

<<<BLOOM TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPECIAL MEETING 12/13/06>>>

David Petty, Chair, called the special meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Trustees Petty, Brian Randles, Joseph Smith, and Fiscal Officer Carol Moore. Also present were Anne Darling Cyphert, Board Office & BZ Admin., Fire Chief Terry Gill; President and several members of I.A.F.F. LOCAL 3465; and several interested citizens.

Purpose of the special meeting is for trustees and firefighters to dialog.

Union President Brad Shull asked if the prosecutor's office responded to the fax by David Petty regarding Deferred Comp issues. Petty stated he will call her tomorrow. Shull said the main issue the union has regarding Deferred Comp is regarding what is meant by the term "reasonable." Shull said the next union contract needs to have definitions. He said pay period in January is not being interpreted the same by all. He asked the trustees what their interpretation is. Smith said the first pay of the year is the first pay period. Shull said the union thought the first pay day is difference from pay period. Petty stated the union is asking for a better definition. Randles agreed it is a vague term. He said if he were those guys he would think the first pay is the first pay period. Petty said it should be the first check. Chief Terry Gill said it is pay after the first full pay period in January. Petty said the medic bonus and holiday pay should be the first check of the month. Petty said the language needs tidied up. Randles said that would be good for all. Randles asked what we can do to change it. Smith said not to change it until the new contract. Petty said Gill should do the bonuses on the first pay. Randles said he agreed.

Shull said the union firefighters' holiday pay for those with direct deposit was two days late. Shull said a firefighter incurred bounced check charges in the amount of \$315 and requested reimbursement. Moore said Gill had presented the bill to her just before the meeting. Moore said if the trustees want to pay it she would like an opinion first from the prosecutor's office because, if it is not legal for the township to reimburse the employee for the bank fees, then the employee would have to pay the money back when the township is audited. Randles said he makes sure the money is in his checking account before he writes checks. The trustees said they were surprised the firefighter's bank fees were so high. Moore suggested the trustees review it and decide what to do at another meeting. Moore said that would give her time to get a legal opinion. Petty said if the prosecutor's office has no objection, out of good will we could pay it. Smith said that would set a precedent that we may not want to set. It was suggested that our payroll service pay the fee. Moore said the payroll service was given the wrong information in the first place by the fire department as to when the holiday check was due. Moore had asked payroll to correct the holiday pay date from December 7<sup>th</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> as the union contract requires. Payroll Services agreed to the correction. The firefighters who receive "live" checks were able to cash them on the 5<sup>th</sup>; however, the payroll service had not changed the date for those with direct deposit. Payroll apologized; however, Moore said it was the township's mistake in the first place. The decision of whether to reimburse the bank fee will be based upon the prosecutor's opinion. Shull said he does not know how the firefighter will feel about that. Petty said he would feel worse if the auditor made him repay it.

Shull presented the issue regarding the union not being involved in the trustee's decision to renew the health insurance policy. Smith said the policy changed by the insurance, not by the trustees and was beyond their control. Shull said the union and trustees will have to come to terms about that during the next contract. He said the contract says any change in insurance would be equal to or better than present coverage. Petty said that insurance policy does not exist anymore. Petty said there is a process laid out for next year's plan to review insurance needs. Shull said he is concerned that the township's insurance time line is questionable because the rates are only valid for so long. Petty said if they want our business the insurance companies will have to comply with the trustees' schedule. He said the township pays a quarter million dollars for insurance. A firefighter complimented their assertiveness but said that is neither here nor there. He said the contract is not being followed by providing equal or better insurance. He said if there are any changes to be made, the union should be consulted. Shull said it becomes an issue; he needs seven days to let the union members know there will be a meeting. He said the co-pays change and that is not "equal to" or "better than" the other policy. Randles said that policy is no longer available leaving the township no other option. Smith said other companies are going through the same issues. Shull said that does not change the fact the policy now makes the firefighters incur more financial liability. A firefighter said all the trustees have to do is ask them in the future. The firefighter

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expressed concern about the current insurance agent. Shull asked if the township would reimburse the difference in co-pays to the firefighters. Randles said the township can't offer a policy that does not exist. Shull said the contract language says the insurance must be "equal to" or "better than" the current policy. Another firefighter said the township could consider another policy. Randles reminded everyone that a union firefighter worked with the current insurance agent on the policy. The firefighter said he was not told when working with the agent a few months ago that the co-pays would change. Shull said the agent needs to be told we may consider another agency. Petty and Randles said this is the standard change across the health insurance industry. Petty said the township health insurance is much better than a corporate policy. Cyphert stated this same issue came up several years ago and the firefighters said the employees had no choice because the policy changed. She said it was accepted at that time.

Shull asked if the township was prepared to do a memorandum of agreement to stay these issues until the new contract. He said the contract said it must be "equal to" or "better than" the current insurance. He asked the trustees for concession on the issues. Petty said the difference in prescriptions would be about \$270.

Gill said the contract said it must be "equal to" or "better than" insurance in 2002. He said it doesn't matter what was offered in the current year. Randles said both parties should research the cost differences and discuss it at a future meeting. Petty said if the township agreed to it (reimbursements), the fiscal officer would be cutting checks constantly. He suggested that the union members could have their insurance monthly premium contribution cut in half. Smith said insurance costs continue to escalate. Randles said we need to discuss the 2002 insurance policy and get back to the union members. Gill said the intention is not to hammer the current agent. He said the 14% increase was cut to 8.5% by the agent and that saved the township money. He said he doesn't think Trimmer Ins. was negligent in getting the best offer for the township.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Petty adjourned the meeting.

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David Petty  
Chair

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Carol J. Moore  
Fiscal Officer