

**MINUTES for COUNCIL MEETING
of McMaster University Retirees Association -
Wednesday March 14, 2007, 1:30PM at Student Centre Room 224**

Present: Cliff Andrews, Helen Barton, Beth Csordas, Geoff Evans, Brian Ives (chair), Margaret Jenkins, 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

Regrets: John McCutcheon

THANKS to Brian for the chocolate valentines and the reminder from CARP that on special occasions a bit of chocolate is good for us! WE APPRECIATE!

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Approval January 10, 2007 Council Meeting Minutes

Correction: Section 9 f) on page 6: The minutes initially stated that Les Robb was invited to a Council Meeting but the invitation was for a Pension & Benefits Committee Meeting

Motion

- Geoff Evans **motioned** to approve the minutes as corrected.
- Kathy Overholt **seconded** the motion
- **Carried** unanimously

3. Business Arising

a) Policy regarding flyers in MURAnews: "tweaking" of guidelines and specifics documents presented in January (Joan Parker)

Joan Parker presented the "tweaked" policy and guidelines report for MURAnews. Council clarified the wording in Section 3 of the Policies, replacing the word "on line" with "electronic" and removing the reference to graphics.

Motion

- Mildred McLaren **motioned** to accept the Policy & Guidelines Report as clarified.
- Geoff Evans **seconded** the motion
- **Carried** unanimously

The final report is attached.

b) Recommendation for a software upgrade for our MURAnews editor (Joan Parker)

Joan Parker presented the report for upgrading MURAnews software and printing. The best choice for producing MURAnews, at this time, continues to be WordPerfect but we'll upgrade to the latest version X3. We will produce a PDF document for printing and the MURA web site using PDF Creator. A reference to PDF was removed from Section 1 in the report to clarify the original intent. In section 2, the report suggested trying King Print as printing services cannot give us resolution above 200DPI which affects the quality of photos and in section 3, improving our procedure for stuffing envelopes as a result.

Motion

- Geoff Evans **motioned** that the MURAnews committee try King Print (at Locke South and Hunter West) for the April 2007 newsletter to investigate their print service.
- Pam Penny **seconded** the motion
- **Carried** unanimously

The final, clarified report is attached.

c) Report on setting up a scholarship endowment and fund raising for it (Beth Csordas)

Helen Barton and Beth Csordas met with Leah Hoover and Christina Phillips from the University Advancement Office.

THE FUND:

- To award \$1250 a year as we do now, we need an endowment of \$32,000.
- The minimum endowment accepted is \$20,800
- Once we reach \$20,800, we are allowed to withdraw \$800 annually from the fund hence we would need to add only \$450 from the operating budget as opposed to the current \$1250
- We will be given 5 years to raise an endowment fund once we sign an agreement with the university (a minimum of \$20,800 ... our goal though is \$32,000)
- If we do not reach the our goal in five years, we can top it off from our reserves.
- If we do not reach the minimum target and we choose NOT to top off the fund, the funds collected will go to a general scholarship fund

DRAFT AGREEMENT

- Draft agreement currently refers only to the scholarship (\$1000) but not our award (\$250). The university is looking into this.
- Draft agreement should be ready for signing soon, and can be presented to the April 2007 council meeting

THE FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

- While we have five years, a 3 year campaign is suggested as the year 2010 is MURA's 25th anniversary.
- The university is prepared to help us develop a plan for promoting the campaign. However, we are expected to do the larger part of the marketing
- Alvin Lee would include our plan in his annual letter to retirees
- The university will handle the financial aspects, from collecting, tracking and issuing tax receipts
- We're hoping we can kick start the campaign at the May 30, 2007 Annual General Meeting
- Regrettably, the government is not offering to match retirees contributions at this time.

4. Correspondence

- a) Incorrect telephone number for Retirees Support Services on Website was corrected by Nick Solntseff.
- b) Brian received a couple of responses from members who thought they could identify themselves in the January President's Corner.
- c) Advertised a Back Pack Trip to Grand Canyon for alumni travel group offering this trip as an alternative to the cancelled Sanderson Centre trip.
- e) Publicized the McMaster Stratford Seminar
- f) Publicized the CAW social activities to which all MURA members are invited, including CURLING on March 30/07
- g) Someone sent a cheque for membership and phoned us as we were late cashing the cheque (bad weather). This gave Pam an opportunity to tell the member that we are currently not collecting membership fees. The owner of the cheque is donating the fee to MURA.

