



## MEA has cordial meeting with labor commissioner

MEA president William Dworkin and other MEA officials had a cordial, one-hour meeting with labor relations commissioner James Hanley at his office on May 13. This was the first official contact between the MEA and the new city administration.

Mr. Hanley was optimistic that the state legislature would pass a retirement incentive similar to those adopted in recent years and the MEA asked that all managers be given the opportunity to participate. When Mr. Hanley said that no decisions have been made about who would be eligible for any incentive, Mr. Perlmutter concluded, "Our concerns are heightened since we have not received the assurances we wanted. We will continue our lobbying on this point."

The MEA representatives requested a change in the formula under which accrued sick leave is paid to managers upon termination as an additional incentive for managers to leave now.

Currently managers who have more than 60 days accumulated sick leave get paid for one-third of the accumulated amount while managers with less than 60 days sick leave balance upon termination receive nothing. The MEA wants one days pay for every two days sick leave remaining at the time employment is terminated, the same as unionized staff receive.

Mr. Hanley commented that no change in the terminal sick leave formulation is being contemplated for this year. Mr. Perlmutter reported that he "believes that business eventually can be done" with the Bloomberg administration on this issue to the MEA board of directors on May 14.

Deputy commissioner Pam Silverblatt confirmed that the mayor has eliminated the vacancy control board, which permits agencies to implement personnel actions without city hall approval provided those actions are within the agency's budget. Mr. Dworkin said, "The



L to r are (seated) Pam Silverblatt, James Hanley and William Dworkin, (standing) Joe Ramaglia, Ed Perlmutter, Roy Durig and Steve Ferrer.

MEA views this as a positive step since the past inability of agencies to fill vacant positions in a timely manner has long been a source of irritation for city managers."

The MEA expressed concern that the administration is seeking agreement with the unions to reduce health care benefits as a way of easing the city's fiscal situation. Mr. Hanley did not comment. Mr. Perlmutter explained, "Health care benefits are a mandatory subject of collective bargaining so an agreement with the unions is required to change them for submanagerial

staff. Fringes for managers will follow that pattern."

Concern was also articulated by the MEA leadership about the failure of city agencies to inform managers of their rights when unions are seeking representation rights to titles currently considered managerial. While Mr. Hanley and Ms. Silverblatt conceded that this was a problem, they emphasized that the agencies were responsible to inform managers. But they did agree to review how the agencies are doing this job.

The meeting concluded by discussing continuation of the Managerial Issues Task Force chaired by the chief of staff of the first deputy mayor. Mr. Dworkin asked that Mr. Hanley recommend to city hall that this task force convene and that the mayor meet with the MEA before the end of the year. Mr. Hanley replied that he would take these requests into consideration.

Representing the MEA in addition to Mr. Dworkin and Mr. Perlmutter were executive vice president Roy Durig, treasurer Steve Ferrer, secretary Joe Ramaglia and associate executive director John Boden.

## Dworkin slate elected



Judith Warren, associate director of social services at the Queens Hospital Center, casting her ballot in the December 10th election for MEA officer. Election committee chair Jerry McCormick and committee member Vincent Norman observe. The slate led by president William Dworkin was elected. The full story is on page 4.

### General Membership Meeting Tuesday, June 28, 5:45 p.m.

HRA Central Office  
180 Water Street (corner John Street)  
12th Floor Conference Room

### Retirement Incentive

At press deadline the state legislature passed a retirement incentive as part of the new state budget. Please call the MEA hotline at (212) 946-1455 for the latest information about it.

# NYCERS to begin checkoff of retirees' dues

At the urging of the Retirees Chapter, the MEA has secured pension system agreement to have the \$30 per year dues of retirees directly deducted from their pension distributions.

Retired managers have received a mailing from the MEA asking them to authorize the New York City Employees Retirement System to deduct \$2.50 monthly from their pension payments beginning with the July distribution. Retirees were also asked to send checks to the office for \$15 to cover their dues for the first six months of 2002.

