

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 Board of Directors Meeting
Mechanics Place/Worcester
Friday, April 18, 2008

Present: President Joe LeBlanc, Vice President Donnie McGee, Treasurer Philip Mahler, Secretary Phyllis Barrett; Sara Satham (BH/alt.), Greg Sethares (Br/alt.), Claudine Barnes (CC), Rosemarie Freeland (G), Karen Riedl (H/alt.), Lois Martin (Ma), Ned McGuire (MB), David Kalivas (Mi), Ellen Madigan Pratt (MW), Sharron Gillies (Q), Steve Proietti (NE), Rick Ponticelli (NS/alt.), Roberta Albano (ST); Communications Coordinator Don Williams; MTA Consultant Miles Stern. **Not Present:** June Tooley (Be), Clark Grain (R); Consultant Katie D'Urso. **Guests:** Bob Gillies, Chair of Bylaws Committee and NEA Director; Joe Rizzo, DCE Grievance Coordinator.

President Joe LeBlanc called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

The agenda was adopted, by consensus.

The minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of March 28, 2008, were approved, by consensus.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

President LeBlanc reported that the PHENOM Rally/Lobby Day in Boston went well. While in Boston, he set up an appointment with Rep. Kevin Murphy, to lobby for the Board of Higher Education's request for an increase in Massgrant; the budget for this program has been slashed in recent years, impacting our students. The president also reported that the Higher Education Dinner in Boston on April 4 was a great event; MCCC leaders who attended had a chance to meet the new education commissioner, Paul Reville, who agreed to attend an upcoming MCCC Board meeting. The first Adjunct Cluster Meeting was held at Cape Cod this week; President LeBlanc particularly thanked Vice President McGee, Consultant Stern, new DCE Negotiating Team Chair Diana Yohe, and Cape Cod adjunct activist Betsy Smith for their contributions to the success of the meeting. Similar gatherings are scheduled for O'Connor's Restaurant on West Boylston Street, near the Quinsigamond campus, and at North Shore's Danvers and Lynn campuses, both on April 22. Another group will meet at Roxbury on April 28, and a Western Mass cluster meeting will be scheduled soon. The president also shared Massasoit Chapter President Kenn Anania's response to a recent episode of *Canterbury's Law*, a program on Fox TV. The show, which has since been cancelled, slammed the faculty at Massasoit. President LeBlanc also noted that Board of Higher Education Chair Fred Clark is seeking input from MCCC members for the Commission Search Committee's leadership statement. Anyone who would like to provide feedback can go to <http://www.mass.edu/currentinit/currentinitCommissionerSearchPublicInput.asp>.

Regarding the health insurance contribution issue, President LeBlanc reminded the Board that the House Ways and Means Committee Budget includes the increases proposed by the governor. Debate on the budget begins on April 28, and amendments will continue through this week, including one to eliminate the increases. The president urged members to mail the postcards they received from MTA to their representatives before April 28.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President Donnie McGee reported that state revenues are exceeding predictions for the current fiscal year, though some of the increase reflects one-time gains from large income tax recovery cases. The

current House budget of \$28.8 billion includes a cigarette tax hike, lowered corporate excise taxes, and Governor Patrick's proposal for the tiered health insurance contribution rate. Representative Marty Walsh will propose an amendment to delete the change to the health insurance rates; a roll call vote on the amendment is expected during the week of April 28. Currently at least 106 of 157 representatives are "on board." Vice President McGee thanked the MCCC Strategic Action Team for lobbying at the State House and locally to garner legislative support for Rep. Walsh's letter opposing the changes to the health insurance contribution rates. The ballot initiative to eliminate the state income tax continues to loom, however. The MCCC will work with the MTA to defeat the initiative through the education of the membership and grassroots organizing. Several regional workshops have already been scheduled.

In legislative news, the governor's \$2 billion/10-year capital spending plan for public higher education has widespread legislative support, but a redrafted version awaits approval by the Joint Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures, and State Assets. The adjunct health insurance and pension bills are awaiting review in the Senate and House Ways and Means Committees, respectively. The Peace Corps Plus Bill may be revised to focus only on higher education faculty and professional staff; this bill is also awaiting review in the Senate Ways and Means Committee. For more information on pending legislation, Vice President McGee recommends visiting the union website, <http://mccc-union.org/>.

