



McMaster University Retirees Association
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Marianne van der Wel, Secretary

**MINUTES for COUNCIL MEETING
of McMaster University Retirees Association -
Wednesday December 13, 2006, 1:30PM at Student Centre Room 220**

Present: Cliff Andrews, Helen Barton, Beth Csordas, Geoff Evans, Brian Ives (chair), Margaret Jenkins, John McCutcheon, Mildred McLaren, Michele Leroux, Roman March, Joan Morris, Veronica Morrison, Kathy Overholt, Joan Parker, Pam Penny, Rod Phillips, Anne Sinclair and Marianne Van der Wel

1. Welcome & Regrets

No introductions nor regrets!

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Approval November 8, 2006 Council Meeting Minutes

Correction: Margaret Jenkins, Joan Morris and Joan Parker were present at the November 8 council meeting. Roman sent regrets when he was able.

MOTION:

Geoff Evans motioned that the November 8, 2006 minutes be accepted making the correction just indicated.

Joan Parker seconded the motion.

Carried unanimously

3. Business Arising

a) Confidentiality of retiree data /Privacy Statement(Michele Leroux/Helen Barton)

Privacy statement is now on Human Resources form for people retiring. Helen Barton will circulate the formulated privacy statement for MURA for approval at the January 2007 meeting.

b) Voluntary Contributions Campaign for Retirees Association members - Executive Report (Beth Csordas)

- Beth Csordas is the lead negotiator with the university for this project.

- Helen, Brian and Beth met with Leah Hoover, Associate Director, University Advancement, in the President's Residence to find out how

the university felt about MURA setting up an awards endowment. as well as the procedure to do so.

PROCEDURE TO RAISE ENOUGH TO COVER CURRENT AWARDS

- To draw out \$1250 annually (the current amount we award) we would need to establish an endowment fund of at least \$32000. We would sign an agreement with the university to guaranty \$20000 raised within five years else the money raised would go to general scholarships.

Question: If the goal of \$20000 is not raised within five years, can MURA top it off so that the money remains for the MURA awards? The university is investigating.

POSSIBILITY FOR ANOTHER PURPOSE IN FUTURE

Wording of the agreement with the university will determine the possibility of expanding the awards (EG: If we chose "an endowment of exactly \$32000" the possibility for expanding the fund for another purpose would be restricted. Better wording would be choosing the words: minimum of \$32000)

UNIVERSITY'S REACTION

The university's reaction was positive and feels our plan fits well with the University's current fundraising campaign, in particularly with Alvin Lee's letter to retirees. Letters generally go out in the fall and the spring and if an agreement is reached with the university, we may be mentioned in the spring letter.

AGREEMENT SCHEDULE/NO MURA NEWS ARTICLE IN JAN.

Hopefully, the agreement with University will be drawn up for council's approval at the March meeting. Hence we will not be making an announcement in the January MURA news.

ANNOUNCEMENT AT AGM

This is the silver anniversary of MURA. Announcement of the endowment fund raising would be appropriate timing at the AGM!

c) Recommendation on how/when to advertise CARP (Pam Penny)

We need to get hold of a person at CARP (so far have just reached phone machines) to find out if MURA members still qualify for a preferred rate. If yes, what is the rate? We need to get approx, 1500 new flyers if we choose to send with the MURA News. The alternative to a flyer is to simply put an announcement in MURA news. We will let council know our recommendation by the January council meeting(the deadline for the JAN. MURA news).

d) Policy regarding flyers in MURA news (in particular as it relates to trips announcements) (Joan Parker)

We are postponing the policy regarding flyers in MURA news until the January council meeting to include an extensive policy document describing how each type of Newsletter component should be handled/formatted.

e) Recommendation for a software upgrade for our MURA NEWS editor (Joan Parker)

We are postponing our recommendation for a software upgrade and its cost until the January council meeting because:

- we discovered that printing wants the newsletter in PDF format. They had recommended Adobe Creative Suite or Publisher as they will convert such files to PDF for us. It remains to be seen what happens if we give them a file already converted to PDF
- Veronica is planning to upgrade her home computer and MicroSoft VISTA is coming and may affect us.

f) Open discussion on Christmas Lunch

- The Xmas lunch was excellent!
- The P.A. system was also excellent!
- After some discussion considering the University Club or the Dundas Golf & Country Club, we felt that the Schwaben Inn was still the best location so our 2007 Xmas lunch will be held there again.
- This year's organizers did an excellent job! BRAVO!!! We would like them to organize next year's!
- 2006 Xmas lunch budget figures will be available at the January 2007 meeting

