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STATE OF MICHIGAN
EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS COMMISSION

In the matter of:

WILLIAMSTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

-and-

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS, LOCAL 547

Case No. L76 H695

Daniel Kuzges 1-7-77

HEARING OFFICER'S FACT FINDING REPORT

APPEARANCES:

For the Union Local 547

Denny Sluyter
Ralph L. Smith

Field Representative

For the Williamston Board of Education

David Disler

Business Manager

LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL

RELATIONS LIBRARY

Michigan State University

INTRODUCTION

This is a fact finding report under the provisions of Section 25 of Act 176 of the Public Acts of 1939, as amended, which provides in part as follows:

"Whenever in the course of mediation under Section 7 of Act No. 336 of the Public Acts of 1947, being Section 423, 207 of the Compiled Laws of 1948, it shall become apparent to the Board that matters in disagreement between the parties might be more readily settled if the facts involved in the disagreement were determined and publicly known, the Board may make written findings, with respect to the matters in disagreement. Such findings shall not be binding upon the parties but shall be made public..."

In accordance with the Commission's Rules and Regulations relating to fact finding, the undersigned Hearings Officer was designated to conduct a hearing in the matter and to issue a report in accordance with Employment Relations Commission General Rules and Regulations 35. Briefly, this Rule states that the Hearings Officer will issue a report with recommendations with respect to the issues in dispute.

The Fact Finder was appointed by letter dated December 6, 1976. The hearing was held in South Kedzie Hall, Michigan State University on December 30, 1976.

ISSUES IN IMPASSE

The letter from Mr. Ralph L. Smith, Field Representative, International Union of Operating Engineers Local 547 dated October 23, 1976, to Mr. Robert Pisarski, Director, Michigan Employment Relations Commission indicated that there were three unresolved issues:

1. Effective date of the Agreement
2. Wages
3. Uniforms for Bus Mechanics

HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS

Local 547 won bargaining rights for all maintenance employees and bus mechanics in May 1976. At the time the Petition for Fact Finding was filed, there were two maintenance and two bus mechanics in the bargaining unit. However, one of the maintenance employees has since quit, leaving three members in the unit.

The parties bargained and reached an impasse. The State Mediator met with the parties on two occasions but without success. On October 23, 1976, the Union filed a petition for Fact Finding with the Michigan Employment Relations Commission. Dr. Daniel H. Kruger was subsequently appointed Fact Finding Hearings Officer.

DISCUSSION OF ISSUES AND HEARING OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

At the hearing on December 30, 1976, the Fact Finder asked the parties to identify the issues in impasse. Mr. Smith, speaking on behalf of the Union Local 547 indicated that there were three issues:

- (1) effective date of agreement
- (2) uniforms for Bus Mechanics
- (3) wages

Mr. Smith indicated that the Union was seeking an effective date of the Agreement of July 1, 1976, which would be of one year's duration.

Mr. David Disler, Business Manager, Board of Education, indicated that there was no objection by the School Board to July 1, 1976 as the effective date of the agreement.

Recommendation No. 1. Effective Date of Agreement

Since the parties are in agreement on the effective date of the agreement, this recommendation only confirms their agreement.

The effective date of the agreement shall be July 1, 1976, and will expire on June 30, 1977.

The second issue discussed was the uniform allowance for bus mechanics. The Fact Finder was told that it has been the past practice of the Board of Education to supply uniforms to the bus mechanics. In the discussion which followed, Mr. Disler indicated that the Board of Education would provide uniforms to the bus mechanics. There was no discussion as to the number to be provided.

Recommendation No. 2. Uniforms to be provided to Bus Mechanics

This recommendation confirms the agreement of the parties.

The Board of Education will provide without cost uniforms to the Bus Mechanics. The details of providing uniforms will be worked out by the parties.

The third issue in impasse is wages. Currently the Board of Education is paying the following wage rates:

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Hourly Rate</u>
Custodian	\$ 4.48
Maintenance	\$ 3.73
Assistant Mechanic	\$ 3.82
Head Mechanic	\$ 4.41

The Union is seeking a seventy-five cents (\$.75) an hour increase across the board increase. Its rationale for this increase is to bring the hourly wage rate for the maintenance worker up to the same level as the hourly wage rate for the custodian..

A seventy-five cents (\$.75) increase would result in the following wage schedule:

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Hourly Rate</u>
Maintenance	\$ 4.48
Assistant Mechanic	\$ 4.57
Head Mechanic	\$ 5.16

For the maintenance worker this represents an increase of 20 percent over the current wage rate.

Mr. Disler introduced Exhibit #1 which gave wage rates for maintenance workers in twelve surrounding school districts and annual salaries for bus mechanics in four districts. The Exhibit is reproduced below.