5. President's Report

- a) Since his term is winding down, Brian has been in discussion with Helen to ensure a smooth transition of leadership.
- b) Meeting With University President: Helen and Brian met with President George on March 12.
 - asked "How can MURA members help the university in non-monetary ways?" as we would like to find meaningful and/or pleasant projects to encourage our retirees back to campus. Ultimately, we would like to establish a "Retirees Centre", with a social, drop-in lounge.
 - shared concerns over future of benefits. Peter George's assurance were very positive.
 - explored ideas for AGM such as having someone speak on the current

and future developments at the university.

c) MURA Council Private Web Site: Marianne created a draft web site for the private use of Council which she shared with Council before the meeting. Council generally liked the idea of a private web site to assist in conducting council business. Marianne will develop a more permanent version. Agendas and minutes, currently presented on the draft council site, will be made public.

d) Brian invited Stuart Winn to the AGM and informed him of his Honorary Membership appointment.

e) Re-Appointments: Helen reported that Beth Csordas as Treasurer, Marianne Van der Wel as Secretary and Bob West as auditor have agreed to stay on for another year.

Motion

Helen Barton **motioned** that Council confirm the re-appointment of:
Secretary - Marianne Van der Wel
Treasurer - Beth Csordas
Auditor - Bob West

Joan Parker **seconded** the motion

Carried Unanimously

f) MURA Members over 90 Years of Age: While privacy laws do not allow us to track birth dates of our members, Brian has discovered that we have 28 members over 90 years of age and one is 100 [correction since meeting, Brian discovered this person is 99, that is in their 100th year]. Retiree support services is not allowed to reveal the names of these members but Brian plans to do his own detective work so we can meet some of these retirees and maybe invite them to the AGM.

6. Treasurer's Report

Beth Csordas circulated and discussed the Draft Budget for 2007-08 along with this year's figures and the explanatory notes. We want to finalize and approve the budget at the April 2007 meeting. Note that submissions have NOT been made for the items in yellow on the draft budget. Please hand in final expense estimates for 2007-08 (Committee Chairs, Liasons, Officers) NOW, if not done so already, so that we can finalize the budget April 11, 2007 (our next meeting).

The draft budget and the budget notes are attached.

7. "In-depth" Committee Reports

a) Nominating Committee Report (Mildred McLaren)

Mildred circulated a list of nominees and officers for the coming year 2007-08 prepared by the nominating committee. Council made a couple of

corrections and the corrected list is attached.

Motion

- Mildred McLaren **moved** that the nominating report be received as corrected
- Geoff Evans **seconded** the motion
- **Carried** unanimously

The nominees listed on the report that were present at the council meeting left the room. The remaining council members discussed the candidates suitability.

Motion

- Joan Morris **moved** that the people listed as nominees for the indicated positions in the report be approved as candidates
- Roman March **seconded** the motion
- **Carried** unanimously

The secretary will publish the nomination list in advance of the AGM.

b) Web Site Committee (Brian Ives)

- Helen Barton took the chair for this section
- A report was circulated by e-mail Feb 6, 2007, indicating that at this time, we would not switch to a commercial designer nor host. Instead we would redesign the MURA web site using the recommendations found on several "What to do and What to Avoid" design web sites.
- After helping us to redesign the old web site, Nick Solntseff resigned from the web site committee in early March.
- The old web site pages, which were on two servers: engineering and computer science, were consolidated onto one server in engineering.
- The newly designed web site was posted for Council to test. Comments were generally favourable. Any other comments?
- Marianne was provided access permission to the new consolidated web site while it was moved to yet another engineering server
- Because our new web site was moved, some MURA members could not access some of the pages at the old public site. Hence the revised pages were uploaded Monday evening to the public site to avoid "lost" pages for another couple of days!
- Marianne will write thank you letters to Nick Solntseff and Marju Drynan, particularly for their efforts in the original design of the website in 2003.
- Please send photos to Brian of MURA or campus activities so he can change the new home page frequently (target: once a week)

The e-mailed February web site report is attached.

c) Special Events Committee (Margaret Jenkins)

- Will try to book Gary Warner for spring, summer or fall.
- Recommends two trips (Art Park, Lewiston and ROM, Toronto) to Trips Committee
- 10 people have signed up for the April 10 Tour & Tea at the Art Gallery. Will send reminder to Muramembs-1@mcmaster.ca
- Still sorting out \$95 discrepancy with Chamber of Commerce over the fall dinner. Chamber has agreed to return \$50 but hasn't done so yet.

d) Annual Meeting Committee (Joan Morris)

- What should be the PROGRAM? What would be interesting to bring members out?
- Stuart Winn will speak after his Honorary Membership award and likely pick up on the early MURA history.
- Helen and Brian have discussed a theme such as "The Campus I Knew..... (and Loved)"
- We could add the current changes to the university and its future plans. EG: The proposed expansion to Burlington. Marianne suggested possibly a campus tour before and/or after including new features such as the 3D theatre at the new DeGroot building adjacent to Health Sciences. Roman suggested finding (by doing our own detective work) the senior MURA members (the over 90 group), inviting them to the AGM and helping them with transport to/from the meeting.
- Peter George is willing to help us find a speaker for the meeting if we provide a topic/theme.

