

Good evening. Thank you for being here tonight. I know many of you are here because of the teacher contract negotiations. There has been quite a bit of conversation in the district and community regarding negotiations. We welcome that conversation. As a school board, transparency is vital to us. The proposals that both sides make during the negotiations process are public information. We encourage you to ask for and get those proposals. Educate yourself, because we are very concerned that there is a great deal of misinformation going around. Over the last nine years of being on the school board, I have been asked by a number of teachers “what is happening in negotiations?” In all honesty that just seemed wrong to me. This is your life and your contracts. EMM members should know what is happening throughout the process without having to guess. We propose that we proactively invite the public to our negotiations with EMM.

- Negotiations sessions are required to be open by law.
  - The requirement of open negotiations sessions is contained in PELRA. There is no posting or other notification requirement for negotiations meetings. Those who desire to attend a negotiations meeting are not to be turned away.

There are two sides to this process, both are incredibly important. As a board we have a job to do. Which is to take care of the entire district. We are proud of the contract that certified staff has, it is a quality contract and compares well in the State of MN. We want that for you!

When I read the Hometown Press Release on Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, I read a statement that declared that our “teachers are working without a contract” it implies that teachers are not being paid or being given their deserved benefits. This statement was simply wrong. It was especially disappointing because even the contract itself states that it is effective – and I quote – “through June 30, 2019 and thereafter until modifications are made pursuant to the P.E.L.R.A.” The requirement to keep the contract in place also is contained in the law. No one is working without a contract. I assure you, teachers are getting paid, their health insurance is being provided, they are getting sick leave, they are getting personal leave. They are getting all of the contract’s benefits. We believe in taking care of our entire school district which includes our valued teachers.

It is also our job as school board members to settle contracts within our budget parameters. We must be fiscally responsible while striving to be fair to our quality teaching staff; thus, reducing our class sizes that have crept up the last two school years. We see being financially responsible as the highest priority in taking care of teachers, students and the community.

Tonight Tina will be presenting our financial forecast, I encourage you to stay and listen. We do not hide any numbers and our audits have been exemplary under Tina’s leadership.

I have been a proud member of this community and school district for over twenty years, the other members of the board are up here and proud to serve as well. Each and every one of them has a history of volunteering in this school district with passion and dedication. All of our

own children are in the Monticello School District or have already graduated from Monticello District 882.

In closing, I again want to stress our continued desire for transparency! We want all future negotiations be open to members. Altruism is the goal here! Having an Us vs Them viewpoint will never serve us well. We look forward to continuing negotiations in good faith and with an open book.

Thank you.