



United Teachers of Seaford

# Executive Board Meeting Minutes

July 19, 2020

Present:

Absent:

Matt Adler  
Edward Kent -  
Maura Coghlan-  
Jennifer Wemssen-  
Curtis Tripoli  
Keri Degnan-  
Jen Walsh-

Jean Marie Aplustille-  
Lisa Gagliano  
Ann-Marie Motisi

Kerry Hansen  
Suzanne Mooney-  
Roman Wojcik

Danielle Alveari  
Eric Lichtwar-  
  
Christine Lindquist  
Kevin Nichols  
Joanna McCloskey-  
James Scourtos

Brian Horner

## 1) Lawyer Committee update

- a. The committee interviewed 3 different lawyers.
- b. The committee recommends David Schlachter.
  - i. Mr. Schlachter has been a lawyer supporting teacher unions since 1978, and he is a lawyer for the North Shore School District Teachers Union.
  - ii. The Union President of the North Shore district is very happy with him. Mr. Schlachter knows all the “nuts and bolts” of the contract lingo.
  - iii. Mr. Schlachter has interacted with the Seaford District lawyer John Gross in the past, and the law firm the district is using. He knows them, and how they work.
  - iv. Mr. Schlachter has requested is \$40,000 to keep is services through June 2021. That includes all services, there will be no other additional fees.
  - v. \$40,000 per year equals about \$170 per year/member. This comes out to be about \$6 per check/member.
  - vi. The UTS previously set aside \$10,000 in the 2019-2020 budget for a lawyer. \$20,000 was also set aside in the 2020-2021 budget. We will take the additional \$10,000 out of the union reserves.
- c. An LRS (labor relations specialist) in the NYSUT system is retiring. Kevin Pollet who is our current LRS is being moved to replace the retiring LRS. The UTS will be getting a new LRS who has a law degree. In the past, we did have an LRS with a law degree (PJ), and he negotiated with the union lawyer John Gross, but we lost the issue with the supervisors.

### QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

- d. How do the function of the LRS and the lawyer overlap, do we need both? Couldn't the LRS negotiate our contract? Would the UTS be able to negotiate a good contract without a lawyer and work only with the LRS?
  - i. The LRS looks at the big picture for NYSUT.
  - ii. Many of the UTS members wanted the union to investigate hiring a lawyer.
- e. How long do we have to keep the lawyer?
  - i. It is a one-year contract. We can decide after if we need to continue with him.

**Ed Kent made a motion to hire David Schlachter for up to \$40,000 for the current school year. Christine Lindquist and Kevin Nichols seconded the motion. Motion approved.**

## 2. Meeting Dates for 2020-2021

- a. Matt Adler proposed that we should continue with virtual meetings in the future. We cannot meet in person in some of the smaller faculty rooms and be socially distant. We also have more members joining the meetings digitally.
- b. Matt will plan out the dates with Keri Degnan.
- c. A suggestion was made that Friday meetings are difficult for exec board members; many are tired by the end of the week. A suggestion was made to make all meetings on Mondays.
- d. Another suggestion is to hold breakout building meetings, to keep the communication open with the members. Building Reps will be reaching out to all members to work in smaller groups. If you have any concerns (especially about reopening), please reach out to your building reps.

### 3. Reopening

- a. Matt cannot discuss Task Force decisions yet. There is new information coming from the state all the time. A 143-page document was just released today. The start of High School sports was pushed back from August, to mid-September. The reopening of school districts remains fluid.
- b. What we do know as of now:
  - i. Reopening based upon numbers and science. If a region (for Seaford, our region is Nassau and Suffolk) has an infection under 5% they can open schools.
  - ii. Nassau and Suffolk infection rates have been hovering around 1 and 2%.
  - iii. If a region's infection rate goes up to 9% school would automatically close.
  - iv. The task force has been meeting weekly, and members are subdivided into groups. Each group is investigating different topics.
  - v. Governor Cuomo asked every district to have 3 plans by July 31:
    - Opening schools fully remote
    - Opening schools with all students in the building
    - Opening schools with a hybrid model
- c. No matter what plan we go with, nothing is going to satisfy and keep all members happy. We must change our expectations of the new normal. **Three goals of the UTS for opening schools in September are:**
  - i) **The safety and wellbeing of the members.** The UTS doesn't want any member to be put in a situation that will risk their health or their families.
  - ii) **Maintain full-time UTS members.** The Seaford Community supported our budget. They approved the school budget overwhelmingly. The district wants to keep every teacher full time. They are not looking to cut or downsize.
  - iii) **Our members will have to change the way we teach.** Working with our students one on one is going to be different or not at all. We must figure out how to reach our students most effectively and safely.
- d. Our contract does have a Quarantine Clause. If you are forced to quarantine due to COVID 19, it is our stance that members do not have to use sick days. If your family member is quarantined, or if your students are quarantined, and the member must quarantine with them, the same rules apply. There is no set number of days in the clause.
- e. If a teacher is not able to return to the district in the fall due to medical reasons, please notify your union representative as soon as possible. We are unsure as of now how the district will proceed.
- f. Whatever the district decides, it may require an MOA which will have to be approved by the members.
- g. NYSUT has set up cohorts, and the Union President has been talking to Superintendents. Together they are all trying to work for all of Nassau County as a group. All the elementary children in Nassau will hopefully be in the buildings. A suggestion was made to get your children used to wear a mask, find a comfortable style, and get them used to wear it.
- h. The district has not shared any plans for the Superintendent Conference Day plans. The union is going to ask for technology classes and support for teachers.

### 4. Member Concerns:

- a. Previously a teacher can teach 5 hours out of certification It has now been increased to 10 hours. The district is trying to keep the schedules as is. Our contract says, “tentative schedule.” Depending upon what the district decides for the 2020-2021 school year, staff schedules may change.
- b. What are the plans for cleaning? The plan is for the buildings to be sanitized nightly. Will the district be increasing custodial staff? That is unknown currently.
- c. Fire drills and lockdown drills still must happen, it was in the guidelines released by the state.
- d. The administration did not contact the Elementary Vice President of the UTS or the Elementary Building Reps before they contacted elementary members to ask for volunteers to help with the placement of students for the 2020-2021 school year. Normally, this is done in the spring. Elementary teachers were initially given a half-day release for placement. Then it was reduced to 1.5 hours of pay for the time it took to schedule and place students. Now the district is asking for volunteers. Placement is a HUGE issue for the students and the faculty. The district did not complete this task in the spring and is depending upon the teacher’s good nature. Maura and Matt will discuss this issue with Central Administration next week.
- e. There is a summer program currently being held in for the elementary school-aged children. It has been going on for 2 weeks, and no one from the central administration has stopped by to ask how it is going. They are not asking the staff for their opinions (what is working, or not working). The staff feels they should have input for next year since they are living with COVID and the students now.

**Other Member Concerns that the UTS does not have answers to currently:**

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|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| f. APPR                             | i. Collecting papers  |
| g. Screens on the classroom windows | j. Tenure             |
| h. DCA policy                       | k. Medical screenings |

There are many unknowns for our members next year. Please let the union and the reps know of your concerns. Matt Adler proposed a weekly Union Town Hall meeting to allow members to vent or express their issues. Many members thought this was a good idea!

Joann McCloskey made a motion to end the meeting. Kevin Nichols seconded it. All in favor.