4. Correspondence

a) CURAC Conference flyer

- Flyer circulated
- The CURAC conference has interesting presentations and it's a good chance to find out what happens at other institutions. Both Helen and Mildred have attended previous years. Speak to them to find out more about the conference
- The conference organizers are negotiating good hotel rates so you may want to make a weekend of it and bring a guest.

b) MURA's Gerontology Awards

- Finalized...we met Amy Helsdon, winner of the MURA scholarship, at the Xmas Lunch (Dec 7/06) and Joan Drummond, winner of the MURA Prize, at the end of this council meeting (Dec 13/06)...Congratulations to both Amy and Joan!

c) Requests for data on members.

If anyone or any department requests data on MURA members, please refer them to "Retiree Support Services". Due to privacy constraints, MURA cannot give out such information.

d) Christmas Card from CAW555 - Circulated

5. President's Report

a) **THANK YOU** TO COUNCIL for cooperating with our "holiday photo op".

b) Meeting with Ms. Drummond (part-time award winner) arranged for the end of this council meeting.

c) The MURA president's and vice-president's traditional meeting with President George is postponed to New Year, likely the spring.

d) After some discussion, the AGM 2007 date was set for May 30, 2007. Joan Morris will investigate if Convocation Hall is available.

e) MURA Vice President, 2007-2008 - The executive has a general preference for a prior Council member to be our next vice-president. Helen plans to sound out Councillors - please contact her yourself, if you believe you should be considered.

6. Treasurer's Report

- MURA News' Fall mailing was 50-60% higher for postage. Joan Parker (MURA News) mentioned that the music department is to pick up the tab for extra postage and needs to be billed for the amount.

- It's time to start developing the 2007-2008 Budget. Beth will be circulating forms to the various committees. Please give serious thought to what you might need next year and put that information on the forms for Beth.

- Beth will be invoicing our sponsoring groups (MUFA and CAW) for their 2006-2007 contributions.

7. "In-depth" Committee Reports

a) Pension and Benefits Committee (Geoff Evans/Roman March)

- Roman attended the MUFA (McMaster University Faculty Association) AGM meeting which was addressed by acting Provost and Vice-President (academic), Dr. Bob McNutt. Given the dire financial state of the university described by Dr. McNutt, Roman doesn't believe this is a good (strategic) time to open discussions with the university to alter the pension indexing formula. The committee will continue to monitor the situation.

- John McCutcheon pointed out that the fact retirement is no longer mandatory at 65 might work in our favour over time.
- Those over 65 who continue to work and not retire will keep their benefits.
- Unless an organization goes bankrupt, pension benefits for current retirees cannot be arbitrarily changed by the organization.
- Currently, the performance of the McMaster pension plan does not compare as well as plans throughout the rest of Canada.
- MUFA members were canvassed about changes to the Drug Benefit formula (which would affect future retirees). No results yet.
- Helen reported on behalf of Les Robb, on the latest meeting of the Salaried Pension Trust Committee. While inflation was 2.5%, SALARIED retirees can expect a more substantial increase than last year but not more than 1.25%. While Helen didn't have the exact amount, Michele was able to announce the official increase for SALARIED retirees which will be 0.89%...which is much better than last year's! HOURLY retirees are not getting an increase once again.
- The indexing formula for SALARIED retirees is basically the same as the HOURLY with one notable, significant difference:

To calculate any increase:

Average the performance of last 5 years for each pension plans.

For SALARIED retirees, if that average is above 4.5%, then an increase is possible. Basically the increase is amount above 4.5% up to the cost of living.

For HOURLY retirees, if that average is above 6.0%, then an increase is possible by the amount over the 6.0% up to the cost of living. It is this difference in threshold (4.5% for salaried and 6.0% for hourly) that has resulted in no increases for Hourly retirees for several years and makes increases more difficult in future.

See the Retirement Support Services web site for a full explanation of the indexing formula (Instructions follow the minutes)

- Helen, Les Robb and the Pension & Benefits committee will prepare an article for the January MURA News (deadline for submission is January 10/07).

8. Open Discussion of upcoming Report(s)

a) Comments/Questions for the Newsletter Committee.

- Keep up the good work!!!
- **DEADLINE** FOR January 2007 MURA NEWS is January 10, 2007 (Mura Council meeting. Please submit photos and articles by then!

