



MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING FRIDAY/SATURDAY FEBRUARY 3, 4, 2006

The MTA Board met recently in Natick. Selected highlights of the meeting which may be of interest to MCCC members follow.

FRIDAY EVENING

Minority Survey

Concerns of our minority members are like the rest of MTA members, mostly financial and professional. They feel the MTA does a good job meeting their needs in this area. They don't feel MTA does enough in the area of recruiting minority members.

The biggest barrier to more involvement by them is time (family pressures, new career, their job, etc.) which is the same response of the wider membership.

Financial Report

In short, membership is above the budget forecast, so the MTA is able to meet and exceed budget predictions.

SATURDAY

The Board heard a speaker asking for the MTA's help, with other unions, to get Senate President Travaglini's help to bring to a vote at the May legislative Constitutional Convention a proposed change to make practical, cost-effective **universal health care** a (Massachusetts) constitutional right. See www.healthcareformass.org

The Board voted to support H 3912, from the state colleges, on academic freedom. This only affects state colleges; for the text go to <http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/house/ht03/ht03912.htm> The gist is captured in "The trustees/colleges are hereby prohibited from accepting any gifts or bequests from any source that places conditions or restrictions on the use of such gifts or bequests in such a way as

Philip Mahler
Board of Directors
District 44H
978 405 2531
Treasurer@MCCC-union.org

Sara Satham
Board of Directors
District 44H
617 228 2112
SSatham@BHCC.mass.edu

to interfere with or otherwise limit the academic freedom of a state college."

There was discussion on whether to keep an "Issues forum" at the annual meeting. Right now it is mandated as part of the annual meeting.

There was extensive discussion on whether to **have a rally** or not (this was voted later in the meeting). About 25% were contacted, of those about 2/3 responded. The support was ambiguous. It was pointed out that MCAS and what is going on in Springfield, and elsewhere, is producing major attacks on our K-12 teachers. The rally might be around funding. Health care contribution level is as much of an issue as is overall funding. We have a governor and national agenda aimed at starving and destroying public education. The governor recently blamed our teachers for the race gap in student achievement. In Fall River where 2 schools have been declared underperforming, and teachers can be fired at will, there is very little firing of teachers because they realize the teachers are not the problem. A rally can only be part of the solution; the other is to have state elected leaders that support public higher education.

In a discussion item, Margaret Adams of the Brockton schools noted that if you have even one English language learner in your K-12 classroom you will need 80 hours of training by 2008, in 4 different categories. This is true if you have one student or an entire class. In Brockton this is every teacher. But there are districts with 40 such kids that need to train all their students according to the DoE, which is now backing off and saying only



some of them. This is all unfunded mandates, and onerous. Prior to 2002 we had licensed teachers in front of these kids – but the dual language teachers were let go – now every teacher is expected to do the “stand and deliver” act for these kids. The DoE doesn’t even ask, anymore, how much districts are spending on English language learners – makes it easier to bury the problem.

The BHE report on community college graduation rates was mentioned but not discussed.

Legislative Report

An analysis of the **Governor’s budget proposal** was distributed. (This was emailed to chapter leaders by Vice President LeBlanc, and is available on the MTA web site http://massteacher.org/news/headlines/news_2006-02-01a.cfm) Of note for higher ed is that new funding for higher education increases only \$29.9 million (3 percent) over last year. This leaves funding still 26 percent or \$341 million below FY01 when inflation is taken into account. Also, the governor has proposed increasing all employees’ health insurance premium contributions to 25 percent from the current 15 percent or 20 percent. There is no cost of living increase for retirees. The governor’s proposals on merit pay, etc. are not receiving any support in the legislature, as well as his proposals on changing the health care level of member contributions.

Len Paolillo thanked Joe Blum, etc. for the MTA’s leadership for help with funding our contracts.

MTA radio media campaign has started up. The script for higher ed is in production.

About 2,000 members of SEIU at UMass Boston, Amherst, and Lowell voted to join the MTA.

It was reported that it will be a **tough budget year** – perhaps a large dues increase request.

The State Labor Relations Committee is now all Romney appointees.

Most of the NEA membership is very conservative.

The Board voted the following.

- Adopted an investment management policy.
- Adopted a calendar for Board meetings next year.
 - Sunday Aug 6, 2006 at Williamstown
 - Fri/Sat Oct 13-14, 2006
 - Fri/Sat Dec 1-2, 2006
 - Fri/Sat Feb 2-3, 2007
 - Fri/Sat Mar 30-31, 2007
 - Thursday May 10, 2007 at Annual Meeting
 - Fri/Sat Jun 15-16, 2007
 - Sunday Aug 5, 2007 at Williamstown
- Oppose any provisions of House 1262 which infringe on faculty rights. This bill is designed to reduce the cost of textbooks for students in public colleges and universities, though it is poorly conceived and would probably have the opposite effect.
- To endorse the Coalition in support of universal health care for Massachusetts.
- To create a data base for the K-12 locals, on what percent of their health care their members must pay. Many cities and towns require a 50/50 split on indemnity plans, if they offer it, as well as for PPOs. For HMOs the employee often pays 25 to 40%. (Please recall that the MTA, MCCC and others have fought the Governor’s efforts to lower our pay by implementing higher employee contributions.)
- To **hold a statewide rally** in Boston this school year.

Respectfully Submitted

Phil Mahler
MTA Director for the MCCC