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MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING FRIDAY/SATURDAY OCTOBER 13, 14, 2006

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

Friday Evening, October 13, 2006

The Board heard a presentation by the MTA auditors. Things seem to be in good shape, financially. A big help is the readjustment of the present value of the MTA pension liability. This went down by \$14M due largely to better predicted returns on investments. Of course this could do exactly the opposite thing next year!

The Board was debriefed on the Springfield contract settlement. Recall that Springfield was declared in financial crisis by the legislature, which imposed government by a state control board. These Romney appointees have used this opportunity to go after the Springfield teachers, among others. On the financial side, the settlement is roughly 2.75% per year, with a merit component to appointment to certain "lead" positions. Steps are frozen. Fred Dougherty, MTA consultant, noted that it was "hell", and not unlike higher ed bargaining, where one is not bargaining with local people one knows, but with people representing the governor and his agenda, who don't give a hoot about teachers or the local situation.

The Board also ratified a contract settlement with the FSO, the union for the MTA field representatives (i.e. MCCC's Katy D'Urso and Michelle Gallagher).

Saturday, October 14, 2006

The meeting was called to order at 9:12 a.m. The bulk of the session focused on three issues: the media campaign for the governor's race, proposed MTA support for H.4157 and recent proposals by municipalities in regard to their participation in the G.I.C.

Media Campaign for the Governor's Race

The Direct Mail Campaign was presented first. This direct mailing campaign is targeting voters who are weak in their support of Deval Patrick and are likely to switch, young women and independent voters. There will be separate mailings for different demographic members. Retirees, ESPs, PK-12 and Higher Education members will be sent mailings that directly relate to their issues. Examples of each type of mailing were sent around for the Board to view.

The radio and television campaign was presented next. There will be two different radio and two different television ads. Both radio and television ads will be aired during prime time beginning October 16. The target market areas will be Boston and Springfield. There was no mention of which radio stations will be airing the radio ads. The television ads will be aired on ABC, CBS and NBC affiliated stations.



In related areas, the Healey campaign's negative ads were discussed as well as an extremely negative mailing that is being sent to Republicans by that campaign. Much disgust was expressed by Board Members toward the Healey campaign and its misleading tactics.

Suggestions were given to Board Members on how to answer questions from those in their locals regarding statements made by Healey in her ads.

Ed Sullivan encouraged the Board to talk up the election with their locals and to encourage everyone they know, spouses, friends, relatives, etc. to vote.

H 4157, An Act Relative to Teacher and Administrator Quality Throughout the Commonwealth

MTA is proposing support of this bill. There was lengthy discussion of particulars in the bill. Many PK-12 are concerned with language in the bill that could lead to the possibility of both students' MCAS scores and parent communication being used as part of the teacher evaluation process. As the bill relates to Higher Ed, there are sections of the bill that pertain to teacher preparation programs. There are questions concerning the language in the bill. Clarification of the language and how this will directly impact current programs needs to happen. There are also questions as to what changes may have to be made in order to be in compliance should this bill become law.

Recent Proposals by Municipalities in Regard to Their Participation in G.I.C.

There is growing concern among PK-12 about the actions of some cities and town regarding health benefits for current and retired MTA members. Remember PK-12 teacher health benefits are negotiated with their respective municipality. We in Higher Ed receive our health benefits through the G.I.C. (General Insurance Commission) and are not able to negotiate health benefits.

As part of the recent settlement in Springfield, it was negotiated that the teachers would receive their health benefits through the G.I.C. It was determined that joining the G.I.C. was cheaper and would provide better coverage for employees than what the city was currently offering. The employer contribution will be 75% and the employee contribution will be 25%. Could a change in our contribution rate be in the future? This is something that needs to be watched.

It was also mentioned that some municipalities are considering opting out of the G.I.C. for coverage for their retirees. By law these cities and town are required to provide health benefits but are not required to contribute to the cost. (Retirees currently have a 10% contribution rate.) This could mean that the retiree would be responsible for the full cost of their health benefits! MTA had been dealing with this change on a case by case basis but with the current trend will be looking more closely at which municipalities are opting out.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted
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