



McMaster University Retirees Association

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Marianne van der Wel, Secretary

**MINUTES for COUNCIL MEETING
of McMaster University Retirees Association -
Wednesday January 9, 2008, 1:30PM at Student Centre Room 230**

Present: Cliff Andrews, Helen Barton (chair), Jeff Chuchman, Beth Csordas, Helen Dietsche, Geoff Evans, Brian Ives, Margaret Jenkins, Kathy Overholt, Joan Morris, Veronica Morrison, Pam Penny and Marianne Van der Wel

Regrets: Roman March, John McCutcheon, Joan Parker, Rod Phillips and Anne Sinclair

1. Welcome & Regrets

We wish everyone who is away a speedy recovery!

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

(a) Council Meeting - Dec 12, 2007 - for approval

- Geoff Evans **motioned** that we accept the minutes as circulated
- Cliff Andrews **seconded** the motion
- **Carried** unanimously

3. Business Arising

a) Report on scholarship endowment fund raising campaign (Beth Csordas/Helen Barton)

- At end of December 2007, there were 52 donors (up five from the November), with \$10,975 pledged (up almost \$900 from November) with \$8,062 actually received bringing us to 34% of our goal. Since the advancement office is particularly busy at the end of the year with donations in general, some our December endowment donations may not be included in the reported amounts.

- Beth Csordas and Helen Barton will meet with Sarah Cook in early February to discuss the next stage.

b) MURA Cards (Helen Barton, Helen Dietsche and Kathy Overholt)

- The official MURA card to be used for occasions such as bereavement, illness and giving thanks is being printed by the MSU Underground print service thereby saving us about \$50.00 though the exact setup cost is not yet known. A sample of the official MURA card was circulated at council and the majority really liked it.

- Helen Barton, Helen Dietsche and Kathy Overholt will continue to investigate the feasibility for selling cards to raise funds. They will look into: cost of set up, printing cost, card size [council suggested considering a card a little larger than the 4-1/4"x 5-1/2" card that was circulated], possibly more than one design. They will also investigate resurrecting the MURA logo contest. If the fundraising project is feasible, the MURA logo would need to be established before printing the cards.

c) Liaison with Athletics & Recreation re fitness and rehab programs (Joan Parker)

- Consolidated information for "Athletics & Recreation" and "Sport Fitness & Rehab." will appear in the winter (Jan) 2008 issue of MURAnews.

- There will be an Open House in the afternoon of January 31 for all McMaster Retirees, spouses and surviving spouses that includes a tour of the David Braley Centre, a walk on the track (ergonomically designed!) and refreshments.

- Starting Tuesday Feb 5, there will be nine one hour sessions (2:30-3:30PM) for walking on the track. The sessions are especially for McMaster Retirees, spouses and surviving spouses and will be called "McMaster MAD Lappers (MURA)" and will cost \$45 for "Athletics & Recreation" members and \$55 for non-members. Refreshments can be bought and socializing done in the "bymax" after the sessions.

- Thérèse Quigley has offered to investigate if a special price can be arranged for a joint "Athletics & Recreation"/University Club membership for MURA members.

- While the MURAnews article provides a general outline of the "Sport Fitness & Rehab." fee coverage, Jeff Chuchman and his staff have produced a spreadsheet with specific paramedical benefits for each existing retirement plan (of which there are many). This spreadsheet will help Retirement Support Services answer phone queries more quickly. The spreadsheet will also be provided to "Sports Fitness & Rehab." so they can better inform clients from MURA. The spreadsheet will also be passed on to our Pension & Benefits committee for our information.

- Helen had asked if Medical and Dental plans could be added to this paramedical spreadsheet and Jeff Chuchman is looking into the feasibility.

d) Consolidating Retiree Perks on a single web page (Marianne Van der Wel, Brian Ives and Helen Barton)

- We have started a list of known perks, where they are described, and how helpful the descriptions are. When we have the list a bit more developed, we will circulate it to Council for comment, before setting up a single web page that will direct our members to specific perks.

- Helen Barton is investigating whether MURA members are entitled to a photo id, generally needed for using the library, the campus bookstore and to obtain discounts from the various vendors who give them.

- Another perk may be using the campus health clinic for services such as getting a flu shot

- Geoff Evans mentioned that currently, the "Dundas Valley Golf Club" is offering a Pre-Season Special Membership fee of \$8000 (down from the regular price of \$12000) to attract them. McMaster University and Health Sciences employees and retirees get an additional discount of 25% so that for us the initial special membership fee is \$6000. This is a limited time offer and will cease when the golf club's goal of 45 new members has been reached (to total 525 members). By advertising this deal now, we have a 3 week head start before the general advert goes out. Brian Ives will post this on our web site, Veronica Morrison will put a notice in MURAnews and Helen Barton will send an e-mail to muramembs-1.

