City Employees Union, Local 237, Int'l Bhd. of Teamsters, 80 OCB 8(BOC 2007)[Decision No. 8-2007]

(Rep) (Docket No. RE-177-06).

Summary of Decision: The City filed a Notice of Voluntary Recognition seeking to amend Local 237's certification to reflect the reclassification of a bargaining unit title, School Guard, to School Safety Agent. LEEBA filed an objection seeking to represent the title in a separate bargaining unit. As the Board's investigation confirmed that a name change occurred and that there was no change in duties, the Board held that the requested amendment to certification was appropriate and that LEEBA's challenge to Local 237's representation was not properly raised at this time. (Official decision follows.)

OFFICE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING BOARD OF CERTIFICATION

In the Matter of the Certification Proceeding

-between-

CITY OF NEW YORK,

Petitioner,

-and-

CITY EMPLOYEES UNION, LOCAL 237, INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS,

Respondent,

-and-

LAW ENFORCEMENT EMPLOYEES BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION,

Intervenor.

DECISION AND ORDER

On September 13, 2006, the City of New York ("City") filed a Notice of Voluntary Recognition pursuant to §1-02(m) of the Rules of the Office of Collective Bargaining (Rules of the

City of New York, Title 61, Chapter 1) ("OCB Rules") seeking to amend Certification No. 67-78, a bargaining unit represented by City Employees Union, Local 237, International Brotherhood of Teamsters ("Local 237"), to add the competitive title of School Safety Agent (Title Code No. 60817). The current unit employees in the non-competitive title School Guard (Title Code No. 70204), which is represented by Local 237 and subject to a collective bargaining agreement, will be reclassified into the School Safety Agent title. Timely objections to the voluntary recognition were filed by the Law Enforcement Employees Benevolent Association ("LEEBA"), and *pro se* by Lumuel Whiteside and Victor Olivero. LEEBA sought to represent School Safety Agents in a separate bargaining unit.

This Board finds that although the City filed its motion as a voluntary recognition, the issue raised was that of an amendment to certification based on a name change, which is contemplated by OCB Rule §1-02(u). Our investigation confirms the allegation that a name change occurred and that there was no change in the employees' duties as a result of the name change. Therefore, we amend Local 237's certification and add to the bargaining unit the title School Safety Agent. We find that such a change does not allow LEEBA to challenge Local 237's representation of the employees at issue outside the window period designated by the contract bar rule articulated in OCB Rule §1-02(g).

BACKGROUND

School Guards and employees in other titles are represented by Local 237 in a bargaining

unit, Certification No. 67-78, as amended.¹ Employees in this bargaining unit are subject to a collective bargaining agreement between the City, the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation, and Local 237 covering the period of August 7, 2005 to September 22, 2006 ("2005-2006 Agreement").

On August 2, 2006, the Commissioner of the Department of Citywide Administrative Services ("DCAS") adopted Resolution No. 2006-6, an "Amendment to Classification" approving the inclusion of the School Safety Agent title in the competitive class of the classified service. The position description, job qualifications, and salary range for School Safety Agent are identical to that of School Guard.

On September 13, 2006, the City submitted a Notice of Voluntary Recognition, originally docketed as VR-26-06, requesting that the Board of Certification amend Local 237's Certificate No. 67-78 to reflect the newly promulgated title, School Safety Agent. On September 15, 2006, the Director of Representation notified Local 237, and the employing agency, the NYPD, of the City's Notice of Voluntary Recognition. The Director of Representation also provided the NYPD with a Notice to Employees with instructions that this Notice be posted.

On October 12, 2006, LEEBA filed an objection to the City's Notice of Voluntary Recognition alleging that they were objecting on behalf of a unit member and requesting that a representation election be held between LEEBA and Local 237.² Additionally, Whiteside and

¹ The title "School Guard" is also referred to as "School Safety Agent" in Article I, §1, of the 2005-2006 Agreement.

² On March 2, 2007, an attorney representing the unit member named in LEEBA's objection notified the Office of Collective Bargaining that LEEBA's objection was submitted without the unit member's involvement and not at her request. Counsel requested that the unit member's connection with the instant matter end. On March 5, 2007, the Director of Representation responded that the

Olivero filed an objection on October 12, 2007 alleging that the Office of Collective Bargaining's Notice to Employees "was not viewed by all members" and that certain employees viewed the notice too late to file an objection.

