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MLC Envisions Tough Bargaining

Bloomberg II: No Mr. Softie

By RICHARD STEIER

Mayor Bloomberg's resounding re-election victory strengthens his hand in dealing with the municipal unions, and they will need to better coordinate efforts in areas ranging from bargaining to pensions to be worthy adversaries in his second term, the chairman of the Municipal Labor Committee said Nov. 10.

"The Mayor was very effective in having the unions bid against each other," remarked Randi Weingarten, who is also the president of the United Federation of Teachers. "It used to be said that the unions whip-sawed the city; this Mayor whip-sawed the unions."

Lesser Pensions Eyed

She was referring to Mr. Bloomberg's success in reaching contract deals that not only offered significant productivity savings to the city but in many cases will offer even greater revenue as time passes because they featured reductions in pay for new workers.

Aides to the Mayor, none of whom were identified, were quoted in newspaper stories the morning after his 20-point win over Democratic challenger Fernando Ferrer Nov. 8 saying that a less-costly pension system for future workers is one objective Mr. Bloomberg is likely to press in his second term.

Labor Relations Commissioner James F. Hanley said in a phone interview that afternoon that he had not had specific discussions regarding that area with the Mayor. Ms. Weingarten said she anticipated the issue would arise, and that the real question was how determinedly Mr. Bloomberg would pursue it.

"I think the right wing and the [Citizens' Budget Commission] types always tell the Mayor to look at debt service, health care and pensions," she said. Mr. Bloomberg himself on more than one occasion has noted the heavy cost of providing pension and health benefits to municipal workers that exceed what most private companies offer.

Protected Health Fund

The MLC warded off his attempts to have employees pay a greater share of their health costs during his first term, although it was required to make some changes in a supplemental benefits plan that provides psychotropic, intravenous, cancer and asthma drugs that required increases in member co-pays.

If he pursues a reduced pension system, which was reportedly broached during negotiations with District Council 37 last year, "the Mayor should expect the same fierce battle," Ms. Weingarten said.

Those who complain that pension and health benefits are excessive, she said, often overlook the fact that union officials accepted smaller salary increases than would have been available over the last 40 years in order to provide a sturdy safety net for their members. Ms. Weingarten remarked, "Part of the social contract for public employees has always been, you work hard, you'll never get rich but you'll have decent health benefits and a decent pension."

She continued, "Does the Mayor really want to change that social contract?"

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SAVORING THE MOMENT: Mayor Bloomberg acknowledges the cheers from his supporters on Election Night, saying that he had been rewarded for 'always putting people's interests above the political interests and the special interests.'

Transit Worker's Big Win MS. MEALY RIDES INTO COUNCIL

By GINGER ADAMS OTIS

Anyone who met Darlene Mealy during the primary campaign knew that she was a shoo-in to win the 41st District's City Council seat in the Nov. 8 general elections — which she did, with 90 percent of the vote.

After handily defeating 15 other candidates to win the Democratic nomination in September, the two remaining contenders — Republican Brinmore Britton and Independent Naquan Muhammad — posed no real threat to Ms. Mealy's jump from transit worker to City Councilwoman.

A Famous Unknown

Ms. Mealy enjoys an unexpected amount of name recognition for a relative unknown, due mostly to her long history of community involvement and activism in Brooklyn's Bedford-

Stuyvesant section, but also through her ties to the labor movement.

She worked for New York City Transit for 17 years as a clerical worker and is a member of Transport Workers' Union Local 106. She was endorsed by her local and TWU Local 100, which lent her volunteers to help hand out flyers and organize voting drives. She also got the support of



HEADED IN A NEW DIRECTION: Newly-elected City Councilwoman Darlene Mealy kept campaigning hard on Election Day despite being a heavy favorite against her Republican and independent challengers. Just as she did over the summer, Ms. Mealy stumped throughout her Central Brooklyn district, handing out literature and pointing voters to the polls near a Glenmore Ave. housing project.

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State Forest Ranger Jobs Now Available

FDNY and UFO Press Congress For \$125M Aid

Say Restoring Funds Is Key to Treating WTC Responders

By GINGER ADAMS OTIS

Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta, Chief of Department Peter Hayden, and FDNY Deputy Chief Medical Officer David Prezant went to Washington Nov. 10 to lobby Congress for the restoration of \$125 million in Federal aid cut by the Bush Administration earlier this year.

As this paper went to press Nov. 14, a conference negotiation committee within the House of Representatives was deciding whether to honor a Senate amendment that would return the money to the 2006 Fiscal Year budget.

UFOA, Senators Lobby

The FDNY delegation was joined by Uniformed Fire Officers' Association President Peter Gorman, Sens. Charles Schumer and Hillary Rodham Clinton, U.S. Reps. Carolyn B. Maloney and Vito Fossella, and other union and community leaders.

The group spent the day lobbying Congress on Capitol Hill and reaching out individually to Senators and Con-

gress members who sit on key committees.

Mr. Scoppetta said he thought it was "enormously important" that the head of the FDNY be involved in the Washington lobbying, but stressed that a team effort drove the campaign.