Checkoff only has been agreed to by NYCERS. The few MEA members whose pensions are paid from the Board of Education system are not affected and they must continue to pay the \$30 by check annually.

"Checkoff will mean that retirees will have one less check to write each winter and the MEA will save itself the tedious job of mailing and processing membership renewals," explained associate executive director John Boden. He said that the renewal notices for 2002, which are usually mailed in January, were delayed until the agreement with NYCERS was secured.

Georgia Williams, the Retiree Chapter director, appointed a committee at the chapter's December meeting to work with MEA officials to improve the effectiveness of the recruitment and retention of memberships from retired managers in response to concerns voiced by long-time MEA activist Frederick Ewald.

At about the same time, the MEA leadership became aware that DC 37 had secured checkoff from NYCERS for retired union members. The chapter committee enthusiastically endorsed the checkoff concept at its first meeting as the best solution to the difficulties inherent in the manual membership renewal process. Stuart Liebowitz and Shaurain Farber, president and treasurer respectively of the DC 37 Retirees Association, provided Mr. Perlmutter with the information and documentation that he needed to approach NYCERS executive director John Murphy, who was receptive to the MEA's request.

Three retirees—Tom Diana, Beverly Clark-Grigesby and Bob Pfefferman—have volunteered to make follow-up phone calls to managers who do not respond to the initial mailings.

# MEA operations disrupted by terrorist attack

The MEA office is around the corner from where the World Trade Center once was and, like all offices near ground zero, its operations were disrupted by the tragic events of September 11. The building, at 225 Broadway, was shut for two and a half weeks and about five weeks passed before partial phone service was restored.

Fearing a threat to the health and well-being of municipal managers, executive director Ed Perlmutter wrote to Joseph Lhota, then deputy mayor for operations expressing concern over possible airborne contaminants in lower Manhattan and requested that the MEA "be briefed" on any "suspect health conditions" that might be discovered "at ground zero." As was the case with every organization that expressed concern, the Giuliani administration refused to meet and maintained that no health threats existed. The MEA eventually received a written response from

James Hanley, the commissioner of labor relations, in which he wrote that "...all sites in lower Manhattan...occupied by city civilian employees are typically below the action level for substances being monitored." No city employees were relocated because of hazardous substances.

The MEA board of directors meeting, scheduled for September 11 at a restaurant two blocks away from the trade center, was not held and the special membership meeting scheduled for September 26 was postponed until October 10. When the board convened on September 24, the members authorized an ad in The Chief-Leader to extend "deepest condolences to the families of our colleagues in civil service who died in the World Trade Center disaster" and "to the families of all who perished as a result of this horrific crime and act of war." The board also authorized a \$1,000 contribution to the American Red Cross on behalf of the membership.

On the morning of September 11, MEA office manager Marie Cairol arrived on Broadway minutes following the attack on the south tower after having voted in the subsequently cancelled primary election. Marie was stopped from entering 225 Broadway, where the MEA office is located, by barricades that hastily were being erected. She watched in disbelief and horror as the twin towers burned. The police officers appeared to be as dazed as

everyone around them. When a long drawn out rumble was heard, the police jumped into action and directed onlookers to walk north, past city hall, past federal plaza, and out of the area altogether. This first group was lucky; they missed the smoke, soot and ashes caused by the collapse of what had only moments before that been the World Trade Center.

Mr. Perlmutter lives within walking distance of the MEA office and heard the news just as he was getting ready to leave home. Ed stayed home, but managed to get through by phone to Gordon Brunn, then a part time clerical employee of the MEA, who had reached work as scheduled and heard the impact of each plane hitting the towers. Ed urged Gordon to leave the building, but by the time he actually got outside, debris from the collapsed buildings had begun to fill the streets. Dusty and dirty, Gordon had to walk to the Bronx, where he lives, before he could board a bus for his home.