On November 21, 2006, the Director of Representation conducted an informal conference during which the parties were asked to respond to two matters: first, whether the School Safety Agent was a new title or a successor title; and, second, whether the contract bar rule applies to the instant proceeding. Timely memoranda of law were received from counsel for LEEBA, Local 237, and the City.

On January 17, 2007, DCAS adopted Resolution No. 2007-1, which states in pertinent part:

Whereas, the title of School Safety Agent (60817) was classified in the Competitive Class on 8/2/06; and

Whereas, the duties and qualification requirements for School Safety Agent are the same as those for the non-Competitive Class title of School Guard (70204); and

Whereas, City Personnel Rule 3.4.4 provides that whenever a position in the Non-Competitive Class is reclassified to the Competitive Class, incumbents of the Non-Competitive Class position shall be reclassified to the Competitive Class with all the rights and status of a Competitive employee;

Now, Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED, That all persons employed in the Non-Competitive Class title of School Guard (70204) be reclassified to the Competitive Class title School Safety Agent (60817)

This Resolution also explains that when the incumbent employees are reclassified to the newly promulgated competitive title of School Safety Agent, the non-competitive title, School Guard will be deleted from the classified service.

POSITIONS OF THE PARTIES

unit member is not considered a party to this proceeding.

City's Position

The City alleges that the title School Safety Agent placed in the competitive class by DCAS is the successor title to the existing non-competitive title of School Guard. Citing DCAS resolutions, the City explains that pursuant to Rule 3.4.4 of the Personnel Rules and Regulations of the City of New York "all incumbents holding the School Guard title will eventually be reclassified to the competitive class title of School Safety Agent with all the rights and status of competitive employees." City Brief at 3. By virtue of DCAS' actions, and because the titles have identical duties, qualification requirements, and salary ranges, the City contends that the School Safety Agent position is neither new nor unrepresented and is currently represented by Local 237. Thus, OCB Rule §1-02(g), the contract bar rule, prohibits a representation challenge by an intervener union at this time.

Noting that OCB Rule §1-02(d) does not differentiate between types of petitions, the City urges the Board to follow the precedent of the New York State Public Employment Relations Board ("PERB").⁴ The City contends that the Board should apply PERB's unit clarification analysis to the

³ 55 RCNY, App. A, Rule 3.4.4. Jurisdictional Reclassification, provides as follows: Whenever a position in the exempt, non-competitive or labor class is reclassified into the competitive class, the permanent incumbent of such position, if there be any at the time of such reclassification, shall continue to hold the position with all the rights and status of a competitive employee.

⁴ OCB Rule §1-02(d) Petition by public employer - contents, provides as follows: The petition shall contain:

⁽¹⁾ The name, address, telephone and fax numbers of the petitioner;

⁽²⁾ A general description of the petitioner's function and the number of its employees;

⁽³⁾ The classes of titles of employees in the units claimed to be appropriate and the approximate number of employees therein;

⁽⁴⁾ An allegation that a question or controversy exists concerning representation and a concise statement setting forth the nature thereof, and, in any case when a public

instant matter and only determine whether the at-issue title is already encompassed in a bargaining unit.

Local 237's Position

Local 237 alleges that it is the incumbent employee organization representing School Safety Agents as this title is the successor to the School Guard title, a title that it currently represents. Local 237 also alleges that "[o]ther than the change in classification, which had no effect whatsoever on incumbents in the title, as they were granted competitive status, the terms and conditions of employment, and the duties and responsibilities of the employees occupying the titles in question did not change." Local 237 Brief at 2. Indeed, Local 237 alleges that "there is no dispute that the position at issue, School Safety Agent, is identical to the position already represented by Local 237" and that the title School Safety Agent is also listed in the current collective bargaining agreement. As such, Local 237 maintains that the contract bar rule applies and that, therefore, its representation of the employees at issue cannot be challenged at this time. To support this argument, Local 237 explains that it is party to the 2005-2006 Agreement, which is still in effect.