8. Questions and Input - not done

9. Information Reports from Committees (as required)

a) Cards (Joan Morris):

- Sent three bereavement cards (Ray Johnson, Robert Van Dusen, Carl Larsen). Joan also indicated that she did not send a card to Brian Latto's widow, because the notification came through so long after the death.

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

c) Membership (Pam Penny):

- Nine new members in January, ten for February and two for March. Total MURA membership is 1700

- Trying to sort out how many of these are survivors once a McMaster pensioner died and how many of these survivors may also be deceased.

d) **MURA News** (Joan Parker): See section 3a) and 3b)

e) **Nominating** (Mildred McLaren): See section 7a)

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

Presented by Geoff Evans:

- Had meeting with pension/benefits committee including Les Robb on Feb 6, 2007. Outcomes:

- 1) It appears a difference in active and retirement benefits has never been negotiated (except out-of-province & life insurance). We're checking with Retirees Support Services
- 2) To make any changes in current pension/benefits package, it's best to work with active employee groups
- 3) Approach MUFA to discuss the indexing and supplementary formulae
- 4) Discuss non-monetary benefits with MUFA

- The Co-Chairs met with MUFA representatives on Feb 9, 2007. Topics discussed:

Revising the Indexing Formula. With the current formula, salaried pensioners have experienced a:

- 1) Deficit of 5.3% over last three years due to CPI
- 2) Deficit of 12% over last five years due to CPI

Hourly Pensioners have fared far worse!!!

Surplus Funds: A new model could include a forward and backward catch up over a three year time framework.

Benefits

- 1) Concerns raised about major lack of out of province health insurance for retirees
- 2) Any changes negotiated to the drug section of the benefits package for active salaried employees
- 3) Improving non-monetary benefits such as discounts arranged through purchasing to extend to retirees

The meeting with MUFA was fruitful for both parties and we look forward to more meetings.

The co-chairs' full report is attached separately.

Brian will look into the outcome of the University of Guelph pension trust survey.

g) **Special Events** (Margaret Jenkins): See Section 7c)

h) Trips (Joan Parker):

Anne Sinclair reported that the trips' Bank Balance as of Feb 28'07 was \$1,789.84 and the C.I.C. Balance as of Feb.28'07 was \$2,591.80

Fifty-eight people are going to Bermuda in May 2007.

i) Xmas Lunch (John McCutcheon): No Report

j) Web-Site (Brian Ives): See Section 7 b)

10. Information Reports from Liaisons (as required)

a) University Board of Governors (Mildred McLaren):

Board of Governors March 1, 2007 Meeting Highlights:

- The university has a 79 million deficit in the operating budget.
- Reasons for deficit include: pension fund deficit, lack of government funding to cover inflation , tuition fee regulations, structural defects, increasing costs of post retirement benefits. Most other universities are facing similar challenges.
- University is required to repay the Salaried Pension Plan, 254% of employee contributions for 2006-07 and 210% of employee contribution for 2007-08 or 8.1 million per year til 2009 or until another actuarial valuation is filed with the Ontario government.
- Construction of the Engineering/Science/Health-Science Complex has started. Phase 1 will be for Engineering
- The capital cost of the Ronald Joyce stadium will be \$22 million and is to be covered by donations and grants. Athletic and recreational fees will cover the operating costs

Mildred's full report is attached separately.

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

Official invitation to CURAC's Annual Conference in Windsor for all CURAC (hence all MURA)members is now available. Theme is: "Securing the Future, Pension & Benefits". Registration deadline to book accommodation in Alumni Hall, Univ. Of Windsor is APRIL 23, 2007 and the banquets is MAY 17, 2007. See <http://www.curac.ca/>

Brian is going!

c) MUFA (Brian Ives): See section 9f)

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

Helen and Kathy met with Matt Root, Rosemary Viola and Joe Giardine from CAW and discovered we are invited to all their social activities. Check out: <http://www.cawlocal555.ca/>

CAW is planning a CAW Retirees Organization but it's not to replace MURA.

CAW wants to stay in touch with us!

e) **Hourly Staff Liaison** (Rod Phillips): No Report

11. Other Business

- Cliff Andrews asked if we could make the newsletter more eye catching so that it not be so easily set aside as junk mail or another fundraising request. We discussed this briefly and would think about how to do this.

12. Next Meeting

Wednesday April 11 , 2007 at 1:30PM in Student Centre Room 220 ◀◀◀(Note! Back in old room)

13. Adjournment

Joan Parker **motioned** the meeting be adjourned. It did at 3:45PM