



New York City  
Managerial Employees  
Association

**MEA Works for You**

## REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP

Submitted by **Stephen M. Ferrer, President**

**June 24, 2009**

The New York City Managerial Employees Association (MEA) is more than 40 years old and has reached a crossroads. We are fighting for well deserved raises, residency rules for all employees, early retirement, an adverse action appeals process and the appropriate use of performance evaluations by all agencies. We are also faced with the real possibility of a reduction in health benefits. Unions are petitioning the Office of Collective Bargaining (OCB) to represent managerial titles with little or no resistance from the City Office of Labor Relations (OLR) and the affected agencies.

MEA celebrated 40 years of advocacy in City Government during a special gala at the Grand Prospect Hall, Brooklyn on Thursday October 23, 2008. The theme of our celebration was *Managers and the City of New York: Partners in Excellence*. The MEA Board of Directors selected Mayor Michael Bloomberg to receive the Distinguished Service Award for 2008. This award is presented to the public official who has been most instrumental in recognizing the achievements of the career managers of the City of New York.

During the first six years of his administration, Mayor Bloomberg treated rank and file managers fairly and equitably in terms of compensation and working conditions. In late 2008, Mayor Bloomberg signed a contract with District Council 37 to provide raises for 125,000 municipal employees, despite the current fiscal crisis. On November 25, 2008 the Mayor stated "More than ever before, we want to incentivize our employees. We want people to focus on providing the services that the public needs than worrying about how they're going to put food on the table."

Other unions quickly signed contracts with the City accepting the pattern already established by DC37 calling for wage increases of 4% October 6, 2008 and 4% October 6, 2009. Subsequently, in a complete reversal, Mayor Bloomberg decided to freeze managers' salaries. It is grossly unfair to single out managers as the only city employees without raises.

We immediately contacted the Mayor's Office and a meeting was held with Deputy Mayor Edward Skyler where we were told that the Mayor had "every intention of granting raises to managers." We were also told that "It is not a question of if; it is a question on when." It is now June 24 and we are getting tired of waiting.

The Civil Service Title of Administrative Manager historically has been designated as managerial. On April 8, 2009, the Board of Certifications (BCB) of the NYC Office of Collective Bargaining (OCB) issued an amended certification to add Administrative Manager, Level I and Level II as a collectively bargained for position represented by CWA Local 1180. This decision affects 99 current MEA members.

At an April 22, 2009 Executive Board meeting of the MEA, members strongly opposed the decision made by the Board of Certifications. A resolution was adopted to reflect the opposition. MEA's objections are based upon the following rationale.

- Reclassifying management positions to non-managerial status creates a barrier to an employee's managerial advancement and limits executive management's work assignment prerogatives.
- Transferring managerial staff into non-managerial positions erodes the motivation to continue functioning in a capacity for utilizing independence, good judgment and initiative in managing the agencies.
- Combining managers and non-managerial employees into one bargaining unit impedes management/employee interaction and relations.
- This reclassification will create a distinct possibility of increased costs in overtime and pension benefits in these difficult economic times. Non managers are entitled to overtime, longevity, and shift differentials – Managers are not.

MEA as an organization does not have legal "standing" and consequently we immediately contacted the Mayor's Office and asked the City to appeal this decision. Deputy Mayor Skyler informed me on June 16 that the Corporation Counsel had informed him that there were no legal grounds to appeal.

My fellow members, I am here to tell you that MEA is at a Crossroad and we must plot an aggressive strategy to save our organization.

The City budget was recently passed. The money for our raises is in the budget and we are waiting for the Mayor to authorize these raises by Executive Order. The MEA Executive Board has approved the planning for a "press conference" on the steps of City Hall, in the event the raises are not announced by July 15, 2009. We need the commitment of our membership to attend this press conference as a show of solidarity and strength in numbers.

Additional petitions are being filed by Unions to reclassify managerial titles to non-managerial. The MEA must begin an effort to work with the Office of Labor Relations and our members to ensure that the integrity of the managerial work force continues. We must lobby for Taylor Law reform and explore all possibilities including partnerships with non-city Unions while maintaining our autonomy.

There have been positive outcomes this year for the MEA. Our membership continues to grow at a slow but steady pace. We currently have 2,111 members – an all time high. We have hired a dynamic Executive Director Linda Barnes who is charged with the responsibility to grow our membership to new heights. There is strength in numbers – the more managers who become members give MEA a stronger voice. Elected officials more readily respond to the needs of organizations with large memberships.

The MEA has worked to provide job security and protection. We are currently involved in attempting to save the jobs and salary levels of our members. MEA offers civil service test preparation courses for our members.

Ongoing Professional Development is also more important in today's environment. Toward that end, MEA provides tuition reimbursement for members enrolled in an exciting educational opportunity in cooperation with DCAS' Citywide Training Center. We offer undergraduate and graduate courses through the City University of New York's Murphy Institute which provides students with a solid background in government, the policy-making process, and public administration

Our members — senior, middle management and front-line — are collectively a fine piece of machinery that has been honed and developed for many years. MEA leadership recognizes and acknowledges the hard work of our members and will continue to represent them to the best of our abilities.

Have a great summer!