



**DISTRICT COMMITTEE
OPEN MEETING MINUTES
MEETING #1877
January 23, 2024**

Members Present:

Thomas Hatem	Methuen	Chairperson (Interim)
Marilyn Fitzgerald	Andover	Treasurer
Mr. Mejia	Lawrence	via zoom
Mr. Mercedes	Lawrence	
Mr. Jones	Methuen	
William Tarbox	North Andover	

Members Absent:

Zoila Disla	Lawrence
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Others Present:

John N. Lavoie	Superintendent-Director
Susan Zielinski	Principal
Melissa Martel	Director of Finance
Susan Lally	District Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Hatem called the meeting to order at 6:00PM

Roll Call by District Recorder: Ms. Fitzgerald (present), Ms. Disla (absent), Mr. Jones (present), Mr. Mejia (zoom), Mr. Mercedes (Present), Mr. Tarbox (present), Mr. Hatem (present).

2. HEALTH INSURANCE UPDATE

Mr. Tereso from MIIA presented a review of MIIA Health Benefits. Included in the presentation was the Governance, HBT Trust Structure and Administration, BCBSMA Partnership, Member Experience and HBT Trust Agreement. Chairman Hatem asked if the retirees are on Medicare or not. Mr. Tereso reported that it could be both. Supt. Lavoie wanted to clarify if the rate would never go higher then the average and if it is possible to be less? Mr. Tereso reported yes, it depends on the claims. Supt. Lavoie asked if Mr. Tereso could explain the transition from self-funded to whole insurance and what does that mean for GLTS. Mr. Tereso reported you are paying BCBS an administrative fee and you are paying the claims as they come in. The claims that take place are about two months behind. In July/August, you are usually paying claims from May. The district must be aware that you are paying the fixed premium to MIIA and then the outstanding claims when we take over on July 1st. Supt. Lavoie asked if there was still funding left in the trust, does it go back to the subscribers? Mr. Tereso recommended speaking with council on that. Mr. Tarbox asked as a retired teacher, would there be issues with my doctors? Mr. Tereso reported that there would be no network issues, it is still BCBC. Mr. Jones wanted clarification on who takes care of the claims, unsure of how self-insured works and if there is an issue, would you call BCBS or MIIA? Mr. Tereso explained that there could be a scenario where MIIA is called, but you would most likely be calling BCBS. Ms. Fitzgerald asked how the overall feeling of the 1707 group was. Supt. Lavoie reported that it was presented to them on Monday and the Union Leaders today voted to move forward. Ms. Martel reported that it is not the amount of work, it is removing the risk of self-

funding and it makes sense and costs less. Mr. Mercedes wanted to clarify that this is a minimum of a two-year commitment and if the rates were secure for two years? Mr. Tereso reported that the rates are good for one-year and then the next rate is good for 18 months. There will be a new proposal of rates on July 1, 2025. However, comes with a guarantee that it will be no greater than the average of the increase of the average of the increase of all members in the health trust.

Chairman Hatem thanked Mr. Tereso for his presentation tonight.

Supt. Lavoie reported that we need to vote on this before February 9, 2024 and that is why we had this special meeting. Presenting this to the staff, everyone seemed very happy with minimal work. We were looking at an 8% increase if we stayed self-insured. Supt. Lavoie recommendation was to move from self-insured to fully insured and contract with MIIA for our new Health Insurance.

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved to approve Supt. Lavoie's recommendation to sign the contract with MIIA for our new health plan.

2ND: Ms. Fitzgerald

Roll Call by District Recorder

Mr. Mejia Absent for vote

Mr. Mercedes Y

Mr. Tarbox Y

Ms. Fitzgerald Y

Ms. Disla Absent

Mr. Jones Y

Mr. Hatem Y

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18572

Supt. Lavoie thanked Ms. Martel for hard work she put in to make this a reality and spent a lot of time to ensure we got the best plan. Thank you.

