

AD-HOC LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON PSEBA

Minutes

Thursday, January 24, 2008

IRMA Office

9:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Kelly Amidei Art Malinowski
Bill Brimm Sandra Mikel
Colleen Nigg Kent Oliven
Paula Schumacher Bryan Lewis
Bill Anderson

ALSO PRESENT: Larry Barry, NWMC Steve Brown
Susan Garvey Larry Bush
Jackie Streid Mary Henzler

ABSENT: Lisa Jepson Barry Krumstok
Jeff Moline Andri Peterson
Jason Bielawski

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Amidei called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Attendance was taken and a quorum declared.

II. WELCOME

Garvey welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that the group introduce themselves since there were some new faces at the meeting.

III. PSEBA SURVEY RESULTS

Garvey noted that the survey results spreadsheet was broken out by legislative districts in order to better concentrate on those legislative districts that have the most PSEBA cases. Garvey noted that although there wasn't an overwhelming response, we can continue to collect data. Bush pointed out that many of the numbers under Estimated Lifetime Value of PSEBA benefits were unrealistic and needed to be verified. Barry noted that how the number is determined varies and it is hard to compare apples to apples.

Garvey asked if there were any questions. Malinowski commented that the results of the survey were very eye opening in that there are quite a few cases going on. It also shows that quite a few people are gainfully employed. Malinowski stated that from the survey, there are only actually one or two cases that actually qualify for PSEBA.

Bush asked whether we have received much from the IML. Garvey indicated that there were a few on the spreadsheet and stated that she would contact Joe McCoy to see if there were any more cases to report.

Garvey pointed out an article that was sent in by Neal James about two downstate cases that are very demonstrative of the issues that we are seeing here.

Garvey reported that Steve Brown was going to be late for the meeting, so suggested that the Legislative Strategy agenda item be covered.

V. LEGISLATIVE STRATEGY - Bill Anderson

Garvey reported that she and Anderson had talked last week about how we would be proceeding with the bill. Garvey asked Anderson to give his report.

Anderson reported that he had a conversation with Senator Lightford about what the Ad Hoc Committee was planning and she was very excited about IRMA's coordination and elevation of the issue. Anderson stated that if you are having good conversations with your area legislators and have other legislators who want to be involved in helping out negotiations or co-sponsoring the bill, please let either Susan or him know.

Anderson noted that the legislative session is out now and will be until after the primary, so this gives us a little time for the public relations to kick in.

Anderson stated that he had talked to Senator Lightford about how to have a good strategy as far as our negotiating and setting down the groundwork. Anderson suggested having a set meeting time downstate with the firefighters every other week, where we can present some things and their lobbyists will take things bank to their attorneys and then bring things back to the next meeting for further discussion. Senator Lightford thought this was a good idea in order to have a structured negotiation.

Garvey asked Anderson whether he had the names of anyone else who would be interested in signing on. Anderson noted that in the past, Senator Dan Cronin had been interested and said that he would contact him. Anderson also stated he would follow-up with Susan Garrett.

Garvey reported that Neal James had indicated that the Village Administrator of Forest Park and the Mayor of Broadview are willing to testify at committee hearings.

Lewis asked what committee this was going to first. Anderson stated that it hadn't been assigned as yet. Lewis noted that sometimes they give these issues to two committees at once and it's hard to be in two places at once. Lewis noted that the Illinois Fire Association was going to be down in Springfield for other issues and he would make some phone calls to get firefighters at the meetings on the PSEBA issue.

Garvey asked whether Lewis thought the firefighters would be willing to sit in on some of the negotiations. Lewis indicated that they would.

Lewis asked whether anyone had contacted the City of Chicago firefighters. Anderson reported that he still had to find out who the contact for the City of Chicago is, and would be working on getting this information.

Oliven mentioned that the IML's big push this year is on the police and fire pension plans. Oliven asked Anderson whether this was making the ground in Springfield a little tenser. Anderson replied that it did a little bit, but kept the firefighters busy thinking about things. Anderson stated that the firefighters don't think of this issue coming out of the IML.

IV. PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY - Steve Brown

Garvey introduced Steve Brown, who is helping us with our public relations. Garvey reported that the committee had received the draft resolution and the draft press release that Brown had sent out for review and comment. Garvey asked Brown to share with the committee how he felt it was best to proceed.

Brown noted that the survey results would add some detail and volume to the story we want to tell and, hopefully, we will find some examples as to whether or not there are people who were injured on the job and went back to work at other places where they might be entitled to health insurance for themselves and their family.

Brown reported that he had prepared a resolution that can go before village/city councils as a place to being a conversation and, hopefully, some kind of debate. Brown noted that it has been his experience that the village/city councils tend to get some media coverage. Brown stated that this either gets covered on its own, or you take the press release and that gets reported. You then begin a communication process based on the actions of those respective communities to members of the general assembly and to the folks that represent both the fire service and the police departments in terms of the need for discussion about some kind of legislation in this area. Brown commented that we could take the results of the survey and flush out the resolution and press release even more, where we can find some real good poster children for this issue. Brown noted that general assembly members tend to react once an issue hits the news.

Bush asked whether the resolution and press release were alternatives. Brown stated that the resolution should be used first, and then the press release if the issue doesn't get covered by the village/city council.

Oliven asked how the resolution and the press release relate to the survey results. Are we looking at the survey results as a public document? When the surveys were collected, did any of these communities think that one of their cases would be used in a resolution or a press release?