Local 237 also alleges that School Safety Agents share a community of interest with the current bargaining unit, which includes peace officers assigned to other City agencies who are assigned to substantially the same duties as School Safety Agents. Further, Local 237, alleges that LEEBA is not a public employee organization and, as such, lacks standing to represent the at issue

employer entertains a good faith doubt concerning the continued majority status of a certified union, an allegation to that effect with a concise statement of the facts upon which the doubt is based;

⁽⁵⁾ The names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers of the public employee organizations which claim to represent the employees in the alleged unit(s);

⁽⁶⁾ A request that the Board investigate the alleged question or controversy.

title or object to the voluntary recognition notice filed by the City. In support of this allegation, Local 237 argues that LEEBA fails to meet the requirements of a public employee organization under both the New York City Collective Bargaining Law (New York City Administrative Code, Title 12, Chapter 3) ("NYCCBL") and the Taylor Law.

LEEBA's Position

LEEBA alleges that the contract bar rule is inapplicable to their objection to the City's Notice of Voluntary Recognition of an incumbent union. In support of this allegation, LEEBA offers two distinct arguments. First, it argues that "unusual or extraordinary circumstances" contemplated in §1-02(g) of the OCB Rules exist which would permit a finding by this Board that the contract bar rule does not apply,⁵ and, second, it contends that the contract bar rule is inapplicable to an objection

⁵ OCB Rule §1-02(g) provides as follows:

Petitions - contract bar; time to file. A valid contract between a public employer and a public employee organization will bar the processing of any petition filed outside of the window periods described below. The time period for filing a petition for certification, designation, decertification or revocation of designation pursuant to §1-02(c), (d), or (e) of the rules shall be: for a contract of no more than three years' duration, a petition can be filed not less than 150 or more than 180 calendar days before the contract's expiration date; for a contract of more than three years' duration, a petition can be filed not less than 150 or more than 180 calendar days before the contract's expiration date, or not less than 150 or more than 180 calendar days before the end of the third year of that contract. No petition for certification, decertification or investigation of a question or controversy concerning representation may be filed after the expiration of a contract. However, in the event that a public employer and a public employee organization sign a successor contract after that contract has expired, then a petition for certification, decertification or question or controversy concerning representation may be filed in the 30-day period following the date the successor contract is signed by all parties. Moreover, if the Board finds that unusual or extraordinary circumstances exist, such as when there is reason to believe that a recognized or certified employee organization is defunct or has abandoned representation of the employees in the unit for which it was recognized or certified, the Board may process a petition otherwise barred by this rule.

for voluntary recognition under OCB Rule §1-02(m).⁶ LEEBA alleges that the title School Safety Agent is a newly created title and that in placing this title in the competitive class DCAS effected a significant change in circumstances sufficient to warrant the filing of a Notice of Voluntary Recognition by the City. LEEBA maintains that the twenty day objection period provided by OCB Rule §1-02(m)(5) that follows the filing of a Notice of Voluntary Recognition exposes an incumbent union to challenge thereby constituting a "window period." Therefore, LEEBA argues that voluntary recognitions are outside the ambit of the contract bar doctrine. According to LEEBA, application of the contract bar rule to objections to a voluntary recognition makes "the provisions for objection to voluntary recognition illusory and of no practical consequence." LEEBA Brief at 11.

⁶ OCB Rule §1-02(m) Voluntary Recognition - notification, provides, in pertinent part, as follows:

⁽¹⁾ Filing of Notification. When the public employer proposes voluntarily to recognize a public employee organization for the representation of public employees pursuant to $\S12-303(1)(2)$ of the statute, the employer shall file an original and three copies of a signed written notification with the Board.

⁽⁴⁾ Objection to Proposed Recognition. An employee, a group of employees, or a public employee organization may file a statement with the Board objecting to the proposed recognition and alleging that a question or controversy exists regarding representation. Such a statement of objection, if filed in a timely manner within the period of objection, will preclude a proposed recognition from becoming effective. In the event an objection is timely filed, the notice of voluntary recognition will be deemed a petition pursuant to §1-02(d) of these rules and will be processed accordingly.

⁷ OCB Rule §1-02(m)(5) Period of objection, provides as follows: A public employee or public employee organization objecting to the recognition shall file an original and three copies of its statement of objection, with proof of service on the public employer and public employee organization, setting forth the basis for its opposition within 20 calendar days of publication of the notice of filing in the City Record.