The Optional Retirement Plan Ad Hoc Committee met in Worcester in March, and Vice President McGee and Jack Flannagan from MTA Governmental will meet with Senator Marc Pacheco, Chair of the Senate Post Audit and Oversight Committee, on April 28 to discuss ORP enrollment issues. In the meantime, anyone enrolled in ORP is encouraged to share concerns with the vice president. The committee may meet again in May. Vice President McGee also reported that the SAC Statewide Committee will be meeting in May.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Treasurer Phil Mahler shared the financial statements, noting that a seeming increase in spending this year is largely explained by the addition of a line item for "bad debt" not previously listed in the reports. The treasurer reported that the office has been busy processing the election results. The staff poll all of those elected as delegates to the MTA and NEA annual meetings to determine whether or not they will actually attend; they also reserve hotel rooms for the MTA meeting and handle additional paperwork. Treasurer Mahler recommends that next year all of these duties be handled electronically. The office staff have also sent out letters to over 1000 individuals with past due accounts, and they are being more vigilant about the ineligible list. Treasurer Mahler noted that the business office was repainted recently and that new curtains have been ordered for that area and for the boardroom. Regarding other proposed upgrades to the boardroom, it has been determined that removing the post in the middle of the room would be prohibitively expensive.

REPORT OF THE MTA CONSULTANTS

Consultant D'Urso is out today with laryngitis. She submitted a written report updating the status of negotiations of nursing salaries at Holyoke and Mass Bay. A good salary agreement has been reached at Holyoke, but the college is insisting on a broad waiver of future grievance rights for both nurses and all other unit members as part of the agreement. At Mass Bay, the union team is awaiting a written proposal from management. Consultant D'Urso also reported that Appeals Committee is drafting a job description for a Grade 6 Senior Transfer Counselor position and that the Licenses and Certifications Committee is preparing to take up the 187 requests received; the committee has also developed a form to be filled out by unit members who are appealing a denial of certification points by the college.

Consultant Miles Stern reported that a chair, Diana Yohe (Br), and vice chair, Richard Devine (Br/Q), have been elected by the DCE Negotiating Team. The team met with management for the first time this week. Team members recently attended some valuable workshops related to contingent faculty issues

and will finish crafting priorities once they have the membership survey results. They are also discussing how to communicate with members as negotiations proceed. Regarding the unit determination/CAS cases, Consultant Stern reported that while the unit status of some positions will have to be bargained, agreement has been reached between union and management on the status of the majority of the disputed positions. Consultant Stern urged members to send their legislators the postcards distributed recently by MTA in support of maintaining the health insurance contribution. He also noted that MTA President Wass, Vice President Toner, and Higher Education Director Pippo met recently to discuss strategies for procuring GIC insurance coverage for some adjuncts.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Coordinator Don Williams reported that the April newsletter is going out next week. There will be a feature story on the naming of the boardroom in honor of retiring Bunker Hill Director and MCCC activist Geri Curley. Coordinator Williams also reported that the postcard reminding DCE members to participate in the online survey has gone out, but there is a possibility that delivery was delayed in some geographical areas. He is soliciting projected attendance at the Delegate Assembly from the chapters.

MTA BOARD REPORT

Board Member Phil Mahler reported that recent polls reveal that voters are not sympathetic to cuts in state workers' benefits; in fact, they see state employees' health benefits as a sign of government waste. It is well to keep this reality in mind in anticipating this fall's ballot initiative aimed at abolishing the state income tax. More bad news: MTA Consultant Richard Sanders reports teacher layoffs, bonuses vs. increases on base, longer worker hours, and calls for increased health care contributions in various towns and districts. Phil also announced that MTA is proposing a \$24 dues increase this year, \$19 just to address the need to fund pensions at 100%. He pointed out that the MCCC has seen an increase in support from MTA in the last few years, and both he and fellow Board member Sara Satham attested to the commitment of the MTA president and vice president to higher education issues.

The report elicited a lively conversation about how to combat the media tendency to exacerbate the problem of public antipathy to issues related to public employees. Director Karen Riedl reported that she has suggested a teach-in at Holyoke in the fall on the ballot initiative--an all-campus effort that would engage faculty, staff, and students.

NEA BOARD REPORT

NEA Board member Bob Gillies reported on the progress of a federal bill related to student loans. The next NEA Board meeting begins on April 30 in Washington, D.C.

REPORT OF THE DCE GRIEVANCE COORDINATOR

Although Coordinator Joe Rizzo generally comments primarily on trends in his spring report to the Board, he began his remarks by sharing the tale of a recent arbitration at Northern Essex. DCE faculty grieved the fact that they were expected to attend an orientation that was scheduled between the last summer session and the fall semester. The contract allows for one required meeting in each session, but the arbitrator interpreted the language as meaning "one meeting per session," not necessarily "during" the session, and the MCCC lost. Coordinator Rizzo was disappointed and expressed concern that a new, unpleasant era may be dawning with the transition to a new college presidents' Counsel.