9. Information Reports from Committees (as required)

a) Cards (Joan Morris):

- Only one death reported in the last month but with a 2 month delay. We are informed by Retirement Support Services when they are informed by the family. Joan will continue to use her discretion whether to send a card.

b) Constitution & By-Laws (Helen Barton): No Report

c) Membership (Pam Penny): No report. Waiting for the January 2007 list.

- From Michele: A voluntary severance package is being offered to people eligible for retirement, particularly to staff in Mills Library and Faculty. To date, there are 60 applications. There may be an unusual increase in retirees in February 2007 as a result.

- From Brian: We need to add a code to the membership data base so we can keep track of our honorary members. To date we have only two honorary members that we're aware of, Jack Evans and Averil Thompson. We need to seriously consider adding Stuart Wynn to this list at our AGM.

d) MURA News (Joan Parker): See sections 3 e) and 8 of these minutes Next submission deadline is January 10, our next Council meeting!

e) Nominating (Mildred McLaren):

- John McCutcheon, Joan Parker and Rod Phillips may continue for a second term if desired. Please let Mildred know your intentions.
- Kathy Overholt and Geoff Evans from MURA Council will join the 2007-08 nominating committee
- We suggested Mildred contact Jessie Dunlop, Shirley Luchen, Gail Britton, Frances Weber, Joan Zwina and Jean Deschinko to find at least two non-council members.
- Mildred will approach and when ready, Marianne (as secretary) will send out letters.

f) Pension & Benefits (Geoffrey Evans/Roman March):

- Retirees from McMaster Management may have no benefits when they retire
- also see section 7 of these minutes.

g) Special Events (Margaret Jenkins):

- "Upton" dinner: Went well! 53 people attended! Sending out the e-mail did the trick of increasing the participation to the required number.

The Question/Answer period was particularly good and some would have liked more! The event may be a little over budget due to A.V. equipment. Will have figures for January meeting.

- Ideas for future speakers: Gary Warner, Bishop Spence, Brian Henley (local historian). We could also bring back the people from the "Bay Restoration" council to find out progress made.

- Suggest holding this kind of event twice a year..in the fall and in the spring

- Margaret scouted out the Art Gallery and their facilities for a catered dinner.

h) Trips (Joan Parker):

From Anne:

- Dec 5 tour of Xmas lights was excellent!
- After sending out e-mail, we have enough for our BATA shoe/R.O.M. trip in January
- All set for the Bermuda Cruise in May. We have 20 people lined up for the 2008 trip!
- Trips planned for next year (2007):
 - ... Thursday, Sept. 13th...Stratford..."Oklahoma"
 - ... Thursday, Oct. 4th.....Stratford...Gershwin's "My One and Only"
 - ... Thursday, June 14th...Geritol Follies (Matinee)
 - ... Friday, Dec. 7th.....Geritol Follies (Matinee)There is an option, with the Follies, to have a hot & cold Buffet Lunch prior to the show.

i) Web-Site (Brian Ives): no report

10. Information Reports from Liaisons (*as required*)

a) University Board of Governors (Mildred McLaren):

- Board of Governors meets Dec 14 hence no new report.

- Mildred recommends that the Past President be the representative to the Board of Governors in future.

b) College & University Retirees Association of Canada (CURAC) (Brian Ives):

c) MUFA (Brian Ives):

- MUFA president, Ian Hambleton, was at our Xmas lunch.

d) CAW (MUSA) (Helen Barton/Kathy Overholt):

- CAW is in the process of electing their president (Matt was the acting president). Kathy is watching for the result.

e) Hourly Staff Liaison (Rod Phillips):

- We noted a good participation by the hourly folks at the Xmas lunch!

- Ken Williams (hourly?) was a really good Santa!!! Thank You Ken!

- Greg Hoath, Business Manager, International Union of Operating Engineers, attended

- Please note the participation by the hourly retirees at the Xmas Lunch in the January MURA News!

11. Other Business

- Joan Drummond, MURA Prize Winner, joined our meeting at 3:15PM. She told us a bit about herself and stayed for the rest of the meeting.

- Marianne circulated a corrected MURA Council/Committee contact list.

12. Next Meeting

Wednesday January 10, 2007 at 1:30PM
in Student Centre Room 224 ===(Note room!)

Please note **articles/photos for MURA NEWS are due** at this meeting on January 10 at 1:30PM!

13. Adjournment

John McCutcheon **moved** we adjourn at 3:29PM

WEB SITE REFERENCES

MUFA: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/mufa/>

RETIREE SUPPORT SERVICES: <http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/link.php?link=rss%3AMain>