LEEBA acknowledges that School Safety Agent has been the unofficial title of the School Guard employees since 1998. According to LEEBA, the title change is significant because it allowed them to raise a representation question. LEEBA argues that since School Safety Officers were transferred from the Board of Education to the NYPD in 1998, "the position slowly evolved into more of a law enforcement function with police-like duties." LEEBA Brief at 13. LEEBA details changes in job functions it alleges have occurred within the non-competitive title of School Guard since 1998. According to LEEBA, the hiring by competitive examination "signifie[s] the expanded law enforcement functions of the job," which it alleges led DCAS to issue the new title. LEEBA maintains that due to these changes the continued placement of the title in Local 237's bargaining unit is called into question because these employees no longer have a community of interest with other unit members. LEEBA contends that the circumstances are the same as with Environmental Police Officers, whose name had previously been changed. LEEBA notes that there is an exception to the fragmentation standards for employees whose duties are primarily law enforcement. LEEBA concludes that a representation election between itself and Local 237 is the appropriate resolution.

Further, in response to the allegations of Local 237, LEEBA argues that it is a *bona fide* public employee organization under the NYCCBL and the Taylor Law.

DISCUSSION

The OCB Rules provide that when an employer files a Notice of Voluntary Recognition pursuant to OCB Rule §1-02(m) and a timely objection is received, "the notice of voluntary recognition will be deemed a petition pursuant to §1-02(d) . . . and processed accordingly."

Therefore, we will treat the City's Notice as a representation petition filed pursuant to §1-02(d).⁸ As required by the OCB Rules, this Board has reviewed the "alleged question or controversy," and we find that the City merely seeks to recognize a successor title, School Safety Agent, and that the objection filed by LEEBA is not properly before us at this time.

Under OCB Rules, petitions filed under OCB Rule §1-02(d) are subject to the contract bar set forth in OCB Rule §1-02(g). This rule articulates a doctrine that "has been long and firmly established in the field of labor relations." *City Employees Union, Local 237, IBT*, Decision No. 11-71 at 3-4; *see also Law Enforcement Employees Benevolent Ass'n*, Decision No. 9-2006 at 9. The purpose of the contract bar rule is to "balance the statutory objective of stability in bargaining relationships with the statutory right of employees to freely designate or change their representatives." *Terminal Employees Local 832, Int'l Bhd. of Teamsters*, Decision No. 27-72 at 5, *reconsideration denied*, Decision No. 73-72; *accord Indep. Laborers Union of New York City*, Decision No. 6-2001 at 6, *aff'd, Indep. Laborers Union of New York City v. Office of Collective Bargaining*, No. 113973/01 (Sup. Ct. N.Y. Co. Apr. 3, 2002). The contract bar rule has been applied to prevent a union from raiding an existing union except during limited window periods. Therefore, a petition "for certification, designation, decertification or revocation of designation pursuant to §1-02(c), (d), or (e)" of OCB Rules would be timely only when filed during the appropriate window

⁸ The instant petition was re-docketed as RE-177-06.

⁹ OCB Rule §1-02(g) provides, in pertinent part, that: [a] valid contract between a public employer and a public employee organization will bar the processing of any petition for certification, designation, decertification or revocation of designation pursuant to §1-02(c), (d), or (e) of these rules

period.10

In the instant matter, the City seeks an amendment to Local 237's certificate to include the new name of a pre-existing bargaining unit title. Such petitions are contemplated in OCB Rule §1-02(u) not §1-02(d). Further, petitions filed under §1-02(u) are not subject to the contract bar rule.

¹⁰ In *Law Enforcement Employees Benevolent Ass'n*, Decision No. 9-2006 at 13, we found that the window period to challenge the 2005-2006 Agreement was April 19, 2006, to May 18, 2006.

OCB Rule §1-02(u), states that:

[a] public employer . . . may make a motion requesting amendment of a certification to include classes of titles (positions), the names of which are changed, or new specialty designations, or a new class of titles (positions), and/or to delete obsolete titles (positions) or designations.

