

Massachusetts Community College Council

Joseph LeBlanc, President
Diana (Donnie) McGee, Vice President
Philip Mahler, Treasurer
Phyllis Barrett, Secretary



Don Williams, Communications
Dennis Fitzgerald, Grievance
Joseph Rizzo, Grievance
Hilaire Jean-Gilles, Research

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting
Mechanics Place/Worcester
Friday, September 8, 2006

Present: President Joe LeBlanc, Vice President Donnie McGee, Treasurer Philip Mahler, Secretary Phyllis Barrett; At-Large Members Geri Curley, Lois Martin, Abe Sherf; MTA Consultant Michelle Gallagher; Communications Coordinator Don Williams. **Not Present:** MTA Consultant Katie D'Urso (on assignment).

President Joe LeBlanc called the meeting to order at 10:45 a.m.

MOTION: Approve the minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting and Retreat of August 8 and 9, 2006 (Curley/Mahler). **PASSED.**

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

President LeBlanc has had a busy week, visiting North Shore, Springfield, and Bunker Hill to talk about the proposed contract. He and/or other members of the Day team will be visiting Berkshire, Holyoke, Bristol, Cape Cod, Greenfield, Massasoit, Quinsigamond, and Mass Bay next week. He thanked Team Spokesperson Katie D'Urso for her excellent work on the road and behind the scenes, ironing out language and fielding questions. There have been a lot of questions about Licensures and Certifications particularly. The Executive Committee discussed ways of responding to these on an ongoing basis. President LeBlanc is also scheduling chapter visits and cluster group meetings, and he continues to work on new member orientation materials. The president is also putting together a flyer to publicize Fall Leadership Night on Monday, September 25.

President LeBlanc reported that he and Vice President McGee will be meeting with the MCCC-PAC soon to plan activities for the General Election. He announced that MTA's Candidate Recommendation Committee is seeking a volunteer to serve in Congressional District #2 (the Springfield area). The deadline for applying is September 29. Anyone interested should contact him. President LeBlanc also reminded members who have not yet received a membership card from MTA to contact the MCCC office. President LeBlanc will be attending the BHE meeting at Roxbury on October 19.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President Donnie McGee reported that the Springfield Education Association has finally settled its contract; she thanked those who supported these teachers during the difficult battle with the governor's Finance Control Board. The vice president also reported that the '03 Buyback Law goes into effect on October 17; all state employees will receive notification of the law and the process. The SAC steering committee met on September 6 and agreed on the following legislative priorities for Fall 2006: Higher Ed Funding, Chapter 150E reform, adjunct health insurance, and the Optional Retirement Plan. Another key SAC focus will be this fall's elections, with attendance at fundraisers, candidate endorsements, and coordination of campaign activities. SAC still needs representatives from Massasoit, Greenfield, Berkshire, Mass Bay, Middlesex, and Roxbury. The steering committee will meet in Boston on October 5; the full SAC committee will meet in Worcester on October 12.

Vice President McGee has also been busy, helping to resolve an issue on her own campus, attending the Women's Campaign Forum of the NEA in Waltham recently, attending a fundraiser for Senator Joan

Menard this week, and developing a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed Day contract. As a member of the team, she will be presenting on the contract at Bristol, Massasoit, and Mass Bay. She will also be attending a meeting of the MCCC-PAC with President LeBlanc later this month.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Treasurer Phil Mahler reported that he has reviewed 140 applications for the opening in the office. He thanked Secretary Barrett for her help in choosing candidates to be interviewed. He reported that those interviewed so far have all been more than satisfactory, so he is optimistic about filling the position with a strong candidate soon. Treasurer Mahler asked for advice about the possibility of offering a family health plan for a new employee. It was agreed that the Finance Committee should be consulted and that the Board would have to adopt an appropriate policy. Another of the treasurer's current tasks is reconciling the MCCC and MTA membership lists. The treasurer also reported that the billing of part-timers in the Day contract is going surprisingly smoothly. The office has sent out about 400 requests for dues, and most responses have been friendly.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Secretary Barrett plans to update the *Leadership Directory* again at the end of September. Corrections are welcome. As chair of the Personnel Committee, she reminded the committee that all four coordinators will be evaluated this year. The composition of this committee needs to be finalized soon. She also reported that she has enjoyed being involved in the hiring process for the office position.

DAY BARGAINING REPORT

President LeBlanc reported that team members are currently visiting the chapters to answer questions about the tentative agreement. Most of the response seems positive. Questions are arising, however, concerning such things as the awarding of points for brand new and for very senior members of the unit. There have also been a lot of questions about licenses and certificates, which will be funded for the first time in this contract. President LeBlanc pointed out that there are always individual issues that do not come up at the time of the talks at the table. Answers are being sought from the appropriate sources. Of course, members are also concerned about the timelines for funding, and the president stressed that we will aggressively push for funding within the parameters of the process outlined in Chapter 150E. Since the legislature is now in informal session, this means that the *Agreement* would most likely not be funded until next spring.

