Hobart High School, 2211 East Tenth Street, Hobart, IN.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no other business to come before the Board, President Butler adjourned the meeting around 4:24 p.m.

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART

Terry D. Butler, President

ATTEST:

Sandra J. Hillan, Secretary

Submitted for Approval: November 21, 2024