Coordinator Rizzo then commented on current trends. He noted that the number of grievances is rising again after a real downturn. More of these grievances have to do with discipline now than with salary or work assignment issues. Under the current agreement, 131 cases have been filed; 38% of these grievances have been won, 29% resolved, and only 1% lost (the others are pending or were withdrawn).

Coordinator Rizzo also reported that DCE unit members are still having great success when they file for unemployment. Regarding a problem related to the use of the evaluation form for full-time faculty teaching online courses, Coordinator Rizzo reported that the State-Wide Distance Education Implementation Committee has agreed that the current form will continue to be used. However, the Counsel's office will communicate to evaluators that the online evaluations shall be considered but may not be averaged with the results of evaluation forms for traditional courses because the scales differ on the two forms.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Bylaw Motion

In an attempt to clarify the intent of a proposal made by the Executive Committee and voted by the Board, the following language changes, *in italics*, were offered as a friendly amendment:

MOTION: The Board of Directors shall be composed of the (delete *constitutional*) officers, one member elected for a term of one year from each chapter by the members of the chapter, and two at-large part-time members elected by *part-time/adjunct members* as part of the regular election cycle each year. The term of office for members other than officers shall be one year beginning with the June Board meeting of the year in which members are elected. The Board of Directors is empowered to fill vacancies *in the two at-large part-time positions*. (Kalivas/Gillies). **PASSED.**

B. Agency Fee Mailing

MOTION: Spend up to \$1500 for a mailing to part-time/adjunct agency fee payers to encourage them to join the MCCC (Kalivas/Freeland). **PASSED.**

DISCUSSION/ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. ECLOP Program

At this month's Executive Committee meeting, the group discussed President LeBlanc's proposal for a daylong program for emerging chapter leaders. The purpose of the workshop is to increase grassroots member participation; examine and revise the mission statement; and sustain, support, and develop new leaders. Activities will foster effective communication and team building skills. The event, which is partially supported by an NEA grant, is scheduled for May 28, from 10-4, at the Worcester office.

B. Weblog

President LeBlanc demonstrated the blog he proposes to launch. It will be linked to the MCCC website. There was discussion about the potential perils of maintaining and monitoring the site. Consultant Stern volunteered to research the possibility of a presentation for the Board by someone from another union that has implemented this kind of communication tool. This issue will be followed up at the June meeting.

C. Delegate Assembly

With thirteen chapters reporting projected numbers, it looks as if the necessary quorum will be met.

D. Mass Bay

Director Ned McGuire thanked the Board for its support of the chapter.

E. Campus Round-up

Campus security issues surfaced as a theme today. At Middlesex, a person armed with a BB gun and a knife was apprehended in the library. At Northern Essex, a professor was verbally accosted and chased down a hallway by a student. It was noted that some campuses have armed their security guards and that others are currently debating that issue, including Holyoke. At Cape Cod, a public address system is being installed. It was agreed that this is an area for ongoing discussion.

Miscellaneous issues include the recent finding that 75% of credits taught at Bristol are taught by adjuncts; NEASC's identification of a mix of strengths and weaknesses at Cape Cod, the latter including failure to include faculty in decision making, adjunct issues, building conditions, and failure to fund the library adequately; a national award going to the student newspaper editor at Mount Wachusett, who blew the whistle when the college president removed copies of the newspaper before a visit from the governor; and rumors of a summer dress code at Quinsigamond! Refreshing news included Rosemarie Freeland's announcement of the Second Annual Gretchen Watson Pub Quiz, which helps to fund two scholarships at Greenfield honoring their beloved late chapter president. Rosemarie also hyped an upcoming softball game against rival Holyoke.

Finally, Ned McGuire (MB) and Sharron Gillies (Q) both took the opportunity to announce that they will not be continuing on the Board of Directors next year. They will be missed.

F. MCCC News Ideas

Suggestions included an article on the campus security issue and an article on the capital outlay bill.

G. Len Paolillo for NEA Executive Committee

President LeBlanc reminded the Board that Len Paolillo, MTA activist and faculty member at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, is running for the NEA Executive Committee. Mounting this kind of campaign is costly; donations would be appreciated.

H. Farewell Secretary Barrett

At the end of the meeting, members of the Board presented outgoing secretary Phyllis Barrett with a lovely engraved vase, flowers symbolic of their regard for her, and a card signed by everyone. She expressed her gratitude for their friendship over the years.

The meeting adjourned at 3:31 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for May 16, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,



Phyllis Barrett, Secretary