In the ensuing days and weeks, the MEA leadership did its best to maintain office operations. The Organization of Staff Analysts provided emergency telephone service and space in their office was offered to the MEA. This proved not to be necessary. About a week after the attack, Ed and Marie, accompanied by a police officer and using flashlights, climbed fourteen flights to the office to retrieve necessary records. They filled two shopping carts and headed on foot for Ed's

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Edward Perlmutter.....Executive Director  
Bob Pfefferman.....Editor

# HHC wants to cut staff but plans to enhance services

Health and Hospitals Corporation officials declared that the corporation was strongly supporting adoption of retirement incentive legislation and that the executive staff would recommend that the corpora-

ist in Albany has been attempting to speed passage of a retirement incentive. He stated that the corporation's four-year fiscal plan called for the loss of the equivalent of 1000 full time positions and retirements from



**L to r are MEA president William Dworkin, HHC chapter director Mary Richardson, HHC senior vice president Frank Cirillo and assistant vice president Nancy Doyle**

tion board allow all employees an opportunity to participate should such legislation be enacted.

President William Dworkin had requested the meeting, held March 18, with senior executives reporting to newly appointed HHC president Benjamin Chu to discuss this and other issues.

Senior vice president Frank Cirillo further explained that the corporation's lobby-

the incentive legislation were important to the success of the plan.

Mr. Cirillo reported that the city's payment for services to the corporation will drop by \$55 million next fiscal year and that any additional staff reductions would be achieved by attrition. He stated that the corporation would not eliminate

any services or programs as a result; in fact, new revenue initiatives in the next 18 months are expected to permit enhanced services and improvements in outpatient programs.

Mr. Cirillo promised to give serious consideration to a suggestion articulated by executive director Ed Perlmutter that a Managerial Issues Task Force be established for the corporation but he strongly

recommended that the MEA meet with the senior vice presidents of each of the seven regional medical "networks" to discuss local issues in the meantime.

He added that Dr. Chu is interested in the concerns of staff and already has met with managers at Elmhurst, Jacobi and Woodhull. These meetings are followed with a question and answer session for all HHC staff at each facility. The president intends to visit every major HHC location.

Mr. Perlmutter asked if there were any developments in Local 1180's renewed request to represent coordinating managers. Nancy Doyle, assistant vice president for workforce planning and development, responded that the office of collective bargaining, the entity that resolves labor-management jurisdictional and substantive disputes, appears to be reviewing its decision of ten years ago, but there is no indication as of now that it will reopen the case. If OCB should do so, Mr. Cirillo and Ms. Doyle said the corporation would meet with the MEA to solicit the association's views.

In addition to Mr. Dworkin and Mr. Perlmutter, chapter director Mary Richardson and associate executive director John W. Boden attended the meeting.

## NYCHA chairman meets with MEA

New York City Housing Authority chairman Tino Hernandez presented a detailed picture of the authority's current fiscal status and discussed his views on possible retirement incentive legislation at an hour-long meeting with the MEA on April 2.

Mr. Hernandez reported that the authority received about 96 percent of its operating funds from the federal government and that the anticipated reduction in city tax levy for the next fiscal year could be absorbed through operational efficiencies rather than by service reductions. But the authority was concerned about an expected capital budget reduction of almost 40 percent, \$130 million, from city and federal funding sources. A cut of this magnitude would mean all projects not required to correct health and safety hazards or to comply with various municipal codes would have to be reviewed.



**NYCHA chairman Tino Martinez (3rd l) and his senior executive staff meeting with MEA president William Dworkin (at far end of table) and, clockwise, John Boden, Simon Driver, Ed Perlmutter and Lal Motwani**

MEA executive director Ed Perlmutter asked if the authority had considered specifics if a retirement incentive were adopted by the state legislature, observing that the agency generally has allowed all employees to take advantage of previous incentives.

Mr. Hernandez reiterated that the housing authority did not have the financial crisis that other city agencies faced nor, by implication, the same urgency to reduce

staff. He articulated a "responsibility" to retain highly skilled managers who are essential to operations. The group then discussed personnel issues of concern including postings of vacancies, salary policies, disciplinary actions and promotional opportunities. Mr. Hernandez said he would not countenance a posting policy that was a "subterfuge" to avoid an open

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# Close election spurs effort to reform the rules

A slate led by incumbent president William Dworkin won the closest officer election in MEA history over former executive vice president James Durrah and his running mates.

