

September 2008

## Change Coming To Boston Retirement Board

*For the first time in 14 years, a non-union member is elected Chairman*

John J. Perkins, who was first elected to the State Boston Retirement Board by the other members in January 2003, was elected Chairman of the Board at its meeting on October 7. He is President of Somerset Corporate Advisors, a financial advisory firm. This marks the first time in 14 years when a non-union member of the Board was elected Chairman. During that time, Lawrence Curran, an officer of the Boston firefighters' union, IAFF Local 718, served as Chairman.

Previously on September 26, the active and retired members of the State Boston Retirement System voted for two new Board members. Michael McLaughlin, Elementary Field Representative for the Boston Teachers Union and Sean Kelly, a firefighter and brother of union head Ed Kelly were elected to three-year terms. They replace Lawrence Curran of the Fire Department and Edward Welch from the School Department who both did not run for reelection. Mr. McLaughlin and Mr. Kelly continue the long tradition of the two candidates from the School and Fire Departments running as a team to insure election given the size of their respective union memberships.

Retirement Board 2008
Sally D. Glora, City Auditor (ex officio)
Sean Kelly, elected member
Michael McLaughlin, elected member
John J. Perkins, elected by the other four Board members
Mitchell Weiss, appointed by the Mayor. He is the Executive Director of the Tobin Project.

The fifth member is elected by the other four members. If the four members cannot agree on the member to elect, the Mayor appoints the fifth member.

Recently, the Retirement Board has come under criticism because of approval of disability pensions for Boston firefighters, several of which are being investigated by the U.S. Attorney and because of its delay in acting on disability pension applications. In general, the lack of accountability and transparency in its operations also has been a concern.

The selection of a non-union Chairperson, the appointment of Kathleen Kiely-Becchetti as acting Executive Officer and other actions taken lately by the Retirement Board have given rise to expectations for improvement of the Board's operations.

Even before these elections, the Retirement Board had recently approved a few steps that will have a positive impact. They are:

- Engaged the public accounting firm of Ernst & Young to assess the Board's disability retirement application process and suggest improvements
- Added staff to the disability unit to expedite the backlog of disability retirement applications
- Preparing for design of new software system to drive best business practices