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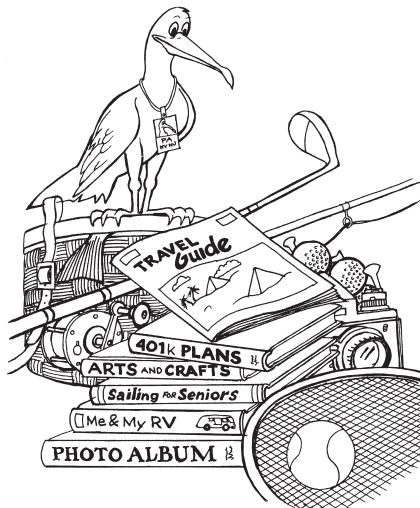
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“Don’t forget Where You Put Your PARA-phernalia.”



A Message From Your President

PARA is marking several significant milestones this year. It has now been 25 years – a quarter of a century – since PARA was formally incorporated as an organization in 1989. And it has been 30 years since the initial core group of eight retirees, led by Hal Milley, first began to meet to address their concerns about establishing a cost of living adjustment (COLA) in our New York State pension plan. All of this early work was accomplished without the benefit of email or cell phones or fax or social media. In retrospect, it was an amazing accomplishment and we are all reaping the benefits of the-organizers’ efforts. Your PARA organization continues to thrive as we strive to address the issues facing today’s retirees. Hopefully we can persevere and be as effective as our early founders. Who can predict what the next 25 years will bring?

Finally, after a long and challenging winter in the New Jersey/New York region, we are enjoying the warmth of the spring sun and the burst of growth and color on trees and flowers. The clouds of a very testy winter have left and we are called to enjoy the outdoors once again. But the difficulties of this past winter have not been limited to the weather alone. For those who have been following the story, these past months have been a major challenge for the Port Authority as well. The ongoing fallout from “Bridgagate” continues to impact the organization in so many ways. From a PA perspective, this has been the dominant story of the year so far. It has become clear that the closure of local traffic lanes in Fort Lee leading to the George Washington Bridge this past September was just the tip of what has become a much bigger iceberg.

As retirees, our interest is more than mere curiosity. In many cases, we have spent the bulk of our working life at a facility or in the offices “downtown.” I have been in contact with a number of our members over these past months and have heard or read their comments about these ongoing revelations. As we all continue to read about this story and discuss it with family members, friends and former colleagues, it seems clear that the emotions run strong. The feelings are deep – understandably so. Many of our friends are still at work in the PA and they continue to hold on to the strong traditions of professionalism and public service despite the ongoing turmoil. They are to be commended and supported as they continue to fulfill their daily assignments. We hope that the advisory panel, which was named by the PA Board in March, will be a strong voice for renewing and rebuilding the organization. Only time will tell.

Your PARA Board has been following the many facets of this story since it first surfaced in the media and we have been posting a number of PA-related articles on the PARA website ever since the beginning of the year. **See the PARA website home page – click on to Current Items of Interest – GWB Controversy/Bridgagate.** We hope that you will log on from time to time as one way of keeping current on the ongoing controversy.

Finally, it is time once again for our annual election of PARA Board members. The details about this year’s process are included in this newsletter. Please review the information – and **PLEASE VOTE!!** We urge you to do it today. Your input is important.

Meanwhile we wish you all the very best for a healthy and happy summer.

Dave Gallagher, President

Officers & Board of Directors

Richard Helman, *President Emeritus*

New Jersey:

Dave Gallagher, President
Bob Isaacs, Treasurer
Jerrilyn Raczynski, Secretary
Elizabeth DeLaura
Rita DuBrow
Arnold Karvasarsky
Richard Lee
Maria Malone-Hodges
Michael Morrow
Ken Philmus
Jack Savage
Herb Somerwitz
Ken Vitty
Harmon Williams

New York:

Ralph Verrill, Vice President
Rae Ann Hoffmann, 2nd VP
Holly Blausler
Al Graser
George Jensen
Rich Hellenbrecht
Frank Lombardi
Chuck Seliga

Massachusetts:

Lee Goodman

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para Newsletter • Edition #51 • Spring 2014
-phernalia

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Retirees Association, Inc.