Mr. Dworkin received 116 votes to 103 for Mr. Durrah. Roy Durig was preferred to Louis Sommo for executive vice president by vote of 128-90 and Stephen Ferrer out polled Edward Yood for treasurer by the same count of 128 to 90. Incumbent secretary Joseph Ramaglia, who was allied with Mr. Dworkin, was unopposed.

The election was hard-fought. Both slates took advantage of the one mailing to the membership authorized by the election committee, chaired by Jerry McCormick of the Human Resources Administration, and participated in a debate that the committee had organized. Each side was permitted to prepare a double-sided letter-sized leaflet that was mailed at MEA expense. The debate was held December 3 at the Department of Health location on First Avenue and 26th Street in Manhattan.

In addition, candidates appeared at the regularly scheduled fall chapter membership meetings and at "meet and greets" organized in Health and Hospitals Corporation locations by chapter director Mary Richardson and other chapter officers. Chapter director Ron Wilkerson arranged a debate at the central office of the Department of Homeless Services.

Voting took place at the annual holiday party and general membership meeting at Antun's Catering Hall in Queens Village from noon to seven p.m. A second polling site was authorized by the election com-

mittee at the MEA office in Manhattan and was open from noon to 6 p.m. to allow members to vote who were not going to the party.

Mr. McCormick said, "It was difficult to establish rules for a democratic election without the benefit of precedent and during a contested election. At the end, I was pleased that no one questioned the integrity of the election process and the vote count. However, our decisions often left both sides unhappy. I was glad when the election was over and I will never do anything like this again."

The other members of the election committee were Daniel Agostini of HRA, Anthony Annaruma of the Department of Environmental Protection, Veronica Stevens from the Administration for Children's Services and retiree Vincent Norman.

President Dworkin commented, "I am gratified at the result of the election. The difficulties experienced by the election committee show the need for codification of our election rules."

At the first meeting of the board of directors after the election, Mr. Dworkin, with the approval of the board, established an election codes committee chaired by Mr. Ramaglia as well as a bylaws reform committee chaired by newsletter editor Bob Pfefferman. Both committees already have had several meetings.

The two chairs and executive director Ed Perlmutter met with a representative of the American Arbitration Association, a respected organization that has long experience conducting elections and referen-

dums. A joint subcommittee of the bylaws and election codes committees has recommended that the MEA adopt a mail ballot election for officers and hire an outside neutral party to conduct contested elections.

Mr. Pfefferman reported that the bylaws committee would discuss this recommendation



Enjoying a moment at Bellevue Hospital during the hard-fought campaign are MEA presidential candidates William Dworkin (l) and James Durrah with patient accounts manager Maryann Maikish and HHC chapter officer Barbara Duckett.

and the committee plans to present a comprehensive revision to the membership at the December meeting.

## MEA operations ...

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apartment where a temporary office was set up. In the third week following September 11, electricity was finally restored to the area and access to structurally undamaged buildings near ground zero, including 225 Broadway, became possible. Full phone service was not restored until around Thanksgiving and the MEA was stuck with about half of a \$5,800 bill to have the office cleaned.

## NYCHA ...

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hiring process. He called for priority in promotional opportunities to be given to existing staff balanced with a judicious sprinkling of outside appointments.

Mr. Hernandez agreed to have a future meeting with the MEA and President William Dworkin thanked him for being available for a dialogue with housing authority managers.

In addition to Mr. Dworkin and Mr. Perlmutter, chapter director Simon Driver, assistant chapter director Lal Motwani and associate executive director John W. Boden represented the MEA. Accompanying Mr. Hernandez were general manager Douglas Apple, deputy general manager Frank New, deputy director of human resources John Reilly and chief of labor relations Gloria Pearlman.



Discussing a new MEA election code and reform of the bylaws are (l to r) Jessie Woodbury, Jerry McCormick, John Rall, cochair Joe Ramaglia, Ed Perlmutter and cochair Bob Pfefferman