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## **Report**

### **MTA Board of Directors Meeting Saturday, January 10, 2004**

The MTA Board met at the Natick Crown Plaza on January 10, 2004. This was an abbreviated meeting to replace the one that was scheduled for December 5-6 but was snowed out.

Some highlights which might be of interest to our MCCC colleagues follow.

### ***Finances***

MTA Director of Finance and Accounting Kathleen Conway presented financial reports and noted they are much improved over those in the past. The MTA is implementing a new accounting software package that brings major improvements.

Membership is down 1,877 compared to the same time last year; the prediction of the contingency budget committee was 1,880 so they did a good job on that! The contingency budget freezes about \$900,000 of the approved budget to allow for reduced membership and unexpected expenses, particularly a very expensive legal case. The contingency budget includes a hiring freeze on MTA employees.

The Board was warned that if the MTA is to sustain its ability to meet the challenges of our society's attacks on public education, we need to be thinking about a substantial MTA dues increase.

### ***K-12 Under Attack***

Discussion by many of the K-12 educators on the Board noted that most of their members feel much too pressed for time to do their job. They are "drowning in a sea of minutia." Also, it was noted that a school principal would rather have their school deemed academically deficient than dangerous (both of which are classifications of the Board of Education), and so there is pressure to not properly discipline (with suspension or expulsion) dangerous students.

It was noted that many Massachusetts schools, especially in urban centers, are being called deficient, and that this is a real threat to unit members when people are looking for someone to blame.

There are many open K-12 contracts, mostly over salary and health benefit costs. Zero/zero/zero salary offers are not uncommon, nor are caps on spending for health benefits.

In one town the school committee won't even meet, because they are waiting for an override vote (they claim, in any case).

### ***Personnel Issues***

The Board reviewed personnel issues, in Executive Session.



## **Calendar**

The Board adopted the calendar for next year's Board meetings:

Sunday, August 8, 2004 (Williamstown)  
Friday/Saturday, October 22-23, 2004  
Friday/Saturday, December 3-4, 2004  
Friday/Saturday, February 4-5, 2005

Friday/Saturday/Sunday, April 1-2-3, 2005  
Thursday, May 12, 2005 (Annual Meeting)  
Friday/Saturday, June 24-25, 2005  
Sunday, August 7, 2005 (Williamstown)

## **Higher Ed Contract Funding**

The funding of the university, AFSCME, and other higher ed contracts was discussed. Executive Director Ed Sullivan is justifiably proud of this great victory for our colleagues. It also preserves the sanctity of collecting bargaining for all of us, which is even more important than the financial gains. Len Paolillo thanked the Board for its support on behalf of the state colleges (who also were not part of the bill), I did on behalf of the MCCC, and Donna Johnson did for the USA (University Staff Associates).

The MTA is aware of the funding issue for the MCCC contract extension, and is working to ensure the full funding of the university contracts (retroactive pay and funding in this year's budget).

## **Civil Marriage Supported**

The Board voted, at its October meeting, that the MTA supports civil marriage rights, and the MTA will act accordingly as these rights, established by the SJC, come under attack by in-state and out-of-state forces.

## **Media Initiative**

The MTA will be running radio ads on Boston stations WBZ, WROR, and WTKK and Attleboro WARL during drive time (6-10 am, 3-7 pm) Jan 12-16 and Jan 20-23. This will start out talking about "horse sense, incense, and common sense". The goal is to make a case for preserving education funding in the next state budget.

## **NEA Report**

In a report on the NEA, membership pressures were noted also, and the possibility of an increase in the PR/Organizing assessment in the next few years. Like the MTA, the NEA is trying to cut back on spending. Also, the NEA is working to mitigate the damage being done by the No Child Left Behind legislation.

## **Old Business**

The MCCC Board requested that the issue of letters to the editor in the *MTA Today* be brought up for discussion. This was scheduled for the December 5-6 meeting but had to be cut out of this agenda because the meeting was shortened. It should be on the agenda for the next meeting, February 6-7.

## **Next Meeting**

The next MTA Board meeting is Friday and Saturday, February 6 and 7.

Submitted by Phil Mahler for

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Tom Parsons  
Phil Mahler