"We've attracted some attention, and it's important that the public and press see that we are here in earnest, in all seriousness. There's a case to be made, and we're doing the best we can to make it," he said. "I am absolutely committed to getting that funding; we have people, U.S. Reps. Carolyn B. Maloney and Vito Fossella, and other union and community leaders.

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UNIONS SUE ON PENTAGON ATTACK ON JOB RIGHTS

By GINGER ADAMS OTIS

Ten unions filed a lawsuit Nov. 7 against the Pentagon over its plans to implement new personnel rules for Department of Defense employees at the end of the month.

Union leaders argued that they weren't adequately consulted about the new regulations, which the Bush Administration calls the National Security Personnel System. They've accused the Pentagon of using NSPS to try and circumvent collective bargaining rules.

Similar 'Homeland' Suit

It's not the first time a coalition of unions representing Federal employees has clashed with the Bush White House over proposed personnel changes. The same coalition filed a lawsuit over regulation changes for the Department of Homeland Security earlier this year.

A Federal judge ruled in August that the new personnel system in place for DHS workers didn't adequately provide for collective bargain-

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Starting Pay Is \$34,742 a Year Test in January

Bachelor's Degree With Forest/Environment Credits Needed

The state Department of Civil Service is accepting applications for an exam leading to Forest Ranger jobs.

Applications must be postmarked by Dec. 19. The written test is scheduled for Jan. 21. The starting salary is \$34,742. That figure will likely change pending a collective-bargaining agreement now being negotiated.

Qualifications Needed

Individuals assigned to work in New York City or in Nassau, Suffolk, Rockland, or Westchester counties will receive a \$1,200 location pay differential.

The positions are available in the state Department of Environmental Conservation. There are currently 20 vacancies, according to the exam notice.

By the date of the written test, candidates must have a bachelor's degree including 18 credits in environmental life/science, or two years of work-related experience. Individuals with an associate's degree in forestry or another job-related topic can also apply.

Candidates who expect to meet the education requirement by June 30, 2006 can take the written test, but must obtain their degree before appointment. Appropriate part-time and volunteer experience that can be verified will be accepted on a pro-rated basis.

Examples of experience that do not qualify are: lawn-mowing, landscaping, tree- and brush-trimming, pesticide application, sawing firewood, and garden shop work.

Examples of qualifying education and work are: forest management/recreation, resources technology and engineering; environmental education; fish or wildlife biology/management; ecology; natural resources management; and environmental studies and technology. Not qualifying is the study of physics, geology, chemistry, engineering, mathematics, human/medical biology, or social sciences.

What Test Covers

The exam will test candidates' abilities to apply written rules and communicate and interact with the public. The test will also gauge candidates' knowledge, aptitude, and skills in

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NYPD Must Negotiate

Captains: Win on OT Key in Wage Talks

By REUVEN BLAU

Captains' Endowment Association President John Driscoll said last week that he plans to use a soon-to-be-filed grievance against the NYPD concerning overtime compensation as leverage during his upcoming contract talks with the city.

In May, the Office of Collective Bargaining ruled that the city violated the CEA's collective-bargaining agreement by failing to negotiate with the union before placing a 1,556-hour cap on the amount of comp time Captains can accumulate. The issue, OCB concluded, is a mandatory subject of bargaining.

More Charges Coming

Since that ruling, Mr. Driscoll said, the NYPD has begun auditing and

subtracting comp time from his members that the department had previously signed off on. "I'm now bringing another unfair labor practice charge," he revealed in a Nov. 9 phone interview. "It's something they have to bargain with me, so that gives me more flexibility."

The CEA's contract expired Oct. 31, 2003, and the union has had only one meeting with city negotiators since then, in February 2004. The union represents 750 Captains.

The NYPD contended that it only removed the cap on comp time in December 2001 as part of the aftermath



JOHN F. DRISCOLL: Will use his leverage.

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Hopes to Gain Contract

CSA Head Reaches Out to Bloomberg

By HOWARD MEGDAL

Despite actively fighting against Mayor Bloomberg's re-election, Council of School Supervisors and Administrators President Jill Levy is hopeful that what may see as the Mayor's mandate will include more communication with her.

"We have four more years with Mayor Bloomberg," said Ms. Levy, a day after his landslide victory over Fernando Ferrer. "We hope to establish a working relationship on behalf of children, which is what he wants to do also. People who work with children, and the unions that represent them, deserve his respect and attention."

It's the Contract, Stupid

Ms. Levy's frustration with the Mayor stems from many sources, she says,

though the fact that CSA has been without a contract since July 2003 is seemingly foremost on her list of complaints.

"We haven't had a contract in almost two-and-a-half years," Ms. Levy said. "We know the mayor doesn't like to get involved — let him know how the reorganization has affected his school leaders, how it affects our children, particularly people with special needs."

She said the decision to endorse Mr. Ferrer over Mr. Bloomberg was an easy one: he was the only candidate who sought the union's support.



JILL LEVY: A kinder, gentler approach.

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