- Pam Penny gave Geoff Evans the name of Terri Wetton in Purchasing for the golf club to let the university know of this deal.

e) Information from Purchasing re Discounts (Pam Penny)

- Pam Penny passed a printed copy of information to Marianne Van der Wel regarding discounts for employees listed on purchasing's web site. Retirees are supposed to be eligible though that is not explicitly stated on the site.

f) Retiree email accounts and UTS retiree webpage (Helen Barton)

- McMaster e-mail accounts for retirees will no longer expire after 5 years but will continue indefinitely unless the account is not used for 13 consecutive months.

- Jeff Chuchman will look into the Retirement Support Services mailing list which informs departments when a McMaster retiree dies to ensure that UTS (University Technical Services) is included.

- Julia Kraveca from UTS is in the process of coordinating an upgrading of the UTS web page for retirees.

g) Menno DeGroot's 100 Birthday Celebration

- Noone from MURA council was able to attend Menno's 100th birthday party. About fifty people were there and Menno's son, Menno Junior, is sending us some pictures.

- Helen Barton sent a congratulatory e-mail and we will still try to organize a small group from Council to see him later this month on a day that suits the family.

4. Correspondence

- For salaried retirees, the pension letters went out January 8, 2008. The current year's increase is 1.72%. With very good returns in 2006, the catchup provision in the Plan has provided this group with an additional increase of up to 2.271% (depending on when the retiree retired).

There was an calculation error (an addition instead of a multiplication) in the January payments for the salaried retirees who received the full catchup; they were underpaid by a small amount. This will be fixed in February.

The figures in Les Rob's January 2008 report are correct!

- The McMaster Employee Spirit Society (MESS) sent have informed us of free tickets for a January 26/08 basketball game. This announcement is already posted on MURA's web site. Helen Barton will compose an e-mail informing our members of the "Dundas Valley Golf Club" membership deal as well as this MESS' event and send it to the muramembs-1 list.

5. President's Report

a) Funding for next 3-year period

- Helen Barton and Kathy Overholt have an appointment with CAW555 (Matt Root) Thursday Jan 10, 2008 for an initial discussion on renewing the funding agreement.

- Helen Barton will contact Cliff Andrews to set up an appointment with Ted Mansell (secretary of SEIU)

b) Volunteer Network

- Nothing new to report except that there will be a meeting with Karen McQuigge of the Advancement Office sometime in January 2008 to start the planning.

c) Cost Cutting - Opt Out Mailing

- Because we are including the "Opt Out" mailing and we have a lot of articles for our winter (January) 2008 issue, we will exceed the 30 gram limit. Postage will be 96 Cents instead of the normal 52 Cents per issue. There is no postal rate increase to the regular 52 cent rate this year.

d) Seeking Meaning in Retirement

- The Ecumenical Chaplaincy is offering a series of three session seminars on " Seeking meaning in Retirement" in April 2008. Ellen Ryan is one of the main organizers/presenters. The fee for the series is \$5.00 per session or \$15.00 for all three. We will advertise the series in MURAnews but after some discussion, declined to use MURA funds to contribute to an honorarium.

6. Treasurer's Report (Beth Csordas)

- Payment of Scholarship/Prize expense: We pay for the awards in March of each year and they are then presented to the recipients following November.

- Lately, thank you notes from the Awards Office have been going to Beth's husband. Beth needs to investigate this and have thank you notes addressed to MURA (not any one individual), at our campus office.

- Beth has sent invoices to MUFA and CAW555 for this year's membership contribution. Since the President's office paid twice last year, Beth did not invoice them.

- We need a budget to cover the next three years (2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011) to present to CAW555, MUFA and the President's office to ask for a renewal of our current funding agreements as well as approach other union groups who may agree to fund hourly retirees. We are aiming to not increase the three year budget from the current budget level mainly by reducing the number of retirees that receive MURAnews via the post.

- The current budget with Beth's projections to the Year's End (green sheet) was again distributed along with the MURA Budget Preparation Sheet (yellow) to each council member present. Beth had also e-mailed these two to all council members the day before. Beth requested that each person, committee or group that will require funding over the next 3 years fill in the sheet and get the information to Beth by January 25, 2008. Beth can prepare a preliminary budget for the next 3 years for the February council meeting to be finalized at the March meeting.

- Beth would like to meet with the MURAnews committee before January 25, 2008 to help plan the budget for the MURAnews as it is our largest expense.

- Special Events committee will be submitting a proposed budget.

