

**GRAND FORKS COUNTY EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE MEETING UNOFFICIAL MINUTES
18 June 2008 @ 3:00 PM**

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Larry Ahles, Jason Johnston, Julie Riechert, Andrea Huso, and Kevin Anderson

OFFICE REPS & AND OTHERS PRESENT:

Linda Hammen – Extension
Larry Hoffman – Sheriffs Dept
Vicky Hendrickson – Finance & Tax
Deb Goodman – Social Services
Donna Flaten – Emergency Management
Cathy Westensee – Veterans Office
Tom Grinde – Buildings & Grounds
Wayne Riendeau – States Attorney's Office

CALL TO ORDER:

This meeting was called to order by President Ahles.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Members who did not receive a copy of the minutes, was given time to read them over, after one correction to Linda's last name being Hammen and not Hammer, motion was made to accept the minutes by Kevin, seconded by Linda, so carried.

TREASURERS REPORT:

Our new treasurer, Julie Riechert received the treasurer's books and she reported balances of: Checking - \$482.16, Savings - \$746.96, CD 1 - \$4,000 at 2.8%, due 5-29-2009, and CD 2 - \$6,000 will expire on 11/30/08.

Larry made a motion to accept treasurer's report seconded by Andrea, carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Email: The email received and discussed in May's meeting was clarified and Andrea reported that employees feel upon entering the courthouse, it is dark and dreary. Persons feel adding a couple of flags to the interior entrance and maybe even some plants to liven things up. Larry was unsure that this be an employee association responsibility but more of a buildings and grounds. If we had a written request asking to donate funds in order to purchase a couple of tree plants or a flag, etc, that would be something we could look at. Andrea will put together a letter pertaining to this matter and have Larry proof it before sending it to the commissioners in care of building and grounds.

Negotiator: We still need one negotiator. Larry will talk to Dale Rivard and Nancy Yon from the states attorney's office.

Negotiations: The members present discussed the importance of deciding what we are going to negotiate for as it is soon July, we need to move on this. Questionnaires results were read and an informal compilation showed the main concern is how expensive everything is becoming, making COLA the employees number one request. Some results wanted us to ask for a starting negotiation of 10%! Other voiced concerns were the healthcare increase, adding another paid vacation day, increasing sick leave rate of accruing, transferring sick leave over to vacation time once sick leave has been capped, and other single requests.

- COLA had the largest voice, a lot of employees didn't notice the prior years increase because their health care costs increased as well washing out that extra money they were anticipating.
- Sick time, once accumulated is capped at 900 hours, for payback. Once the maximum carried allowance has been met, employees would like to begin transferring those hours to vacation time, or leave it as an option to the employee to transfer to vacation hours.

- Once an employee has ended employment here, they are paid a certain percent of their sick time, up to 900 hours. Thoughts were to increase that to 1,000 hours.
- Going to summer hours was suggested as well. Linda stated how it is up to the employee department head to do so according to the employee manual. This would work for some departments but it would not with others. For example working a 4 day work week doesn't mean the entire department work the same 4 days and take the same day off, the shifts would have to rotate etc. You should discuss this with your department head or refer to the employee manual for further information. Mr. Hoffman discussed the law enforcement schedule and how unfair the sick leave disbursement is utilized.

Discussions pertaining to the fairness of when anniversary dates pay increases were implemented were voiced. For example an employee being hired in January would receive their anniversary date pay raise in January; an employee being hired in September wouldn't receive that anniversary date pay raise until September so employee A has 8 months of unpaid difference compared to employee B. Different ideas to overcome this were stated. Setting up all pay increases to be an equal distribution either at once annually or semi annually was voiced. For all employees anniversary dates falling January– June receiving their anniversary date pay raise in January 1, and all employees hired July – December receiving their anniversary date pay increase July 1. It was also voiced maybe stopping the month of your anniversary date pay increase be stopped after 5 or 10 years, and moving it to January 1. Vicky who works with payroll stated how these individual anniversary date pay raises are a headache and setting it up once or twice a year would definitely be beneficial.

Kevin inquired on the procedure of negotiations. A brief was given and he stated that he would like to know what percentage of increase to place on the ballot for paid employee members to vote on, and he also wanted to know the other options to put on the ballot. The association members present decided it would be best to call a special meeting next week, get ballots out, where employees number the options in order of importance. We will then tally them at the special meeting. We went over the questionnaires and decided that the ballot will have four options:

- Reimbursement by the county for any accrued sick time over 900 hours, at the employees discretion
- COLA increase at 8%
- All anniversary dates moved to January 1st, after 5 years of service and
- (write in)

Larry will produce the ballot and email to each department head. Each department head is responsible for passing out, collecting, and tallying the ballots they receive.

Another point made talked about how the commission uses unfair comparison techniques when comparing salaries for positions. When it is to their benefit they use Cass County as a comparison, and when it comes to benefit the employee they pick a poor county in a different state.

NEW BUSINESS:

Much to Larry's demise, Andrea mentioned the cookbook issue, stating it would be an excellent profit maker. She also checked into the legalities of doing so because we are not officially a nonprofit organization either incorporated or non-incorporated. We have bigger things on the table right now with the negotiations, so this issue has been tabled. No other new business was brought forth.

Larry moved to adjourn with a second from Julie, so carried.

Next meeting will be a **special meeting June 25, 2008 at 3pm. Conference room C.**

Next regular meeting will be July 16th, 2008 at 3pm. Conference Room C.

Respectfully submitted by Andrea Huso, Secretary