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View Medicare Part D Explanation of Benefits (EOB) Online

You can save time and reduce paper clutter when you switch to electronic Medicare Part D Explanation of Benefits (EOB) statements. You'll have immediate access to the same information that's on your paper statement without having to sort through the mail. In addition, with online access you can do even more, i.e.:

- ◆ Access up to 18 months of EOB statements. Your Medicare Part D EOBs are stored securely online, so you can view, print or download them to your computer whenever you need them.
- ◆ Quickly view summaries of drug claims processed since your last EOB and see your total out-of-pocket and drug costs.
- ◆ View any updates to the list of covered drugs that could affect your medications.

It's safe and convenient and you will reduce the time you have to spend finding, sorting and filing your important benefit information. Just **log in** at Express-Scripts.com to switch to electronic Medicare Part D EOBs and stop receiving paper statements in the mail. Help reduce paper waste and start to make our planet a cleaner, greener place to live.

Readers' Comments on the PAB Article

Thanks to all of you who were kind enough to send in your comments regarding the wonderful article about the old Port Authority Building (PAB) submitted by Jerry Doherty in the Fall 2013 issue of *para-phernalia*. The feedback was very positive and stirred up a lot of good memories from those fortunate enough to have worked there. Since the move to the WTC is now over 40 years ago, many of you may not have had the opportunity to experience work life in the PAB but we hope you can appreciate the fond memories of those who did.

Here are some excerpts of a few of the comments we received:

- ◆ *Thank you for the interesting and informative article on the PAB. It brought back some fond memories for me . . .*
- ◆ *Pass along to Jerry Doherty how much I enjoyed his musings on the PAB in the recent PARA newsletter; many, many good memories of those days and the folks I worked with flooded my "mind's eye" while I was reading it; . . .*
- ◆ *Enjoyed your article on the old PAB. I'd like to share some memories of outside people who just walked the floors selling their wares. (Something you cannot do today). First – there was "Patty" the shoe shine man. He was Tobin's private shoe shiner and we would get some good rumors from him. Second – a guy would come around shouting "magazines – what do we read today". Finally - there was Larry the 'Tie guy'. He had some collection of ties for a \$1. We would get 4 guys – each flipping a quarter until there were 3 tails & 1 head or 3 heads & 1 tail. The odd man would get the other 3 quarters and a 25 cent tie! . . .*
- ◆ *The way the article brought to life the building and the surrounding area was terrific. It made me recall many things about the wonderful days spent in the PAB. . . . The more I read of Jerry's article the more it made me recall how nice it was to work in the Port Authority Building. There was a family atmosphere in that building that is hard to describe but certainly existed for all of us who worked there. . . .*
- ◆ *I just hope the PANYNJ is as memorable for current PA employees as it was for me during my 1956 to 1990 tenure . . .*

Your feedback is important and all comments and suggestions are welcome.

PARA 2014 Election of Officers & Annual Meeting

It's that time of year again, when you get to exercise your right to vote for members of the PARA Board of Directors. All Board members serve as volunteers but your support is important in order to have PARA continue to be a helpful organization for all of us. **We ask that you please take a moment to cast your vote.** Up for re-election are: Dave Gallagher, Frank Lombardi, Rae Ann Hoffmann, and Holly Blausler. New members nominated for the PARA Board are: John Fitzpatrick, Enoch Lipson, Peter Rinaldi, Herb Ouida and Steve Borrelli.

The Annual Meeting will be held at 11:15 A.M. on Thursday, July 24, 2014 at the Times Square Hall, Port Authority Bus Terminal, in the Borough of Manhattan in the City of New York. Members who have paid their 2014 dues on or before July 3, 2014 will be entitled to vote. The names of the new candidates and those up for re-election, as well as their proposed term of office, are listed on the enclosed Official Proxy Ballot Card on which you can indicate your vote for all, some, or none of the candidates, or you can submit a write-in candidate of your choice if the individual is a member in good standing. You need not attend the meeting to

vote. **Just return your completed ballot in the enclosed pre-addressed envelope postmarked on or before June 27, 2014.** If you have not already paid your 2014 Annual Dues, you may include your check along with your Ballot. We always encourage members to exercise their right to vote and play an active role in their organization. Since seating at Times Square Hall is limited, it would help with our planning if you advise us of your plans to attend. Please let us know of your intentions by July 1, 2014 by mailing us notice at PARA, PO Box 2002, East Millstone, NJ 08875-2002 or by e-mail to davegallagher@paranynj.org.

