NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

NEW YORK TIMES, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2001

Power chief to head Port Authority

By ERIC HERMAN
DAILY NEWS BUSINESS WRITER

Gov. Pataki tapped New York Power Authority chairman Joseph Seymour yesterday to run the Port Authority, an agency still reeling from the loss of 75 employees in the Sept. 11 World Trade Center attack.

Seymour will serve as executive director, running the Port's day-to-day operations, and report to a 12-member board of commissioners.

By tradition, New Jersey's governor picks the board's chairman, while the executive director is New York's pick.

The $185,016-a-year position has been vacant since the death of executive director Neil Levin in the Sept. 11 attack.

Seymour has longstanding ties to Pataki.

In the mid-1980s, he served as city manager of Peekskill, Westchester County, while Pataki was mayor.

When Pataki became governor, he named Seymour to head the state's Office of General Services. There, Seymour played a key role in creating the "Albany Plan," a real estate initiative to build new state office buildings, according to Edmond Schorno, former first deputy commissioner at OGS.

"Joe has extensive experience in real estate and real estate development from a municipal perspective," Schorno said. "He's a details-oriented guy."

But Seymour will take over an agency that stepped back from the real estate business last year by leasing the World Trade Center to developer Larry Silverstein for 99 years.

The Port's primary role is operating the Kennedy, LaGuardia, and Newark airports, the Port Authority bus terminal, and the PATH trains.

Seymour faces formidable challenges, such as rebuilding downtown's damaged PATH lines. And he'll also have to restore shaken morale among the Port's 7,000 employees, who lost co-workers and close friends in the attack, including executive director Levin.

The chairman is also changing. Chairman Lewis Eisenberg recently stepped aside, and New Jersey's Jack Sinagra, a former state senator, is set to take his place.

The agency had its headquarters in the World Trade Center. After the attacks, it relocated to several New Jersey locations.

It has since relocated again to offices in Manhattan, near Union Square.

"It will be a much more difficult job as manager than it had been," said Empire State Development chairman Charles Gargano, who is also vice chair of the Port Authority.

CITY_21MC100_011834214

NYC-WTC_000415872