

SOLANO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
GOVERNING BOARD

UNADOPTED MINUTES
February 4, 2009

APPENDIX A

5. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Board President Young recognized Tom Grube, CTA President, who requested to comment on collective bargaining.

Mr. Grube began by stating that as President of the CTA, “both he and the union have a responsibility to engage in collective bargaining to help negotiate and settle contracts. The first recommendation speaks of not allowing collective bargaining to become a distraction, and I couldn’t agree more. We have to stop having collective bargaining serve as a distraction and focus on accreditation. To that end, I want you to again realize that for five hundred plus days in negotiations, the offer we received could be regarded as nothing but tactics to stall and drag things out. To those three Board members who have been on negotiating teams, or union officials in the past – you have no idea what those offers were – I don’t know if that was a Board strategy or an idea given to them by someone else, but I know more and more legal bills were being racked up while talks were dragged out, and we received nothing that could have been considered a reasonable salary while more and more money got trucked down to San Diego to pay lawyers to not negotiate.

We finally did receive what could have been considered the first reasonable salary offer, and we accepted it. We aren’t asking for a salary increase for this year—we said we would accept COLA knowing it likely would be zero, and indeed it is zero this year. We know that. COLA the district received last year was 4.53%. The offer was for 3%, a little less than 2/3s of that. We said we would accept it. Things should have been done. The faculty wanted to put negotiations behind them, and when you gave us an opportunity to do that, we were ready to do it. Let’s take the offer. Let’s put negotiations behind us.

Then someone got the idea we were too anxious and too willing to accept that offer, so someone decided to pull back a little. Try to add a little language--will you participate in the health care committee. Then try to a little bit more language, and now we are told, it’s not gone, but it is. We were being perfectly reasonable accepting the first reasonable offer that came to us.

You saw as a distraction the pickets, the door hangers, the letters to the editor. Ask what caused that. Ask what brought that on. It was the strategy of the delaying and stalling which could do nothing but frustrate us, and annoy us, and ask us which buttons did we have to push to eventually get a reasonable and sane offer. We had an offer in hand. We received an offer from the District’s chief negotiation on December 8, and

although the District's chief negotiator later refused to sign said offer, we have taken the unprecedented step to move to our members for a ratification vote.

By the time I stand before you two weeks from now, I hope to be able to tell you our faculty has agreed to accept your offer. We hope the District will do the responsible thing, and recognize the offer that has been made, and stop collective bargaining from being a distraction, and let's move on. If you truly don't feel you have the dollars to pay us, tell us how you want to structure that debt to us to get last year's retro checks to us eventually, and to get this year's retro checks to us eventually. We are trying to be accommodating. We are trying to be reasonable.

Again, we accepted the first reasonable offer that was made. I don't know whose decision it was to stall...chief negotiator, the former CBO...I don't know what discussion has gone in closed session. It was not our decision to stall. It was obviously someone else's decision to drag out negotiations. Let us move on from these distractions as the first paragraph recommends. I have a responsibility to keep pressing until we have a contract. It will be really easy and a much better place if you will just sign off on what has been offered."

Board President Young thanked Instructor Grube for his comments.

Board President Young recognized Dr. Gene Thomas, Biology Instructor, who requested to comment on the Board of Trustees.

Dr. Thomas made the comment that it seems to him the Board has ignored the very advice given to them by consultants, and, with the exception of Trustee Thurston, questioned why the remaining six should stay in their positions on the Board as Trustees, and asked if they felt they should move on. Dr. Thomas commented further that the Board hasn't shown leadership or competency, and asked for dialogue with the Trustees, which Dr. Waits stated was not appropriate under public comments. Dr. Thomas concluded by stating people are wondering why the College should continue to pay their stipends, and, for the good of the College, if they should stay.

Board President Young thanked Dr. Thomas for his comments.