Departing PARA Board Members

After long and faithful service on the PARA Board, two long time Board members are leaving. Leon Goodman and Harmon Williams – the two longest serving members on the current Board – have decided it's time to pass the baton. We extend our sincere gratitude for the contributions made by both of them. They willingly and freely gave their time and energy to PARA and can be justly proud of their service to the Board and all of our members. Their advice and counsel will be sorely missed.

Candidate Biographies



John Fitzpatrick – came to the Port Authority in 1989 and served as an attorney in the Contracts Division of the Law Department for 23 years, eventually becoming Assistant Chief of the Division. He holds a BA degree from Fordham University and a JD degree from Fordham University School of Law. While in the Law Department, John dealt with a wide variety of matters

including construction projects, computer hardware and software acquisitions, financial transactions and technology law issues. He retired in 2012. Prior to his time at the Port Authority, John was an attorney with the New York City Off-Track Betting Corporation and held the position of Senior Director of Contracts at the time of his departure.



Peter Rinaldi – joined the Port Authority as an Engineering Trainee in 1973. During his 38-year career, he served as the Engineering Department's manager providing services to TB&T and PATH, where he was responsible for implementing over a billion dollars in capital improvement projects. In September 2001, Peter was assigned to the on-site WTC emergency response team

and spent nine intensive months supporting the recovery and cleanup efforts. He later served as the General Manager of the WTC site and was part of the PA's downtown rebuilding program. At the time of his retirement in 2010, Peter held the position of Assistant Director of the Engineering Department. During retirement, he has been spending time with his seven grandchildren, enjoying international travel, and stocking his wine

Continued on page 4 **Candidate Biographies**

Candidate Biographies *Continued from page 3*

cellar. He also volunteers as a docent at the 9/11 Tribute Center where he leads groups through the 9/11 Memorial.



Enoch Lipson – joined the Port Authority in 1966 in the Marine Terminals Division of the Engineering Department. He remained in the Engineering Department for his entire career with the Port, working on projects at most of the facilities. He spent about 15 years with Tunnel Bridges and Rails which morphed into TB&T, doing toll plazas, tunnel ceilings and other projects. He

was transferred to Aviation for Kennedy 2000 and remained as Engineer of Projects EWR and later Engineering Program Manager Aviation. As the workload increased, the division was split into New York and New Jersey divisions and Enoch retired as Engineering Program Manager, New York Airports at the end of 2000. Since then he worked briefly for Lockwood Green, and no, he was not responsible for them going out of business, and since then with AECOM (formerly Architecture and Engineering Company), primarily on the design of the Second Avenue Subway.



Herb Ouida - devoted 26 years to the Port Authority in a variety of positions of increasing responsibility. These ranged from an attorney handling litigation and employee personnel matters to international business development management positions. During his tenure at the Port Authority he accepted a one-year leave of absence at the request of the

Mayor of the City of New York to manage a city agency responsible for ground transportation regulation. After retiring in 1995 he began eight years of service as the Executive Vice president of the World Trade Centers Association (WTCA). In 2003 he left the WTCA to create a foundation in memory of his son Todd lost on 9/11, to teach at a local university and to serve as a consultant on international projects. Herb holds a BA degree from Brooklyn College and a JD degree from St. John's Law School.



Steve Borrelli – joined the Port Authority in 1975 as a temporary Buildings and Grounds Attendant (paper picker) at JFK Airport. In a span of over 33 years he held positions in Planning & Development, Comptrollers, Audit, Treasury, Tunnels and Bridges, Management & Budget and Port Commerce Departments. During his tenure with the Port Authority he was part of numerous

projects including the revitalization of the Bus Terminal, Net Lease of the WTC, Pan Am Bankruptcy, jetBlue Terminal 5, Purchase of Stewart Airport, New PATH Rail Car Program and the restructure of the Port Newark Container Terminal Lease that included \$500 million private investment.

He retired in 2012 as an Assistant Director, Port Business Development. Steve is part of a long line of Port Authority employees (father and brother) that amassed over 110 years of service.

