

Board ratifies teacher contract

By Janet Paulson
Of the Emerald

Board members of the 4-J School District on Monday unanimously ratified the contract agreement reached last week that ended the longest teachers' strike in Oregon's history.

The new contract is effective immediately. Eugene's school teachers will receive salary increases retroactive to the beginning of the 1986-87 school year.

The teachers' previous contract expired June 30, 1986, and the teachers have worked for the past school year without a contract.

School board members met in executive session for an hour and a half prior to the ratification vote as Steve Goldschmidt, the district's chief negotiator, reviewed the details of the contract agreement.

Board members then proceeded with the public portion of the ratification.

Board member Karen Hemmingsen moved to ratify the contract, and Judy Moseley seconded the motion. Moseley referred to the new contract as a "watershed mark," noting the contract included a new provision to handle contractual problems

through joint committees formed by representatives of both the school district and the Eugene Education Association.

Schools Superintendent Margaret Nichols gave a brief overview of the new contract for the public. She noted that the district had achieved its goal of reaching a settlement that stayed within the existing tax base.

'The healing process needs to start with thanking Margaret Nichols and Steve Goldschmidt for their leadership and professionalism.'

— Judy Moseley

Nichols said the district also was able to achieve its goals for the insurance package. The district was committed to "controlling the spiraling cost of insurance and to predicting insurance increases," she said.

The district now will be able to determine the insurance carrier; however, the current carrier will not be changed before July 1.

Moseley said that Nichols and

Goldschmidt had endured campaigns of "particular difficult attacks."

"The healing process needs to start with thanking Margaret Nichols and Steve Goldschmidt for their leadership and professionalism," she said.

Both Nichols and Goldschmidt were accused by teachers during the strike of personally blocking the pro-

gress in contract negotiations. Nichols and school board Chairman Jack Billings joined the district's negotiating teams for the last two bargaining sessions.

However, Billings said he was convinced the same agreement would have been achieved regardless of his and Nichols' presence at the negotiations.

Special district approved

By Will Holbert
Of the Emerald

The proposed Riverfront Research Park passed yet another bureaucratic milestone Monday night when the Eugene City Council voted unanimously to adopt 71 acres of University-owned property along the Willamette River as a "special development district."

The designation of the area as a special district attempts to set limits as to what activities can be carried out in the proposed park and also provides for numerous building codes that would preserve the area as much as possible.

Primary uses of the district would be programs and activities carried out by institutions of the Oregon State System of Higher Education and the University in particular.

The creation of a special district obligates future developers to follow rules that limit the floor space of a building that can be devoted to manufacturing and requires them to submit reports verifying that the primary use of the special district is being preserved. Other rules require that buildings be set back certain distances from the river and that solar access be preserved for the bicycle path.

The Carley Group is the developer for the park.

John Moseley, vice president of University research, said the park would "substantially enhance the riverfront area" and provide a "significant catalyst for development in the area."

However, those opposed to the park brought up the fate of the Southbank playing field.

"I don't know how many of the council here have been down to the field lately, but I can assure you that it is currently packed seven days a week," said Dan Stotter, a University student concerned about the field being wiped out by the park.

Mediation offers alternative to litigation

By Patty Peterson
Of the Emerald

Many officials see statewide mediation programs as a new and cost-efficient alternative to conflict resolution.

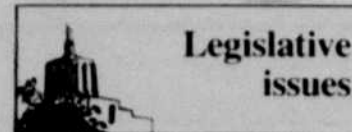
On April 30, the Oregon Legislature passed a bill that will establish a Dispute Resolution Advisory Council. The council would set guidelines for statewide dispute resolution programs.

Rep. John Schoon, R-Dallas, originally introduced the bill and is enthusiastic about the potential for mediation programs statewide.

"Our system is extremely expensive because no one will talk outside of court," he said. "I think (dispute resolution) has tremendous potential for reduc-

ing costs over the long haul. This bill will have more effect on reducing court costs than anything else the Legislature has planned."

The bill states that expenses incurred by the DRAC will be paid from funds provided by the Legislative Counsel Committee. The bill also states expenses will not exceed \$1,000.



"I'm sure this bill will do well in the Senate," said Rep. Judy Bauman, D-Portland. "I can't imagine the Ways and Means Committee not funding such a worthwhile project at so little cost."

The bill comes at a time when mediation programs are becoming more and more prevalent in Oregon.

One of the first mediation centers in Oregon was formed last July by Eugene attorney Jim Melamed. Oregon Mediation Association is a non-profit organization committed to ex-

panding and improving mediation services and opportunities in Oregon, he said.

Mediation is defined as "a problem-solving process in which a neutral third party facilitates resolution between parties with conflict."

Mediators are generally volunteers from the community and must be trained before they actually hear a dispute. They remain neutral throughout the process and if HB 2949 becomes law, it is guaranteed that mediators will not be required to testify in court about mediation proceedings.

The goals of OMA include providing training and support to mediators, establishing ethical standards for the field and offering less threatening and more flexible dispute forums for people of all ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

At the beginning of this year, the University and the ASUO joined together to sponsor a mediation program on campus. The program is designed to resolve conflicts involving ongoing relationships between students and faculty, roommates, co-workers or any other grievance situation in the University community.

The University Mediation Program lists its benefits as stress reduction, increased creativity by generating new options and the demonstration of constructive, collaborative problem-solving.

Sheila Hales, the program's director, said she would welcome any volunteer support from the student body in expanding the program next year. "In this way, students can learn to mediate their own disputes before they get in too far."

There are some problems that mediation cannot solve, however, and if the process fails litigation procedures are still available.

"The court system is so abstract. It makes communication beyond accessible," Bauman observed.

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