7. Information Reports from Committees *(as required)*

a) AGM (Joan Morris)

- Joan Morris will confirm whether Convocation Hall is available for Wed, May 28
- Kathy Overholt suggested having someone from the university available to make McMaster Photo Ids if indeed retirees are entitled to them. If so, please let Joan Morris know so she can arrange for proper setup.
- Pam Penny suggested that we could have a presentation on perks that McMaster Retirees enjoy. From that discussion, we thought that a "trade fair" presenting the perks might be a good idea to shorten the length of the meeting and that our web site may do an adequate job of outlining the perks once a consolidated page is developed so that a speaker isn't needed.
- Helen Dietsche suggested a bus tour of campus.
- Helen Barton suggested Al MacRury from the Hamilton Spectator if a speaker is desired.
- Council liked the idea of a lunch, followed by a short AGM business meeting, followed by the bus tour. The "perks" trade poster would also be set up around the room ahead of time and remain up until the end. If there are photo ids being made, that could be done before and after the AGM business meeting.
- Should we resurrect the idea of a barbecue at the AGM as was done in the past?
- Please send Joan Morris and/or Helen Barton additional ideas to draw people to the AGM

b) Cards (Helen Dietsche):

- Helen Dietsche sent two get well cards but no bereavement cards since the last meeting.

c) Constitution & By-Laws (Joan Morris): - definition of 'retiree'

- Jeff Chuchman will let Joan Morris know when he is available to meet with her to discuss what constitutes a 'retiree'.

d) Membership (Pam Penny):

- We now have 1800+ members as Human Resources has reported an additional 20 new retirees.
- Helen Barton and Pam examined the data base for coding errors. All now seems well!
- What happens when a 'regular' MURA member such as Averil Thompson becomes an honorary member? The constitutions says that honorary members do not have voting privileges, and so suggests such members lose their voting privileges. If so, we would like to change the constitution to allow such a member to continue to be able to vote. Joan Morris will investigate.

e) MURA News (Joan Parker):

- submissions for upcoming MURAnews due today, Jan.9, 2008
- Veronica has lots of material for the 2008 winter (January) issue so if you have not done so already, be sure to submit yours today if you want it to appear.

f) Nominating: (Brian Ives)

- Loraine Allan has accepted her appointment to the nomination committee thus completing the slate. The "Call for Nominations" is posted on MURA's web site and has been submitted to MURAnews. Please submit names for nomination to the nominating committee by February 11, 2008 so that the committee can submit its report at the March 2008 meeting.

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

- Jeff Chuchman reported that newly hired Hospitality employees will have self directed Sun Life Group RRSP's like Operation & Maintenance. The good news is that benefits for new Hospitality employees were reinstated, retroactive to when they were lost.
- Since July 2006, newly hired TMG employees have no post retirement benefits.
- Cliff Andrews reported that his MURAnews article reports a modest increase of 1.25% for hourly retirees. This is not enough to apply the catch up clause. At least it's a step in the right direction! Various groups such as the representing unions are investigating if the hourly indexing formula can be changed.

h) Special Events (Margaret Jenkins):

- Margaret has set up a lunch at 1PM at the University (Faculty) club on Tuesday March 25, 2008 following this year's last free lunch time concert on campus.
- Our spring dinner will be Thursday May 15 at the University Club with Gary Warner speaking on Diversity in Canada.

- Margaret Jenkins agreed that opening MURA special events to the Mohawk College retiree association should work out fine and thus agreed to try it for the upcoming two events..

i) Trips (Joan Parker):

- Helen Barton reported that by mutual agreement, MURA and Mohawk College will not share trips as financial arrangements and giving suitable priority would be very complicated.
- the agenda item on trip revenues was deferred to the next meeting
- Anne Sinclair has passed the trip information to Veronica for the MURAnews.

j) Xmas Lunch (John McCutcheon):

- followup on tipping: deferred til next meeting
- followup on offer from Peter George re subsidy: deferred til next meeting

k) Web-Site (Brian Ives):

- See section "3. Business Arising d)" for the setting up a single web page to point to McMaster Retiree Perks
- If you want to be on the web page, take a photo of your self and send to Brian.

8. Information Reports from Liaisons (as required)

a) University Board of Governors (Brian Ives):

- Brian attended the last Board of Governor's meeting which he found to be a good forum for the university. He reads all the agendae and minutes and will report items relevant to retirees. To date there haven't been any. He will put the minutes of the open sessions in the MURA office.

b) College & University Retirees Association of Canada (CURAC) (Helen Barton): - no report

c) MUFA (Geoff Evans): No report since the meeting with Peter Sutherland was not able to be scheduled.

d) CAW (MUSA) (Kathy Overholt): No report except for the scheduled meeting with CAW555 January 10.

e) Hourly Staff Liaison (Rod Phillips): No report since Rod was away.

9. Other Business - none

10. Next Meeting

Wednesday February 13 , 2008 at 1:30PM in Student Centre, Room 230

11. Adjournment

Kathy Overholt motioned that the meeting be adjourned at 3:30PM