PARA Inc. Celebrating 25 years

In 1984 a concerned group of eight PA retirees got together to have informal discussions relating to PA retiree issues eventually evolving into a more formal organization. Topping the list was the fact that Port Authority pensions were not keeping pace with inflation. Enlisting the aid of the Human Resources Department, they requested (and were provided) an address list of all PA retirees (3000+ at the time). Teaming up with the Retired Public Employees Association (RPEA) and the Alliance of Public Retiree Organizations (APRO), PARA was created and the pursuit for a COLA bill had begun. The first COLA appeared in September 2000 when retirees saw, for the first time, an increase of 50% of the actual Cost of Living index for the first \$18,000 of your pension. Though clearly a victory at the time, it fell short of our long-term goal of getting a full COLA.

2014 marks the 25th year that PARA has been a duly certified Not-for-Profit Corporation under the laws of New York State; the purpose of which is to provide and maintain support for all PA retirees and to promote the welfare of its members. PARA is governed by a Board of Directors, composed of PA retirees, elected by the membership. The

original PARA Board consisted of our eight founding fathers:

- ◆ Harold A. Milley, President
- ◆ Cyril V. Storer, Vice President
- ◆ John A. Huston, Jr., Treasurer
- ◆ Cletus F. Bamber
- ◆ Richard Brady
- ◆ Ralph A. Johnson
- ◆ Stephen P. Kenny
- ◆ Francis H. Werneke

The Board meets approximately quarterly, not less than four (4) meetings a year, to conduct business and ensure it is fulfilling its responsibilities on behalf of the PARA membership. An Annual Meeting, open to **all PARA members**, is held in July to answer questions and review actions of the Board, as appropriate.

A delegate of PARA routinely attends meetings and functions of both RPEA and APRO to maintain an alliance with these two active organizations, which combined, represent a vast multitude of retired NYS public service

retirees. These organizations lobby NYS lawmakers as necessary. The PARA Board also maintains direct contact with the NYS Retirement System to ensure firsthand input/feedback regarding matters concerning PA retiree issues.

From time to time, the Board retains outside expertise to provide advice on specific issues. For example, the PARA Board sought the advice of outside counsel when the PA Board rescinded the EZPass benefit several years ago.

Over the past several years, the Board has facilitated retiree tours of the developing WTC site, the Tribute Center and Memorial.

As the Port Authority, and the entire business world, has changed, PARA has adapted to change as well. We try to keep members informed through various communication tools. We issued our first printed Newsletter in 1987, the PARA Website has been up and running since 2006 and we began issuing ebulletins in 2010 for those members who have signed up to receive them.

The PARA Board is proud to serve on behalf of your interests and thanks all of its members for their support over the years.

Board Highlights

The fourth quarterly meeting of the Board of Directors was held on October 16, 2013, in the Times Square Hall at the Port Authority Bus Terminal. Reports of the Committees of the Board were made. There were no significant expenditures made during this quarter. Membership dues continue to come in during each quarter and membership is slowly increasing. In the area of external relations, it was reported that RPEA (Retired Public Employees Association) continues to closely monitor issues in the New York State legislature regarding employee benefits and PARA will continue to monitor information regarding potential changes to Port Authority retiree benefits and pass it along to our membership.

PARA received a request from Jim Connors, the operating chief of the Memorial Museum for help in recruiting volunteers and/or docents. (See "The 9/11 Memorial VOLUNTEER PROGRAM" in this issue of *para-phernalia*.)

The first quarterly 2014 meeting of the Board was held on February 19,

2014, at the Bus Terminal. This meeting had to be rescheduled from January 22 due to severe weather conditions. Committee reports were heard. The major expenses were for printing and mailing of the Fall newsletter. Dues continue to come in and membership continues to increase.

The Nominating Committee presented their recommendations to the Board at the April meeting and are reflected in the election ballot included in this newsletter. It was reported that bills were introduced in both the NY State Assembly and Senate that support maintaining the status quo in retirement system benefits – good news for PARA membership. A mailing has gone out to approximately 950 Port Authority and PATH employees who have retired since 2010 in hopes of increasing PARA's membership. Also, a collection of articles is posted on the PARA website about the GWB controversy and its aftermath for those wishing to follow this continuing story.

