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Nora Gaskin, Secretary

**The 36th Annual General Meeting
Of the McMaster University Retirees Association
Wednesday June 23, 2021, 1 PM, Zoom**

The meeting was preceded by 15 minutes of online social time involving 49 participants and at its peak, had 58 attendees.

BUSINESS MEETING

MURA President Helen Barton called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to MURA's second Zoom Annual General Meeting. Helen explained that the meeting had been restructured to permit "essential" business to be conducted first to ensure a quorum, followed by the presentation, and then the remainder of the meeting agenda.

A head count established that we met the requirement for a quorum as specified in article 4.06 of MURA's constitution: "At any meeting of members thirty regular members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business."

1. Nominating Committee Report (Heather Grigg)

Heather Grigg, chair of the 2021 Nominating Committee, presented the Nominating Report for 2021-22, which was circulated to members via email. The members of the Nominating Committee were Heather Grigg (Chair), Pat Fraser, Mary Law and Debbie Wiesensee. Heather explained that the Nominating Committee report as included in the agenda package was accepted by Council in April and published in the Spring *MURAnews*. Our constitution permits new nominations to be made up to 7 days before the AGM.

Heather called for any additional nominations to be phoned in to Mahendra Joshi within the ensuing ten minutes, and explained that she would resume her report, with possible additions from the floor immediately after the Treasurer's Report.

2. Approval of minutes

Moved by John Horsman, **seconded** by Barb Carpio

“that the minutes of 35th AGM, November 26, 2020 be approved as distributed”

Carried.

3. President’s Report (Helen Barton)

Helen acknowledged and thanked outgoing Council members Mary Law, Mahendra Joshi, Debbie Weisensee and Heather Grigg.

A few highlights of MURA’s activities since November included ongoing discussions with the university and employee groups about how salaried pension plan administration and expenses are handled, helping members solve issues and concerns with pensions, benefits, and technology, participating in pre-retirement workshops, welcoming new retirees to MURA with a virtual event, and fundraising for the MURA graduate scholarship.

MURA has also been engaging with Human Resources on a proposed new definition of a McMaster retiree, which would exclude people in the group RRSP who retire before the age of 65 from retiree status, and from associated supplementary benefits such as parking, library access, etc.

4. Treasurer’s Report (Nancy Gray) – written report

Nancy thanked Debbie Weisensee and Helen Barton for their help as she transitioned into the role of Treasurer midyear. She noted that two financial reports were being presented, because it wasn’t possible to have the one for the year ending April 30, 2020 audited in time for the last AGM. Owing to the pandemic, there were fewer expenses than usual this year because most of our activities were curtailed, so there was a surplus of \$5,684. Net assets started at \$14,682 and ended at \$20,366 as at the end of April 2021.

A few items relating to the last Christmas Lunch and Annual General Meeting were misclassified in the unaudited report presented at the last AGM in November 2020, and have since been corrected, thus the word “revised” in the motion.

Moved by Heather Grigg, **seconded** by Helen Ayre

“that the revised MURA Financial Report for the year ended April 30, 2020 and the MURA Financial Report for the year ended April 30, 2021 be accepted as circulated”

Carried.

5. Auditors' Reports: Susan Speare (2019-20) & Beth Csordas (2020-21)

Nancy thanked Sue Speare and Beth Csordas for preparing the two auditors' reports.

Moved by John Horsman, **seconded** by Ralph Matthews

"that the revised MURA Auditor's report for the year ended April 30, 2020 and the MURA Auditor's Report for the year ended April 30, 2021 be accepted as circulated"

Carried.

6. Election of Executive and Council (Heather Grigg)**6.1 Completion of Nomination Procedure** (Heather Grigg)

The nomination list as circulated was:

Executive

Past President (ex officio):	Helen Barton
President (Nominated):	Hank Jacek (One-year term, to 2022)
Vice President (Nominated):	Susan Birnie (One-year term, to 2022)
Treasurer*:	Nancy Gray
Secretary*:	Nora Gaskin

Councillors

Nominated for office, two year term until 2023:

Betty Ann Levy

Nominated for office, three-year terms until 2024:

Cliff Andrews

Dina LoPresti

Kathy Overholt

Phil Wood

[Barry Diacon, nominated from the floor]**

Continuing in office until 2022:

Mary Gauld

Barb Carpio

Continuing in office until 2023:

John Horsman

*appointed

****Barry Diacon** was nominated as councillor from the floor, to serve a three-year term until 2024.

Moved by Heather Grigg, **seconded** by Mahendra Joshi

“that nominations be closed”

Carried

6.2 Election of Executive and Council (Heather Grigg)

Moved by Brian Beckberger, **seconded** by Heather Grigg

“that the amended slate of nominees for the 2021-22 MURA Executive and Council be accepted as presented”

Carried

7. Special Presentation by Brenda Vrkljan

Mary Gauld introduced Dr. Brenda Vrkljan, occupational therapist and Professor of Occupational Therapy at the School of Rehabilitation Science at McMaster, who gave a very interesting presentation on “Resilience, mobility, and participation in older Hamiltonians: Navigating everyday life during COVID-19 lockdown(s)”.

