

BLET Chief Takes Sidetrack

Settlement has Hahs stepping down for six months, federal board will review deal with Teamsters

Don M. Hahs, president of the Teamsters' Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, is stepping aside for six months under an agreement to settle union embezzlement charges.

A spokesman for the parent International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Galen Munroe, said under a settlement, Hahs started an immediate six-month suspension from all union elective offices and is to repay union funds he was charged with spending for nonunion purposes. That leaves Hahs as "essentially a rank-and-file union member" for now, Munroe said.

The deal strips one of the nation's largest rail unions of its top leader for the next half-year, assuming it is approved by the watchdog Independent Review Board that monitors certain union issues under a 1989 consent decree between the government and the Teamsters.

The IRB investigated Hahs' spending over several years and recommended to Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa that Hahs be prosecuted inside the union for spending more than \$58,000 the union had not authorized. The spending in 2004 through 2006 included the purchase of Cleveland Cavaliers professional basketball tickets, travel costs for his wife to join him at conferences and other events, plus some other expenses.

Although it removes Hahs from the presidency for a time, the action comes at the end of a year that saw the BLET and most other rail unions wrap up long-term contract negotiations with the railroad industry.

Also under the Teamsters organization is the union for maintenance-of-way or track repair workers, who joined in those contract agreements this year.

At the Cleveland, Ohio-based BLET, Edward W. Rodziewicz is first vice presi-

dent and alternate president, and would be available to run the train engineers' union through the suspension. Hahs and Rodziewicz were both elected to five-year

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terms in September 2001 and re-elected in June 2006.

There was no immediate word on when the IRB would consider the Hahs settlement.

The board has broad latitude to accept or reject the settlement. Its three members are former U.S. Attorney General

Benjamin Civiletti, former FBI Director William Webster and former U.S. Attorney Joseph diGenova.

The IRB in September sent Hoffa the results of its lengthy probe and related documents, triggering a 90-day countdown for the union to prosecute and report back.

IRB Administrator John Cronin later said Hoffa sent the case back to the board at first, asking it to take jurisdiction, after Hahs's attorney asserted his client could not get a fair review within the Teamsters structure.

But the board usually takes cases involving either senior officers of the Teamsters union or those pertaining to organized crime, and it sent the case back to Hoffa. That would have meant a Teamsters' three-person panel would hear the case Dec. 3 and then make recommendations to Hoffa on appropriate actions, but instead Hahs and Hoffa signed off on the settlement Nov. 28.

BY JOHN D. BOYD

Bush Seeks Second STB Term for Mulvey

President Bush will nominate Francis P. Mulvey for another term on the Surface Transportation Board, the White House said, keeping Mulvey at the board for five more years after his current term expires the end of this year.

Mulvey is the sole Democrat member of the three-person board, which is chaired by Charles D. Nottingham and includes Vice Chairman W. Douglas Buttrey. He holds a doctorate in economics and was a Democratic staff director for the rail subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Bush first nominated him to an STB seat in 2003, and he was confirmed by the Senate on May 21, 2004.

Mulvey also has been a frequent dissenter from the majority on regulatory issues, such as when the board would approve new short lines spun off by major railroads with "paper barriers" imposed by the seller to lock in customer shipments to the larger railroad. When the board recently said it would allow case-by-case challenges by shippers to the paper barriers, which some say forces them into higher freight rates, Mulvey backed that decision but said he would watch how the majority implements the plan.

He has also worked for the Department of Transportation, a office of the inspector general, the congressional watchdog General Accounting Office (now the Government Accountability Office), the National Academy of Sciences' Transportation Research Board and American Bus Association. He once headed economic research for a New York State Legislative Commission on Solid Waste Management and cited that experience this year as the STB considers applications for specialty short lines that would be waste sorting and transfer operations.

He has taught economics and statistics at Northeastern University, Wheaton College and Bowling Green State University.