Jerri Raczynski

PA & PATH Retiree Recruitment Efforts – With Gratitude

On behalf of the PARA Board, I want to give a special "Thank You" to the Port Authority's Human Resources Department (HRD) for helping PARA reach the latest cadre of retirees – about 950 PA & PATH employees who retired from January 2010 to mid-February 2014. HRD provided labels with names and addresses for each of these retirees. Their entire outreach effort shows how PARA and the Agency continue to have a productive partnership that benefits both organizations. Very often, PARA's website (www.paranynj.org) has been used in disseminating valuable Agency information to its retirees. This relationship is an enduring one.

Kudos to the PA's Human Resources Department!

Thank you to our own Rae Ann Hoffmann, Maria Malone-Hodges and Holly Blausler! According to Holly, these three were lovingly known as the "labeling squad". With Rae Ann's leadership and with military precision, they planned, coordinated, and executed the entire outreach efforts, completing the mailing on February 26th. The mailing included a letter and a business reply envelope for dues remittance. Due to PA confidentiality issues, PARA could not cross-reference the PA's retiree list with our members' database. Therefore, some current PARA members may have received an invitation letter.

Kudos to Rae Ann, Maria and Holly!

Thank you to our Treasurer Bob Isaacs! In between his golfing, he has been the recipient of all recruitment responses; and, as they came and continue to come in, he updated PARA's membership database. Keep those responses coming. At the time this article was being written, Bob has added over 130 new members, with more responses arriving daily. Good news!

Kudos to Bob Isaacs!

Thank you to YOU, our readers, our members and non-members! If you are not a PARA member, become one now. Renew your membership, if delinquent. Invite other colleagues to join. Volunteer your time, experience, talent and skills. Or, simply send a donation.

Again, with gratitude, thank you to the HRD, Rae Ann, Maria, Holly, Bob and YOU!

Frank Lombardi

The 9/11 Memorial VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The PARA Board has been in contact with staff of the National September 11 Memorial and Museum periodically since 2011. The 9/11 Memorial Museum asked us recently if we would help it get the word out to PARA members about participating in its volunteer programs, particularly because of our members' singular relationship and history with the World Trade Center and September 11.

The following description of the two different volunteer programs – Visitor Services Volunteers and Museum Docents – was provided by the 9/11 Memorial Museum staff.

Since opening in September 2011, the National September 11 Memorial has been visited by nearly 12 million guests from over 80 countries. Occupying half of the 16-acre World Trade Center site, the Memorial features two reflecting pools, each nearly an acre in size, set in the footprints of the Twin Towers. Around the pools, the names of the victims are inscribed in bronze. A surrounding plaza of trees creates a contemplative space separate from the usual sights and sounds of a bustling metropolis. It is truly a special place for everyone who visits but particularly for anyone who has a connection to the events of September 11, 2001. The 9/11 Memorial Museum, located in the seven stories between the plaza and bedrock of the site, will open this spring 2014. The Memorial Museum will include a memorial exhibition commemorating the unique life of each of the victims. It will also recognize the thousands who survived and those who demonstrated extraordinary compassion in the aftermath.

You can discover interesting details about the 9/11 Memorial Museum at: <http://www.911memorial.org/museum>.

The Museum expects 2.5 million visitors each year. The daily activities supporting the Museum could not be performed without the help of volunteers. The 9/11 Memorial values their compassion and contribution to this national tribute. Volunteers for the National September 11 Memorial and Museum play a critical role in providing a meaningful experience for millions of visitors from around the world, and PARA members can participate in the following programs:

Visitor Services Volunteers are an integral part of visitor services at the 9/11 Memorial. They support Visitor Services in the guidance of visitors through the Museum, assist with public programming, provide information about 9/11 victims and orient visitors outside on the Memorial Plaza. Volunteers also support special ceremonies and commemorative events.

Museum Docents help support the Museum's educational mission. Docents provide interpretive services to visitors through thematic talks that include detailed information about artifacts, the World Trade Center site and the history of 9/11.

As a volunteer you will need to show compassion and be able to

cope with difficult subject matter and those affected by it. You must show open-mindedness and patience to work with a diverse public and staff. Importantly you must exhibit the necessary integrity to represent the institution and oneself with the highest standards. You must possess excellent oral and interpersonal skills and a dedication to the Museum Mission and to the values of the Volunteer Program. Lastly you must demonstrate the ability and reliability to consistently keep one's volunteer commitment.

