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WILLIAMSTOWN SUMMER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE UPDATE AUGUST 11, 2006

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MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The MTA Board met at the annual MTA Williamstown conference on Sunday August 6. Selected highlights of the meeting which may be of interest to MCCC members follow.

This was Anne Wass' first meeting as new MTA President, and Paul Toner's as Vice President. They both did a great job.

The Board considered budget priorities for FY 08. A list of possible priorities was circulated by Vice President Paul Toner, and was commented on and modified by the Board. The modified list was prioritized by each Board member, and the list will be circulated to MTA staff and affiliate presidents for their prioritization.

In this election year, MTA lead counsel Ann Clark reviewed campaign contribution rules as they apply to the MTA and its affiliates. We want to scrupulously stay within the limits set by law and good judgment.

Ed Sullivan reported that the last retroactive monies have been approved for higher ed (and AF-SCME) contracts dating back to 2002. This has been a long battle for the MTA and the affected higher ed MTA affiliates. Though the MCCC was not directly affected, the MCCC was quite active in getting those contracts funded in 2002, including picketing at the state house. There remains a problem with the payout to retirees, so this will continue to be pursued.

Ed reported that Springfield remains a quagmire of anti-union animus by the state-appointed control board there. Len Paolillo of the state colleges thanked Ed and the MTA team for their work on holding our health contributions at their present percentage. This is no small matter. Of course the MCCC worked very hard on this issue, and we thank Joe LeBlanc, Donnie McGee and the SAC team for their leadership in this battle.

Ed thanked Priscilla Lyons for her long and valued service as head of affiliate services for higher education. Arthur Pippo, who once consulted for the MCCC-DCE unit, was appointed to replace Priscilla, who is moving back into the ranks of the MTA consultants.

Without taking a position on a candidate, the governor's race was discussed by the board. It was stressed that we need to help our members understand just how important the governor is to our professional careers. Besides the obvious, like deciding how much money to offer for raises to higher education units, the governor appoints people to the Board of Higher Education, the Department of Education, the state labor relations board, judges, and other state agents, all of whom directly affect our professional situation. The governor submits the annual budget to the legislature, which includes the governor's recommendations for higher education funding. We have long suffered from governors who do not value state employees, especially unionized ones, and part of our ongoing fight for dignity in the workplace has to include this key state officer. We know we do a great job for the commonwealth, and we know the MTA and MCCC are vital to our professional well being. We need a governor who understands that.



In new business, the board voted to

- Adopt an MTA/AFT Massachusetts Education Reform Proposal, centered on K-12 issues – which is the segment directly affected by the “ed reform” that started in the early 90s
- Permit legal services for retired members
- Adopt a memorial plan for MTA members who die while performing their professional duties
- Create a task force to consider ways to subsidize attendance at the annual MTA meeting for our newest members.

The MTA is working on other issues all the time, and notably in the hopper are recommendations around ESL teachers and school accountability. Right now all K-12 teachers might be required to take up to 80 hours of professional development around ESL, but it is clear that only a relatively small percentage of these teachers have students for whom this is appropriate. On school accountability, this is something that the legislature and Department of Education looks at in an ongoing fashion, and the MTA wants to ensure that a balanced picture is available on this issue, as well as other issues.

HELC MEETING

HELC is the Higher Education Leadership Council. Members are the presidents of the MTA higher ed affiliates and the higher ed MTA Directors. It is regularly attended by the MTA consultants for higher ed. For the MCCC, President Joe LeBlanc, Phil and Sara are members. On Wednesday August 9 at Williamstown HELC held its meeting and invited all higher ed attendees. About 8 or 10 MCCC members were at that meeting, as was MTA President Anne Wass.

HELC Chair Donna Johnson thanked Priscilla Lyons for her long and valued service as head of MTA Higher Education. Priscilla is stepping down from this position and returning to her role as a field service consultant. Donna also welcomed Arthur Pippo, who was appointed to this position. Art was the DCE consultant for the MCCC for several years.

Arline Isaacson reviewed the highlights of MTA legislative action for higher ed this past year. It was noted that much of what they do is fight challenges to our rights and benefits. Notable this year was once again the challenge to our health insurance payments, and notably again we kept our current level of contribution. This will save our members hundreds of dollars a year. Of major note also is the victory on the "03-buyback" for which Arline gave much credit to the MCCC team. No question about it, without the MCCC's efforts through SAC this real, meaningful benefit would not have happened.

Arline also reported that that the FY07 budget gave the following increases to the segments: University: 6.6%; State Colleges: 3.6%; Community Colleges: 2.5%. Imagine what we could do with a 6.6% increase, or even a 3.6% increase ...

Respectfully Submitted
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MTA Directors for the MCCC