Brimm asked whether there was a suggested way to use the data from the survey results, so we don't violate any HIPPA disclosures. Brimm stated that he didn't know how readily this information can be disclosed. Bush commented that we shouldn't be releasing any information that can be traced to an individual. Brimm stated that we can give out information, we just can't give specific health information out.

Amidei stated that she had received a packet from whoever is heading the IML committee on the pension issue that outlines the steps, i.e., here's what to do. Amidei was asked to forward the packet to the IRMA office. Amidei commented that she thought it was a really good model and we could copy it.

Bush reported that he had learned that one of our committee members, Bob Buhs, had forwarded the resolution and press release to a full group of fire chiefs. Garvey stated that she had sent Buhs an email explaining that these are in draft form and asking him to tell his police chiefs not to send this out.

Brimm asked whether the police chiefs are interested in this as well. Garvey noted that she has spoken to the police chiefs through our steering committee at IRMA, and stated that they are not on board as much as the fire chiefs. For right now, they just seem to be staying out of it. Brimm

questioned whether this issue would be deemed to failure unless we have both the firefighters and police on board. Anderson stated that the police will certainly be invited to the committee meetings and felt certain that they would be interested in being supportive of anything that we put together.

Garvey stated that we will try to approach our police chiefs here again at IRMA. Up to this point, they have not committed to anything and seem to not want to get on the bad side of their labor.

Brimm commented that he is waiting for the state association to step up. If the local chiefs have some angst, he would understand, but we need someone from the top state level to step up.

Bush asked what we want to see in this legislation. There are a couple of issues:

- employees who can be gainfully employed or who are gainfully employed -- this is a huge difference - what we want is employees who can be gainfully employed are ineligible, not only those who are gainfully employed.
- they have health insurance available, but are not necessarily taking it. Almost anyone can decline insurance, so this language saying that they are not covered only if they have insurance and take insurance isn't going to accomplish much.

Bush stated that we want to be involved in what the language is going to say.

Garvey indicated that she and Anderson had talked and thought it made sense not to take a draft of the language into the committee, but rather to hold discussions first. Anderson stated that in the first couple of meetings of the committee, issues should be discussed to get into the nuts and bolts of the issue.

Brown stated that the resolution and the press release can be changed to reflect that. We don't need to talk about the details of a compromise, but rather the need for a compromise.

Oliven asked what the timetable was. When are we going back to the municipalities and giving them the resolution that they should consider and if the resolution doesn't make it into council, then here is a press release to consider. Garvey suggested that committee members should prepare their municipalities now - start talking about where IRMA's legislative committee is going with this issue and this is what we will need you to do.

Bush commented that he felt we were pretty close to bringing this to the municipalities. Brown noted that he can take the notes from this meeting and revise the resolution and press release to be distributed. Brown indicated that IRMA should check on the privacy issue in using the survey information and then we should be good to go at whatever pace you want to move at. Brown noted that the legislature would not be back in session until after the primary election.

Oliven asked whether the municipalities would be brought into this before the next meeting of this committee. Bush replied, yes. Bush also commented that in regards to the survey, he did not envision this being widely distributed. This gives us something to pick from to identify totals, but he felt we shouldn't be relying on this document. Bush stated that the details of this survey shouldn't be distributed.

Schumacher agreed that this should be a summary sheet only and not identify individual members. Bush agreed that a summary sheet would be put together. Garvey noted that the

survey was broken out by legislative districts, so we could go to legislators and tell them what was going on in their district.

Amidei asked whether we should be focusing on the fact that the people on PSEBA are getting better benefits than our full time employees because they are getting 100% of their premium paid. Amidei suggested that we may try and spin this into our issue.

Schumacher stated that another thing to highlight is that the people who can get private health insurance, are really taking away from the people who truly are disabled and cannot work.

Brown asked where the trigger point was between where tax caps impact this or not. Amidei stated that the municipality has to absorb it.

Brimm asked whether levies for judgments are capped. Garvey stated that the tort liability is not capped. Lewis stated that from what he understood, both tort liability and the pension is not capped, but is capped in your individual levy. Brimm asked whether this is something that could be considered by the legislature to help municipalities absorb costs.

Oliven asked whether this could be piggybacked onto the pension reform package. Brimm stated that we should keep the removal of caps on pensions as part of the overall package dealing with pension reform, and keep the capping of levies separate.

Bush stated that staff would put together a summary of the survey and also do a package similar to what the IML is doing. Bush noted that this should be done within the next month. Garvey asked whether the committee felt this should be sent out member-wide. Amidei indicated that she felt it should and also to the cogs. Oliven asked that the committee be given a chance to review what was going out. Garvey indicated that she would send this out to the committee a day or two in advance for their comments.

VI. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

Garvey asked for any additions to the agenda. There were none.

VII. NEXT MEETING

Bush stated that we should find out what the committee schedule is for downstate before we set another meeting of the ad-hoc committee.

Oliven suggested that all newspaper articles on this issue be sent in to Garvey to collect. Amidei suggested that this be put into the packet of information, asking people to forward any newspaper articles.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:30 a.m., a motion was made by Schumacher and seconded by Malinowski to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

Submitted by:

Susan Garvey
Director of Legal Services

Approved:

Kelly Amidei
Legislative Ad Hoc Committee Chair