To learn more and to apply online, go to: <http://www.911memorial.org/volunteer>

Those who work or have worked in the WTC area, or who work for the Port Authority, have a unique and valuable perspective as potential volunteers. Many former Port Authority retirees, and still active employees, hold memories that are still very much alive, and the 9/11 Memorial Museum invites you to apply to become part of its volunteer base. We are eager to identify volunteers who can commit their time in supporting our mission to assist visitors from all over the world and for whom this organization holds a memorable and meaningful connection.

We accept applications on a rolling basis. By applying now, you will be able to receive an invitation to one of our future trainings. The timeline for the two volunteer programs are:

Visitor Services Volunteers

The most recent session was held in late April and early May. Subsequent training sessions will be scheduled on an as needed basis.

- Training is up to 10 hours
- Subsequent trainings will be held as needed, but we encourage all to apply ASAP

Museum Docents

The next acceptance and training will be late spring or early summer.

- A comprehensive training of 60 to 70 hours over a period of four months is required

We hope that this will be the beginning of a long and established relationship between the National September 11 Memorial & Museum and the Port Authority Retirees Association, and we look forward to seeing your application very soon!

Should you have any other questions, feel free to contact: volunteer@911memorial.org

Rae Ann Hoffmann

Tracking the News for PARA Members – “Bridgagate” and More

A core group of PARA Board members, particularly PARA's President, Dave Gallagher, Vice-President, Rae Ann Hoffmann and its indomitable Webmaster, Joe SanSevero, have been tracking the news (dailies, weeklies, magazines, blogs, television, radio and social media) almost daily as stories emerge about the George Washington Bridge (“Bridgagate”), and the much larger fallout that keeps unfolding. The stories that PARA posts as a result of culling what has direct connection to the PA complete archive can be found here: <http://paranynj.org/CurrentIssues/2014/Archive.htm>.

What started as several posts under “Current Items of Interest” on our home page, soon became a constant supply of new and important developments for the Port Authority, its management, mission and structure. This includes a public discussion about the Port Authority of a scope that we have not witnessed in decades. We encourage you to check these news pages out regularly, and take advantage of it as another service that PARA provides its members. Please share this information with other PA and PATH retirees, and employees.

Rae Ann Hoffmann

Don't Miss PARA's Online Bulletins!

If you are one of the PARA members who have not yet gotten around to signing up to receive our email bulletins, please do it now. It's easy. Go to our home page <http://paranynj.org/> and type your email address into the box rather obviously labeled “Sign up for PARA Online Bulletins.”

When your PARA Board has an important notice, announcement or update, online bulletins are the way we reach our members. But you have to sign up first.

Here's a look at the archive of online bulletins member subscribers have received to date: http://paranynj.org/Newsletters/Parabulletin/para_bulletin_archive.htm .

If you are already a subscriber, great! Please pass it on to other PA and PATH retirees and employees.

Thanks for helping us keep PARA news in circulation.

Rae Ann Hoffmann

Port Authority Retirees Association, Inc.

PO Box 2002
East Millstone, New Jersey 08875

April 30, 2014

To the Port Authority Board:

This is being submitted on behalf of the **Board of the Port Authority Retirees Association, Inc (PARA)** in response to the article in the recent issue of the **PA News** regarding your request for comments from the public in connection with the current “Reform” efforts being considered by the Board’s Special Oversight Committee.

Introduction

A small group of PA retirees attended the Special Oversight Committee’s meeting on April 21st to observe firsthand the input from the outside panel and the discussion which followed their opening remarks. We were most encouraged with the candor and constructive exchange of views among all participants. We are hopeful that many of the suggestions that were offered will be accepted and implemented in the near term. To do so will demonstrate the Board’s ability and willingness to address these issues on its own without the need for outside direction.

Those of us who attended that meeting did so not out of idle curiosity but rather from a sense of long standing connection and commitment to the organization where many of us spent the overwhelming portion of our adult working life. It has been both sad and shocking to be reading about the continuous stream of revelations that have surfaced during these past few months. We are hopeful that the Board will act boldly to redirect and revitalize the organization, consistent with the founding core principles which governed the Port Authority most successfully as it pursued its evolving regional mission for these past 93 years - - as of this date.