Dr. Vrkljan noted that occupational therapy has been around for 100 years, when it emerged just after WWI to meet the needs of returning veterans. Since then it has evolved to help people of all ages and conditions to live at home, have fun, take care of themselves, earn a living and get around.

The main topic of her talk was the *The IMPACT Hamilton Study: Investigating Mobility and PArticipation among older Hamiltonians during COVID-19: a longitudinal Tele-survey*, which investigated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health measures on community-dwelling older adults living in the Greater Hamilton Area, especially with respect to their mobility and participation, mental health outcomes, eating and nutrition risk, and musculoskeletal health and pain.

Two methods were used: a longitudinal tele-survey with 3, 6, 9 and 12-month follow-ups, to identify the factors most associated with high levels of distress during the pandemic; and interviews with a sub-sample of the survey participants, to explore the lived experiences of older adults before and during the pandemic, and to understand how they managed everyday activities under quarantine. The survey involved a random sample of adults 65+ living in the Greater Hamilton Area. The average participant age was 78 and there was a mix of men and women from a range of ethnicities and income brackets. Dr. Vrkljan half-jokingly acknowledged that

the researchers were very grateful to the study participants who actually answered the phone when they got a random call from McMaster University on their landlines!

Baseline findings from the survey indicated that 32% of participants reported less community participation during the pandemic, especially family visits and social life; 49% were less physically active, some extremely so; and 35% reported loneliness, with 17% reporting high levels of distress indicative of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Preliminary findings from the interview analysis indicated that while some people described their lives before the pandemic as fun and enjoyable, and were managing everyday life easily and feeling connected to other people, others were already experiencing anxiety, loneliness or loss for other reasons.

During the pandemic, people reported that their daily lives were disrupted. Phone conversations with friends and family were shorter and less frequent because there was less to talk about. Some people were less likely to go out for walks due to the unavailability of washrooms, or because of concerns about transmission. While some were able to return to some of their customary activities by adapting to the new environment, others had little option but to stay home and do very little. Many people described themselves as surviving, not thriving, but others mentioned they were looking forward, not back, concentrating on gratitude and appreciation, and planning post-pandemic visits and activities.

Strategies to stay healthy and safe during the pandemic include:

- establish a daily and weekly routine
- keep moving
- explore new activities
- track your progress
- meet and do your favourite activities online when possible; here's an example involving Brenda's mother and her art group, featured in an [article](#) in the *Hamilton Spectator*
- walk in your neighbourhood and meet your neighbours
- use the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal for good information and tips
- pick up the phone and call someone
- check the local public library for activities and events you might be interested in; you can go online or phone and speak to a librarian in person

At the conclusion of the presentation, Helen thanked Brenda and presented her with a copy of Alvin Lee's memoir, *There Was a Farm in Eden*, and there was a draw for two gift certificate door prizes, which were won by Marie Fairgrieve and John Horsman.

8. Reports on Pensions

8.1 Salaried Plan (Brian Beckberger) – written report

In addition to his written report, Brian noted that:

- University Pension Plan Ontario (UPP): The assets from the three founding universities, U of T, Guelph and Queens, will be transferred to the plan as of July 1, 2021. Trent University negotiated a memorandum of agreement in December 2020, and will be joining the UPP on January 1, 2022.
- McMaster has become a signatory to the recommendations of the [Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures](#) (TCFD), as well as the United Nations' [Principles for Responsible Investment](#) (PRI). As a result, going forward we will see augmented reporting about the climate-related effects of McMaster investments, including the pension plans. The president has asked the Board of Governors to divest our investments in fossil fuels. Currently 2% of our assets are related to fossil fuels, so there won't be a big change.
- Brian is optimistic that there will be an increase in pension payments next year, possibly by 1.5-2%.

8.2 Hourly Plan (Cliff Andrews) – written report

9. President's Address (Hank Jacek)

Hank thanked all officers and members of Council for their work, and for helping him get oriented to MURA and its work. He thanked Helen Barton especially for taking on the Presidency for an extra term. Hank said he would welcome emails or phone calls from MURA members, invited them to contact him with any questions or concerns they might have, and wished everyone a very good summer.

9. Other Business (none)

10. Adjournment

Moved by Brian Beckberger, **seconded** by Nora Gaskin

“that the meeting be adjourned”

Carried at 3:12 pm