



**MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
FRIDAY/SATURDAY MARCH 28, 29, 2008**

The MTA Board met recently in Natick Friday evening and all day Saturday. At every meeting the Board receives more than a score of reports on a variety of things related to the functioning of the organization and initiatives and projects of the organization, as well as extensive discussion and resolution of business items. This meeting was no exception. We select those items that might be of the most interest to MCCC members, with some commentary and opinion from your directors.

**Ballot Initiative:** Much of what colors all of the Board's discussions lately, and regrettably, is the ballot initiative for this fall, which would eliminate the state income tax. Since this would eliminate 40% of the state's income, and since much state spending is non-discretionary - i.e. paying for things mandated by federal programs, things that simply have to be paid for, such as pensions (our pensions!), health care (our health care, among others), social support ("welfare") etc, would be seriously jeopardized. This is a threat to the career of every state employee (that's us), every city or town employee (our pre-K - 12 colleagues) as well as the basic quality of life for every citizen of the commonwealth. It is a real shame that all this energy must be spent just treading water, instead of making the Commonwealth's schools, roads, cities and towns, parks, public safety, health care, and general quality of life, better for us all.

**Polling Members and Voters:** The board heard the results of polls on areas of interest to MTA members and voters in general, concerning matters of interest to MTA members. These are generally for internal use, but a broad picture emerges which is clear even in the popular press and other evidence, that by and large members are satisfied with the MTA (no, no one is resting on their laurels), that voters believe there is significant "waste" in government (that includes your pension and health care, by the way), and that citizens are very concerned about increasing taxes.

**Proposed Bylaw changes:** The Board reviewed proposed bylaw changes for the annual meeting. The board supports, among others, two bylaw changes which extend the office duration of officers (president and vice president) and executive committee members to three years, from two years.

**Affiliate Services:** **Richard Sanders** reported on negotiations for our preK-12 colleagues around the commonwealth, as well as MTA training and other programs under his direction. As we have noted in the past, much of the news on these negotiations shows the stress placed on so many of our colleagues because of the state's financial crisis. Monies that were to be added to base pay become bonuses (so your base pay stays the same, and therefore your pension entitlement will be reduced), school committees that do not ratify negotiated contracts, demands for increased health care contributions, working longer hours, immediate lay-offs and pink slips (23 teachers in one town). It was noted that many problems are caused by mismanagement within the cities and towns - as has been reported even in the popular press lately.

The governor's attack on our health care payments is of course a high priority, and the crisis at Mass Bay continues to be on the MTA's radar screen as well.

**Budget:** The proposed budget for July 1 2008 - June 30 2009 was presented to the board by **Paul Toner**, Vice President and chair of the Advisory Budget Committee (ABC). The budget was recommended by the Board, to the Delegate Assembly.

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Of particular note is a recommended \$24 (6%) dues increase. As has been the case in the last few years, much of the increase is mandated by changes in federal law regarding pensions, caused by the Enron and other debacles of dishonesty and gross mismanagement, as well as the devastation to countless Americans when their company went bankrupt and those employees lost their pensions (things got so bad that even Washington noticed). Now pensions must be funded at 100%, and the MTA has a large pension fund. Fortunately the MTA Pension Committee has done a very good job in the last decade on a good investment return on the existing fund, or things would be even worse for us. Past MCCC President **Tom Parsons** has led that committee with great success.

The ABC also recommends, as does the Board, continuing the \$30 special assessment for communications and public relations around the perennial serious threats to our members, our schools, and our Commonwealth. In this case, the clear and looming threat of the ballot initiative, mentioned above, eliminated much of the usual and important Board discussion around the value of this budget item. Of course this money also supports initiatives around things like the Governor's current push to lower our full-time MCCC salaries by 3.4% by implementing a 67% increase in what we pay for health insurance.

The MCCC Board of Directors has requested in the past that the Treasurer and President work on increasing MTA support for the MCCC in the area of membership support. Having 2,000 full-time, and, notably, 4,000 part-time members, over 15 campuses and every corner of the state, is a special challenge. Several meetings occurred in the last six months between the MCCC President, Treasurer, and MCCC-MTA Directors and the MTA Vice president, and the Executive Director, on these issues. As reported by Paul Toner at the meeting, the MTA has already begun to provide printing of membership materials that the MCCC previously did internally. Additionally, Paul reported that a line item in the proposed budget has been increased which will increase MTA financial support for membership information collection.

**Kathy Skinner**, Director of MTA's Center for Education Policy and Practice, presented a revised draft document of a proposed teacher preparation policy paper. The document should be ready for a hearing at the annual meeting. Quiz: What year did Massachusetts begin to license teachers? 

**Joanne Blum**, Director of Governmental Services, presented, as always, on legislative concerns and updates. This centered on the ballot initiative. Joanne and **Chief Counsel Ann Clarke** discussed the ballot initiative at great length.

Joanne stated that the MTA is sending post cards to all MTA members to be sent to the Speaker of the House and their own state representative and state senator, opposing that 67% increase in our health insurance premiums.

**President Anne Wass and Vice president Paul Toner** always report on their recent activities. We can report that they both work hard to represent higher ed issues in every venue. We will mention that Paul is working on improvements to new member materials for higher ed members.

**MTA Today:** The last delegate assembly directed the MTA to "study the possibility of converting the publication of *MTA Today* from a printed and mailed publication to a Web-based, e-mailed and Web-accessed version." Extensive internal consultation and review of member polling and surveys indicates it would be unwise to abandon the print version of this basic communications feature. However, soon, the MTA will provide a way for members to elect to discontinue receiving the printed edition and instead receive an e-mail when the PDF edition is posted on the Web site.

Respectfully Submitted

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MTA Directors for the MCCC