Strengthening that regional concept, a central guiding principle during the PA’s history, remains even more vital now and into the future. In cooperation with the state DOT’s, the toll road and bridge authorities, and other agencies in both states, the PA has led a number of planning initiatives benefitting all areas of the region. The PA’s independent, bi-state, regional perspective needs to be re-energized as soon as possible.

In our view, the PA has worked well for most of its history and there is no need to radically reshape it such as dividing its assets among the states. We believe that it can be made to work well within the context of the Port Compact and the later bi-state legislation. We believe a return to performing projects and directing revenues within the PA’s core functions are essential.

The PA retiree community, taken as a whole, is a unique, valuable source of experience, history, perspective and professionalism. In that vein, we offer the following for your consideration.

Board Governance and Leadership

We strongly support the outside panelists' suggestions that the Board should act to eliminate the inappropriate impact from outside political pressure on the board's actions. To this end, we emphasize that the Board members need to act on behalf of the Port Authority's best interests – not the parochial or partisan interests of either Governor or any individual Board member. The Board members' governance and fiduciary responsibilities require allegiance to the agency and its mission - not to the appointing Governor.

We support the notion that the Board itself ought to select its Chairperson from among its own ranks. The Chairperson ought not be selected by the Governor. Clearly, the Board needs to work *with* the Governors in pursuit of the PA's regional agenda but, at the same time, the Board needs to be independent *from* the Governors in accordance with the basic intentions of the founders. To be sure, there are occasions when the Board needs to be able to say "No" to the Governor and negotiate a different outcome if a particular request is not in the best interests of the region or the agency. The Port Compact seems to be rather clear on this point. The Governors surely will always have their veto prerogative but the Board's agenda and its actions ought to be consistent with the PA's regional mission not the individual, parochial "wants" of either state.

Any Board member who has the faintest perception of a conflict of interest on any specific item brought to the Board should recuse himself immediately from any discussion or any vote on such an item. That recusal ought to be made in public in the spirit of full transparency.

We fully appreciate that it is the responsibility of the Governors, not the PA Board members, to nominate new commissioners. It is our understanding that there are several current vacancies on the board. We nevertheless suggest that Board members encourage the Governors to nominate individuals whose experience, expertise and statesman-like record will contribute affirmatively to the PA's mission and agenda rather than to the Governor's preferences to satisfy his own state's interests.

Executive Selection and Leadership

We fully support the recommendation from the outside panelists that the Executive Director should be chosen by the Board. For obvious reasons, the Port Authority deserves to have the best leader possible regardless of where the individual resides or what his/ her personal political leanings may be. In this way, it would be clear that the

Executive Director reports to the Board, is responsible to the Board and takes direction from the Board.

We also agree that the Executive Director should have the full authority to form his/her own organizational structure and to select the top executive staff (advisors, deputies, assistants, etc) consistent with well established Human Resource policies and practices. In this way, the notion of a dual line of authority (NY/ NJ) should be completely eliminated as quickly as possible. It is clear that this phenomenon only adds to organizational dysfunction, conflicting agendas and priorities, and uncertain allegiances – none of which are in the best interests of organizational effectiveness. We strongly suggest that the executive management teams which have performed well should remain in place regardless of changes in state administrations. Effective leadership over an extended timeframe provides much needed continuity and contributes to strengthening the agency while frequent changes in priorities and management approach have had the opposite effect.

Staff Selection and Promotion

All staff appointments throughout the organization should be accomplished in accordance with long standing and well established Human Resource policies. There should be no outside directive for political appointments at any level. All positions should be filled based on merit and acceptable qualifications of an applicant vis-à-vis the requirements of the specific position. Political appointees owe their allegiance to their political patron. All staff, on the other hand, should be committed to the best interests of the Port Authority and its regional mission.

Investment and Allocation of PA's Resources

There has been much discussion about the appropriate allocation of the PA's resources, particularly its financial resources. We take no specific position on which projects ought to be approved. That is the rightful purview of the PA Board. But we feel confident in suggesting that all non-Port Authority projects should be curtailed immediately. The overwhelming needs that have been identified for security related work at all facilities in the aftermath of the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, the growing need for upgrade and rehabilitation of the existing facilities, and the need for new facilities including the Goethals Bridge and the reconstruction of the World Trade Center have demanded a major commitment of the organization's financial capacity. Expenditures at this time for non-PA projects only distract from the broader regional mission. This is particularly true without a source(s) of new revenue to support the growing financial needs. The PA's funds appropriately belong to the region – not to either state. This is a fundamental premise underlying the Port Authority's creation nearly a hundred years ago.