Since the City seeks an amendment to certification such as that contemplated by OCB Rule §1-02(u), we will analyze the matter from that perspective. *Cf. Indep. Laborers Union of New York City*, Decision No. 6-2001 at 5-6 (considering a petition to carve out titles from an existing bargaining unit as a representation petition pursuant to OCB Rule § 1-02(c) when improperly filed as a decertification petition pursuant to § 1-02(e)), *aff'd*, *Indep. Laborers Union of New York City v. Office of Collective Bargaining*, No. 113973/01 (Sup. Ct. N.Y. Co. Apr. 3, 2002).

A review of the undisputed facts contained in the pleadings and briefs indicates that the event which occasioned the City's Voluntary Recognition Notice is solely a name change and the civil service classification change from non-competitive class to competitive class. The duties and responsibilities of School Guards are identical to those of School Safety Agents. Likewise, the job qualifications and salary range remains the same. The sole difference between the existing title School Guard and the new title, School Safety Agent, is the change in civil service classification from non-competitive to competitive class.

This Board has a long history of granting requests to amend a certification when our investigation confirms the allegation that a mere change in a title's name has occurred. *See, e.g., Local 371, Social Services Employees Union, District Council 37, AFSCME*, Decision No. 6-2003 at 1-2 (granting City's petition to amend a certification when the Board was satisfied that DCAS deleted titles and reclassified them into a new title); *Office of Municipal Labor Relations*, Decision

No. 50-82 at 6 (amending 29 certifications when our investigation confirmed that nomenclature changes had been made to gender neutralize the City's classified service); *District Council 37*, *AFSCME*, Decision No. 21-77 at 1-2 (amending certification when our investigation confirmed that obsolete titles had been reclassified to the new titles and their duties were "subsumed under the respective broader titles to which the old titles have been reclassified" and other titles previously included in the petitioner's bargaining units were also reclassified to the new titles); *District Council 37*, *AFSCME*, Decision No. 45-73 at 1 (amending certification when our investigation "confirmed Petitioner's allegations regarding the reclassification and lack of change of duties").

These amendments have been granted even when objections to the name change petition have been filed. *See Communications Workers of America*, Decision No. 3-79 at 3 (amending certifications over the City's objection that two certifications should be consolidated when the City's Personnel Director's Resolution clearly showed that the titles at issue were successor titles to titles previously represented by the petitioner); *District Council 37*, Decision No. 25-75 at 2 (amending certification despite objection from an intervening local claiming to be the certified bargaining representative when our investigation "confirmed the allegation that this title has been reclassified . . . without any change in duties").

Only when there is a factual issue regarding whether duties have changed as a result of the reclassification is further investigation warranted. *See District Council 37*, *AFSCME*, Decision No. 6-84 at 12 (finding, when two represented titles and a managerial title were reclassified into a new title, that the new title had managerial duties); *District Council 37*, *AFSCME*, Decision No. 10-83 at 4-7 (considering appropriate unit placement when job specification was not identical and intervenors jointly represented the next title in the line of promotion); *see also District Council 37*,

AFSCME, Decision No. 52-78 at 2 (when 11 titles were reclassified to one new title and only two of the 11 titles had previously been represented, the Board amended the certification to add the reclassified title with the exception of certain positions that the parties agreed were managerial and/or confidential).¹¹

Consistent with our prior decisions, we find that the requested amendment to certification to reflect that the title of School Guard has been reclassified to School Safety Agent is appropriate. As stated earlier, our investigation reveals that such a reclassification has occurred and that there is no change in duties of the employees at issue. Further, the DCAS order provides that all employees in the School Guard title will be moved to the School Safety Agent title and that the School Guard title will no longer be used. Indeed, no party has alleged that the name change will result in a change in duties. That DCAS placed School Safety Agent in the competitive class does not compel a different conclusion. The fact that future employees in the School Safety Agent title will be hired from a civil service list does not raise a question concerning representation. We have found that "classification decisions, including... the decision to hire employees from a civil service list rather than making non-competitive appointments are matters within the exclusive jurisdiction of the New York City Department of Personnel. They are to be distinguished from the establishment of appropriate units for purposes of collective bargaining which is the responsibility of the Board of

¹¹ NYCCBL § 12-305 provides, in relevant part, that "neither managerial nor confidential employees shall constitute or be included in any bargaining unit."

¹² LEEBA's arguments regarding changed duties date back to the 1998 transfer of School Guards from the Board of Education to the NYPD and not to the reclassification at issue.

