Another Negotiation Session Concludes

Our teams met again today for what we all hoped would be a final negotiation session. The meeting started off with the hospital's attorney once again threatening to end the day with a last, best and final offer, not being willing to drag negotiations out for another five or 15 sessions, and not providing any written proposals. Despite the insulting opening comments, we were able to move forward with our written proposal and have some collaborative discussions regarding the remaining open proposals.

They are agreeable to our proposed modifications of contract language that will provide step increases at every year of service 1-25, although the percentage increases for steps 17 through 25 are much smaller than the earlier steps, this is an improvement. We had proposed across the board increases of 1.75 percent for year one, 1.75 percent for year two and 2 percent for year three along with an increase to the night shift differential to $5.25 per hour, an increase to the retirement matching amount of $.50/$1.00 with a cap of 5 percent total, and decreasing the tuition reimbursement option from $20K per year to $7500.00/year with a limit of two recipients and a ratification one-time bonus of $750 for 40 and 36 hour nurses and pro-rated for part-time nurses. Casual nurses would not receive any such bonus. We offered this proposal as part of a package that allows the employer to call off regular staff and allow travelers to work if the travel contract requires payment whether the nurse works or not which the employer said was mandatory for them in reaching an agreement.

At the end of the session the hospital came back with a completely different verbal wage proposal, even though throughout this process they have told us repeatedly that they didn’t care how we chose to prioritize how the money is allocated, they are now only interested in increasing the wage scale for the purposes of recruitment. No increases to differentials, elimination of the tuition reimbursement program, no increase to the matching portion for retirement, no retro wages for the time since the contract expired.

For year one, they now proposed a tiered increase: steps 1-7 would receive 3 percent; steps 8-15 would receive 2.5 percent increase; steps 16 and above would receive 1.75 percent increase.

They proposed wage increases across the board for everyone of 1.5 percent in year two of the contract and 2 percent in year three of the contract. They also included limits to the ratification bonus that would exclude anyone not employed prior to July 1, 2020 or those who are not employed at the time of contract ratification.

The hospital attorney made it clear at the end of the day, that they really have no interest in discussing anything different than what they have verbally proposed although he stopped short of calling this out as a last, best and final offer. The hospital did not provide any written proposals and indicated that they

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might be able to get those to us next Tuesday sometime. We had negotiations confirmed for Tuesday, Jan. 19, however it was agreed that this session should be cancelled since the hospital may not have provided actual written proposals by that date. We have a tentative negotiation date of Jan. 25 although it has yet to be confirmed by the hospital.

What Does Last, Best & Final Offer Mean?

The hospital attorney has stated several times that their proposals are close to the last, best and final offers. Those statements are intended to intimidate the bargaining unit into agreement. In reality, there are a couple of other steps that are legally required in coordination with such a proposal.

1. We must have been bargaining for a minimum of 150 days. We have done that.

2. Mediation must have occurred. We have not had any mediation sessions yet.

3. We must officially reach an impasse. That can only be done after mediation.

4. The final offers from both sides, including costing of the contract proposals, must be provided within seven days of impasse.

5. 30 day cooling off period after which the employer may implement their last proposal and the bargaining unit can give the required 10-day notice of strike.

We need to know from you, the bargaining unit membership, if you are willing to accept the hospital’s financial proposals as they stand. If your answer is no, we need a commitment to participate in additional actions up to and including a strike. If you want to accept the wage proposals we need to know that too. Please complete the survey by 5 p.m. on Jan. 20 with your input. Follow the link or use your phone with the QR code above.

www.SurveyMonkey.com/r/CVH-DIFFERENTIALS

If you have more questions, please join one of the following zoom meetings:

- **Saturday, Jan. 16 at 5 p.m.**

- **Tuesday, January 19 at 8:30 a.m.**

Or ask your questions on the ONA at CVH Facebook page. www.Facebook.com/groups/725065794653826/