Perhaps the most valuable resource of the organization lies in the men and women who comprise the workforce. These “human” resources too need to be nurtured and developed in a thoughtful and aggressive way so that the professionalism, innovation, excellence and commitment that have been hallmarks of the agency for decades can continue into the future. In every respect, the Port Authority staff ought to be recognized leaders in the public sector. It used to enjoy that reputation throughout the nation and across the globe. With the current clouds of uncertainty hovering over the workplace and with the outflow of so many staff who are retiring, we are concerned that there may well be a severe skills gap in the near future that will lead to further decline in the PA’s capabilities to meet its regional agenda going forward. We encourage a strong support from the Board for strengthening the career service concept which has proven to be so valuable in the past.

Conclusion

The efforts of the Special Oversight Committee offer much hope for bringing the PA back on track. It seems that the organization has been off kilter for far too long. We are very encouraged by the comments of the outside panelists and the interest expressed by the Board members during the April 21st meeting. We realize there may not be unanimous acceptance of all recommendations but that is a part of the process. There will always be differences of opinion on policies or project proposals but such differences do not equate to dysfunction as has been alleged. Healthy debate is useful and it should promote thoughtful, constructive discussion but it needs to be managed well and the decision maker(s) need to act for the benefit of the organization’s mission and with genuine respect for the parties. Again, we hope that a renewed commitment, consistent with the PA’s historic core principles, to the basic goals and practices can be forged in order to promote the best interests of the region, the public, the staff and the Port Authority itself.

Our interest, commitment and concern about these issues continue. We sincerely hope that the Board will address the underlying root causes of these current problems. We are available to explore these or other ideas in further detail at your request.

Submitted on behalf of the PARA Board.

Dave Gallagher,
President, PARA

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PA and PATH Retirees and Active Employees may join PARA.

DEAR PARA MEMBERS,

In the [most recent edition of PA News](#) there is an article about the current efforts of the PA Board to consider actions to "reform" the Port Authority. In that article there is a solicitation for public comment. The [home page of the Port Authority's Web site](#) also mentions this outreach to the public for comments. Your PARA Board is preparing a statement to submit to the Special Oversight Committee of the Port Authority Board. It will be posted on [PARA's Web site](#) within the next few days.

PARA continues to update its [Current Issues news posts](#), and we hope you will use this resource to keep yourselves up to date about the public discussion regarding the Port Authority's governance and its future.

As a community, Port Authority retirees possess a treasure trove of experience, professionalism, history and perspective. If you are considering submitting a comment in response to the PA Board's request, we strongly recommend that your comments be informed, professional, supportive, encouraging and constructive. You may send your comments to: reform@panynj.gov.

This solicitation for comments follows the [April 21st open meeting of the Special Oversight Committee of the PA Board*](#). At that meeting an outside panel of independent experts offered their comments and engaged in a candid and direct discussion with the Board members covering a wide range of recommendations on this topic. A small group of PARA Board members and retirees were present at this meeting to observe the discussion firsthand.

This is clearly a pivotal moment in the history of the Port Authority. It is in everyone's interest that the Board, in concert with the two governors, will find a way to redirect and re-energize the organization. We trust that any such action will be consistent with the basic principles which served as the foundation for success in this region, ever since the Port Compact was ratified in 1921.

These efforts by the PA Board are encouraging and we are all hopeful that they will lead to an effective resolution of the underlying root causes of the problems which have adversely impacted the entire organization and have been the subject of substantial media coverage in recent months.

Sincerely,

YOUR PARA BOARD

[*Background on Special Oversight Committee of the PA's Board of Commissioners](#)

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The Port Authority Retirees Association, Inc. does not provide, and this notice does not constitute, legal or other professional advice. We recommend you contact your own professional advisor for such matters as neither The Port Authority Retirees Association, Inc., nor anyone associated with this notice, assumes responsibility for your relying on the information provided, even though we have attempted to ensure that it reflects our understanding of what is presented.