Certification."¹³ United Fed'n of Law Enforcement Officers, Decision No. 11-87 at 12 (noting, in a representation proceeding, that a change in title code number is "a ministerial change [that] does not affect the certification of a union as the collective bargaining representative of a group of employees").

Moreover, we note that an objection to a request to amend a certification to reflect a name change cannot be used as a substitute for a timely representation petition. See Communications Workers of America, Decision No. 3-79 at 3 (finding that the City's objection seeking consolidation of two bargaining units is inappropriate in a name change petition since such a petition "basically involve[s] no more than quasi-ministerial changes in the certifications to reflect City reclassifications" and denying the City's request "without prejudice to the City's right to file a timely petition for consolidation in the future"). A rival union's challenge to represent employees that are clearly represented by another union is more appropriately brought as a representation petition pursuant to OCB Rule § 1-02(c). See Detectives' Endowment Ass'n of the City of New York, Decision No. 15-80 at 15 (dismissing a rival union's objection to a unit clarification petition and noting that the "application would more appropriately have been brought as a petition for certification" since "rather than constituting a question of unit clarification, the DEA's petition appears to be a challenge to the PBA's clear and present representation of the employees in question"); New York State Nurses Ass'n, Decision No. 68-68 at 2 (dismissing a rival union's petition to accrete a title in another union's bargaining unit because the provision allowing the Board to shorten life of a certification "was not intended to be used by unions as a substitute for

¹³ The Department of Personnel was subsequently subsumed within DCAS. *See Org. of Staff Analysts*, Decision No. 1-2007 at 3 n.1.

representation petitions" and use of the provision "as a means of challenging a rival certified union would subvert the requirement of proof of interest and the contract bar doctrine").

Substantively, LEEBA's objection in the instant matter is founded on its claim that the job functions of School Guards have changed since these employees were transferred to the NYPD in 1998. This is an issue properly raised in a timely representation petition. *See Law Enforcement Employees Benevolent Ass'n*, Decision No. 3-2005 (representation petition seeking to fragment a title from an existing bargaining unit where there were changes in duties and qualifications was granted). We note that even if LEEBA had filed a representation petition in the instant matter, rather than the objection to the proposed voluntary recognition, its claim would not be timely under the contract bar doctrine. OCB Rule § 1-02(g) provides, in pertinent part, that "[n]o petition for certification, decertification or investigation into a question or controversy concerning representation may be filed after the expiration of a contract." As the contract covering School Guard (School Safety Agent) expired on September 22, 2006, LEEBA's request on October 12, 2006 to represent these employees is not properly raised at this time.

Based on our holding, we need not address Local 237's argument that LEEBA is not a *bona fide* public employee organization. In addition, as Whiteside and Olivero received notice and were able to pose a timely objection, we need not reach the issue of timely posting of the Notice to Employees.

For the reasons set forth above, we find that the title School Safety Agent is merely the successor to the title School Guard. We also find that the objection filed by LEEBA is not properly raised at this time. As the City's petition seeks to amend Local 237's certification order merely to reflect the change in nomenclature, we find that Certificate No. 67-78 should be so modified.

ORDER

Pursuant to the powers vested in the Board of Certification by the New York City Collective Bargaining Law, it is hereby

ORDERED, that Certification No. 67-78 (as previously amended) be, and the same hereby is, further amended to add the title School Safety Agent (Title Code No. 60817).

Dated: April 24, 2007

New York, New York

MARLENE A. GOLD
CHAIR

GEORGE NICOLAU
MEMBER

CAROL A. WITTENBERG
MEMBER

NOTICE OF AMENDED CERTIFICATION

This notice is to acknowledge that the Board of Certification has issued a Decision and Order amending certification as follows:

DATE: April 24, 2007 **DOCKET #:** RE-177-06

DECISION NUMBER: 8-2007

EMPLOYER: City of New York and the New York City Police Department,

One Police Plaza, New York NY 10038

CERTIFIED/RECOGNIZED BARGAINING

REPRESENTATIVE: City Employees Union, Local 237, International Brotherhood of

Teamsters, 216 West 14th Street, New York, NY 10011

AMENDMENT: Certification No. 67-78 has been amended to add the following

Title/Code:

Added: School Safety Agent (Title Code No. 60817)