

BOSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Verrill grows Mass. presence through combination with Boston law firm

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Boston-based Rackemann Sawyer & Brewster is combining with Verrill, giving a law firm with Portland, Maine, roots a bigger presence in the Bay State.

The tie-up will create a firm with about 60 lawyers in Boston and nearly 150 across its footprint. As of earlier this year, Verrill had 36 lawyers in Boston, while Rackemann had 24, according to Business Journal research. Portland is Verrill's largest office, though Boston will come close in terms of headcount following the transaction.

The combination is expected to become effective Jan. 1. The firm will take Verrill's name. Financial terms were not disclosed.

Neither firm had been actively looking for a merger, said Regina Hurley, a Verrill partner and the chair of the firm's executive board. The courtship between the two firms began in July, when attorneys from both of the firms got together for an informal lunch. "We started talking about our firms, and it was really as a result of that lunch that we thought that this could be a potentially really interesting opportunity," she said.

A few weeks later, another lunch was scheduled, this one involving managing partners from the two firms. That meal started at noon. It ended around 3:30 – a "really good first date," according to Hurley.

"Time flies when you're having fun," said Frank De Vito, Rackemann's managing director.

Lawyers for the two sides had previously worked together or opposite one another, and a mutual respect existed between them, according to firm leaders. Verrill has been looking to strategically grow in Boston, and its leadership saw Rackemann's well-known



Regina Hurley, a Verrill partner based in Boston and the chair of the firm's executive board.

real estate law practice as a good match with its own, Hurley said. Both also have established trusts and estates practices, in addition to handling business and litigation work.

"It all comes down to the key question, does this combination help us deliver value to clients? It does," De Vito said. "We recognize that clients want depth, they want breadth, they want reasonable costs and lawyers with integrity. When you put all that together as a combined firm, we're able to check all the boxes."

Rackemann Sawyer attorneys are expected to officially move into Verrill's One Federal St. office within the next few months. The firm will be vacating its current location just down the street at 160 Federal St.