1975-1976 SALARY COMPARISON*

MAINTENANCE

	<u>Rate per hour</u>		<u>Rate per hour</u>
Okemos	\$ 5.66	Holt	\$ 4.85
East Lansing	5.61	Portland	4.60
Charlotte	5.35	Owosso	4.30
Lansing	5.11	Eaton Rapids	4.06
Grand Ledge	5.05	Mason	3.90
Waverly	4.95	Williamston	3.73

BUS MECHANICS

	<u>Annual Salary</u>
Haslett	\$10,700 per year
Leslie	9,464 " "
Mason	11,000 " "
Williamston	7,945 - 9,172 per year

*Exhibit #1
Board of Education

It was pointed out by Mr. Smith that this exhibit had data for 1975-76 and not 1976-77. Mr. Disler stated that the 1976-77 data were not readily available.

Mr. Disler pointed out that the Board of Education had made an offer of a wage increase of 7.5 percent in mediation. This increase would result in the following schedule:

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Old Hourly Rate</u>	<u>7.5 Percent Increase</u>	<u>New Wage Rate</u>
Maintenance	\$ 3.73	\$.28	\$ 4.01
Assistant Mechanic	3.82	.29	4.31
Head Mechanic	4.41	.33	4.74

Mr. Smith reported that he had taken this offer by the Board of Education to the membership and they rejected it unanimously.

Mr. Disler stated that the Board of Education had negotiated the following wage and/or salary increases with other employee groups for 1976-77:

- Custodians had received an increase of slightly more than six (6) percent
- Bus Drivers had received an increase of five (5) percent
- Teachers had received an increase of five (5) percent

Recommendation #3. Wage Increase

The Fact Finder strongly recommends the following wage increase:

- (a) an eight (8) percent increase will be given effective July 1, 1976. This increase of eight (8) percent will produce the following wage schedule:

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Old Wage Rate</u>	<u>8 Percent Increase</u>	<u>New Wage Rate</u>
Maintenance	\$ 3.73	\$ 0.30	\$4.03
Assistant Mechanic	3.82	.31	4.13
Mechanic	4.41	.35	4.76

(b) an additional increase of three (3) percent will be given beginning on January 1, 1977 based on the new wage rate noted above.

A three (3) percent wage increase will produce the following wage schedule:

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Wage Rate 7/1/76-12/31/76</u>	<u>3 Percent Increase</u>	<u>New Wage Rate 1/1/77-6/30/77</u>
Maintenance	\$ 4.03	\$ 0.12	\$ 4.15
Assistant Mechanic	4.13	.12	4.25
Mechanic	4.76	.14	4.90

This two step wage increase will result in a wage adjustment over the life of the agreement as follows:

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Old Wage Rate</u>	<u>Total Wage increase in Two Steps</u>	<u>Percent Increase</u>	<u>New Wage Rate</u>
Maintenance	\$ 3.73	\$ 0.42	11.26%	\$ 4.15
Assistant Mechanic	3.82	0.43	11.26%	4.25
Mechanic	4.41	0.49	11.11%	4.90

It was pointed out that the members of the bargaining unit work 40 hours a week 52 weeks a year. Thus the cost of this two step increase will be as follows:

Period July 1, 1976 to December 31, 1976

Maintenance	\$0.30 an hour increase times 1040 hours equals	\$312.00
Assistant Mechanic	\$0.31 an hour increase times 1040 hours equals	\$322.40
Mechanic	\$0.35 an hour increase times 1040 hours equals	<u>\$364.00</u>
	Sub-total cost	\$998.40

Period January 1, 1977 to June 30, 1977

Maintenance	\$0.42 an hour increase times 1040 hours equals	\$436.80
Assistant Mechanic	\$0.43 an hour increase times 1040 hours equals	\$447.20
Mechanic	\$0.49 an hour increase times 1040 hours equals	<u>\$509.60</u>
	Sub-total cost	\$1,393.60

The total cost of the two step wage increase to the Board of Education during the life of the agreement will be \$2,392.00. During the life of the agreement each member of the bargaining unit will receive the following total increases in wages:

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Total Amount of Wage Increase</u>
Maintenance	\$ 748.80
Assistant Mechanic	769.60
Mechanic	<u>873.60</u>
Total cost of wage increase	\$2,392.00

The Fact Finder has recommended a two step wage increase which is fair and equitable. The recommendation is designed to accomplish three objectives:

- (1) to narrow the differential between the maintenance and custodial employees

- (2) to provide employees in the bargaining unit with protection of the purchasing power of their wages due to inflation in the last several years
- (3) to enable the Board of Education to develop a work force which is of high quality and stable.

The Fact Finder very strongly urges the parties to accept these recommendations.


Daniel H. Kruger
Hearings Officer

January 7, 1977