3. BOND ATTORNEY

Supt. Lavoie reported that he has been working with our school attorney on the need to purchase the hangar in Lawrence and the facility down the road. He suggested we should hire a bond attorney because the bond attorney writes all the language in order to go before the Town of Andover and North Andover for approval. The hangar that goes in the warrant should come from the bond attorney. For the facility down the road, the bond attorney would determine the process and the correct way for us to pursue that. Before we seek out a bond attorney, we would get the fees to see what the cost would be. I would request to seek out a bond attorney in order to write the language for the hangar. I met with the assistant town manager and the attorney of Andover yesterday and asked me to meet and talk about our future. They seem very comfortable at this point with what their share of the bond would be at least for the hangar. I attended the North Andover Selectman Board meeting for the same reason. They were excited about both prospects. The concern of our attorney, is the City of Lawrence has paid the owner of the hangar but has not signed any documents. The owner is concerned about the liability. I am in touch with the City so they can sign the documents. I am asking the committee if I can hire the bond attorney at least for the Hangar and obtain a price for the other work. Ms. Fitzgerald reported that she wanted clarity about the bond attorney. The last meeting you spoke about hiring a bond attorney for the Elks purchase. At that time our own attorney, had recommended not to do that. Are you now looking for a second issue for a bond attorney for the purchase of the hangar? We have not done our research yet, regarding the Elks and the same for the Hangar. What is the price? I am very confused. Is our attorney advising us to do this or to wait on it? Supt. Lavoie reported that our attorney, Mr. Mike Morris Sr is advising us to hire a bond attorney at this time. The reason for the bond attorney for the hangar is that originally the city was purchasing the hangar and giving us the hangar. The city council feels differently about it and wants us to pay him back. We would use some of funds in one of our accounts. It would be approximately \$300,000. We still need a bond attorney to write the language to make sure it meets the law. We will not be hiring a bond attorney at this

time for the Elks until I give the committee more information after I meet with them. Ms. Fitzgerald asked why can we not purchase the hangar from the person that owns it. Supt. Lavoie reported that the language in our charter does not allow us to. Rep. Frank Moran has written a bill to allow us to purchase anything. It has to pass. If it does pass, we still have to go to our cities and towns for approval. Ms. Fitzgerald asked why we don't wait for the bill to pass before we get a bond attorney involved. Supt. Lavoie reported that we have a very close timeframe to get this on the towns warrant. That language has to be submitted to the selectmen before that to get on the towns warrants.

Mr. Mercedes wanted to clarify that the vote is for the actual bond attorney and do you know what it is going to cost us? Supt. Lavoie reported I have been waiting for the fees and they have not been sent yet. Attorney Morris believes it is very minimal and we should move forward with this. Mr. Jones asked if the school will use the hangar for its own use? Supt. Lavoie reported that there are three hangars in a condo association. We will take possession of one of the hangars. Two are attached to each other and one is by itself. We own the hangar but we do not own the land. The city always owns the land and we pay a fee to the city and taxes to the town of North Andover but we are tax exempt, being a school. The lease fee is very minimal, approximately \$1,000/year to the condo association. Without the hangar, we will not get the program approved. Ms. Fitzgerald asked if we have informed our school insurance company? Supt. Lavoie reported that the company has been involved in all this. We own airplanes and our insurance company has helped us with insuring them. Chairman Hatem reported that the motion still stands to hire a bond attorney.

MOTION: Mr. Mercedes moved to approve Supt. Lavoie's recommendation to hire a bond attorney

2ND: Mr. Jones

Roll Call by District Recorder

Mr. Tarbox Y

Ms. Fitzgerald Y

Ms. Disla Absent

Mr. Jones Y

Mr. Mejia Y

Mr. Mercedes Y

Mr. Hatem Y

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18573

Mr. Hatem reported that Mr. Mejia joined our meeting in person at this time.

Chairman Hatem asked for an update on the Assistant Superintendent Position. Supt. Lavoie reported that we identified four candidates in which we will start to interview. I should have a candidate by our next meeting. There were about 16 candidates, in which 1 was internal.

4. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to enter into Executive Session at 7:07PM

2ND: Mr. Jones

Roll Call by District Recorder

Mr. Mejia Y

Mr. Mercedes Y

Mr. Tarbox Y

Ms. Fitzgerald Y

Ms. Disla Absent

Mr. Jones Y

Mr. Hatem Y

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18574

ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION
ENTER OPEN SESSION

5. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to adjourn at 7:20PM

2ND: Mr. Jones

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18576

Respectfully Submitted:



Susan Lally
District Recorder

Minutes Reviewed:



John N. Lavoie
Superintendent-Director