REPORT OF THE MTA CONSULTANTS

President LeBlanc reported that Consultant Katie D'Urso, who is also the Day Team Spokesperson, is at Mount Wachusett today with Team Member Gail Stuart, doing a presentation on the contract for the chapter.

Consultant Michelle Gallagher reported on an unfavorable Labor Relations Commission finding in a Bristol case concerning changes to the college's requirements for Criminal Justice faculty. She is considering an appeal. Consultant Gallagher shared information on MTA field staff organizing responsibilities for the election season. She also shared copies of a proposed implementation schedule for electronic communication in DCE and of a draft of the joint Committee on Under-Enrolled Courses' proposed salary guidelines, which will now be shared with the college presidents and then bargained.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Coordinator Don Williams circulated copies of the September newsletter, which has a front page article on the proposed Day *Agreement*. The October issue will emphasize the importance of getting involved in and voting in the upcoming elections. Several people suggested additional items that should be included

in that issue, and there was another discussion of appropriate material for the proposed “Your Union Working for You” feature. Coordinator Williams was also charged with mailing the ratification ballot and accompanying information last week.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

Trust Board member Abe Sherf reported that the next meeting is scheduled for September 22. At that time, the Board is likely to sign a new three-year agreement with MetLife. Costs in the first year will be the same, and it is hoped that improved benefits may be negotiated in the remaining years of the contract. Abe also reported that he has recently helped several members overcome difficulties with MetLife’s failure to pay some claims due to technicalities.

MTA BOARD

Board member Phil Mahler noted that the recent report he prepared for the MCCC on the MTA Board meeting formed the basis of a report from Vice President Paul Toner and was distributed to all of the other MTA Board members for use at their locals by Paul. Paul gave Phil credit for his help and plans to share Phil’s report with all MTA Board members in the future.

NEW BUSINESS

A. SAC Motion: ORP Ad Hoc Committee

MOTION: That the MCCC Board of Directors create an ad hoc Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) Committee to explore the concerns of members enrolled in the ORP and develop an appropriate action plan. **PASSED.**

B. Health Insurance for Office Staff

MOTION: Recommend to the Board that the MCCC offer a family health insurance benefit for office staff at a 20% employee contribution rate, subject to Finance Committee approval (Mahler/Curley). **PASSED.**

DISCUSSION/ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Fall Leadership Night

President LeBlanc announced that the MTA Benefits folks are providing \$500 in door prizes, as they did last year. He hopes that a varied program will appeal to members at various points in their careers, boosting the attendance. He will be firming up plans at the hotel later this afternoon.

B. Higher Ed Bill

President LeBlanc shared a press release from the State House News Bureau, updating the situation with this currently stalled piece of legislation. There is still reason to hope that a good bill will be passed. The president and vice president encourage calls to rank and file legislators at this point, supporting expanded funding for public higher education.

C. MTA Budget Priorities Input

Locals are being asked by MTA for their budgetary priorities. Executive Committee members worked together to respond to a form soliciting the MCCC’s input.

D. MCCC and MTA Strategic Directions Initiative

President LeBlanc announced that MTA Director of Affiliate Services Richard Sanders will attend the October Executive Committee meeting to discuss the Board/chapter presidents retreat planned for January.

E. Adjunct Ad Hoc Committee

President LeBlanc suggested that adjuncts might be interested in forming an ad hoc committee, somewhat like the one formed by professional staff several years ago. He would like to see adjuncts become more engaged in and comfortable with the union.

F. NEA Membership Grant

President LeBlanc and Consultant Gallagher reported that the MCCC has applied for a grant in support of the membership orientation project.

G. Weingarten Rights Legal Opinion

In light of an opinion just received from MTA Legal, members are always encouraged to assert their right to have a union representative accompany them to any meeting that they believe may affect their employment.

H. Adjunct Request re: Blue Cross/Blue Shield

Consultant Gallagher volunteered to do some research on the possibility and expense of establishing a group of members who could purchase Blue Cross insurance. She noted that the issue was explored several years ago by a management-union DCE committee and was not found to be possible because the group would be self-selecting and would not require participation by all group members; however, the matter will be reexamined.

I. Campaign 2006

Ideally, SAC would like every member to be involved in a local campaign. SAC Chair McGee and her steering committee are trying to identify at least one member on each campus who would facilitate the effort.

J. MassPirg Affordable Textbook Bill

Unfortunately, a well intended effort by MassPirg to make textbooks more affordable seems to be premised on quite a bit of inaccurate information. MassPirg may be invited to attend a Higher Education Leadership Council (HELIC) meeting to discuss this issue further later this semester.

K. Roxbury Issue

It was agreed that the MCCC officers and Board of Directors stand ready to support the Roxbury chapter in the campaign to improve the situation for adjuncts teaching under-enrolled courses there. The chapter is urged to make specific requests for assistance.

The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Phyllis Barrett, Secretary