

**MINUTES for COUNCIL MEETING  
of McMaster University Retirees Association -  
Wednesday November 14, 2007, 2:00PM at Student Centre Room 220**

**Present:** Helen Barton (chair), Jeff Chuchman, Helen Dietsche, Brian Ives, Margaret Jenkins, John McCutcheon, Kathy Overholt, Veronica Morrison, Joan Parker, Pam Penny, Rod Phillips and Marianne Van der Wel

**Regrets:** Cliff Andrews, Beth Csordas, Geoff Evans, Roman March, Anne Sinclair

### **1. Welcome & Regrets**

For health reasons, Roman March will not be participating in MURA activities until he gets clearance from his physician.

Jessie Dunlop, our previous treasurer, is in hospital with broken limbs resulting from an accident when a car hit her while she was walking. She is at McMaster Hospital. Helen Dietsche will send her a card on behalf of council.

### **2. Minutes of Previous Meetings - Council Meeting - Oct 10, 2007 - for approval**

There were two amendments:

- 1) Page 3 near the top, "there is are" was changed to "there are"
- 2) Page 5, section **f) Pension and Benefits:** Under the line "Roman reported on behalf of the committee:", the layout was indented to separate Roman's report from Geoff's and clarify that this was Roman's report. Also the last sentence of Roman's report "Will develop terms..." was made a separate point.

- Kathy Overholt **motioned** that the minutes be approved as amended.
- John McCutcheon **seconded** the motion.
- Motion **carried** unanimously.

### **3. Business Arising**

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

- The "kickoff" luncheon on Oct 11 was well attended.
- Nine people helped with the phone campaign on October 25. Thirty six pledge cards were sent out as a result.
- Current Status: Twenty-one donors by the end of October 2007 with \$5,150 in pledges of which \$3,800 has been received.
- A problem was reported that some donation receipts were sent to

very out-of-date addresses; the fund-raising office is investigating.

**b) Recent Retirees Reception - Tues. Oct 16 at 4:30 in Great Hall of Alumni Building**

- Helen Barton will clarify with Dr. Peter George (University President), when they next meet, whether only the MURA executive or the entire council is invited to future receptions. Since this hasn't been clear in the past and since the University President hosts this reception, all of MURA council was invited this year but was asked to play a more subdued role (which we did).
- The reception was well attended by MURA council who mingled with the guests but did not greet at the door as in previous years.
- An estimated 30 out of over 100 new retirees attended (including 3-4 from the hourly group)
- Feedback on the reception included:
  - it lacked "luster"; Engineering's new retiree reception was cited as a good example
  - administrative people who attend should make more of an effort to talk to the retirees, even if they are not from their area
  - some attendees commented that Dr. George's speech concentrated too much on fundraising and not enough on the new retirees. Suggestion: The names of the new retirees be read out.
  - Noone was at the door to welcome people. Suggestion: Have Two Greeters (one for each door) who are clearly recognizable as such; also have people at doors when people are leaving
  - Helen Barton's speech was good. It acknowledged our host, Dr. Peter George, and gave a good overview of MURA.
- Council asked Helen B. to diplomatically discuss improvements with the President's Office at the earliest opportunity

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

- Joan Parker reported on the October 30 meeting with "Athletics & Recreation" and "Sports Medicine & Rehab. Clinic". We're looking forward to the "brochure" articles these two departments agreed to write for our January 2008 MURAnews. There is also the possibility of "Athletics & Recreation" arranging an Open House for February followed by a pilot program of several sessions offering activities like winter golf, walking on the indoor track, badminton, squash, tai chi.

Helen Barton has asked Retiree Support Services for information about insurance coverage for rehabilitation services.

For details see report 'Oct 30/07 Meeting With "Athletics & Recreation" and "Sports Medicine & Rehab. Clinic" in DBAC -W121' circulated to council on-line before the meeting and at the meeting on yellow paper.

Feedback from council:

- This may be a good opportunity to develop scheduled "drop in" sessions for McMaster retirees, say a couple of times a week. EG: "MURA HAPPY HOUR"
- Will it be possible to participate in programs designed for retirees without paying the membership fee? We currently do not know but will ask.
- "Sports Medicine & Rehab. Clinic" also offers massage therapy

☞ The web site for MURA is "[www.macra.ca](http://www.macra.ca)". This is our officially registered web site name. Please use only it.

Hence remove the reference to "<http://mura.mcmaster.ca>" from page 3 of this report. This address currently works but can change without notice if our web site is moved to a server with a different name.

To access this report, corrected, on-line, please link to:

<http://mura.mcmaster.ca/justcouncil/reports/fitness/OCT30.2007.pysed.rehab.pdf>

#### **d) Followup on Membership items**

- information about retirees who don't sign privacy release: Jeff's office has reported that currently there is only one retiree who has not signed the "privacy release". Pam has been informed and has taken care of this in the database.

- address updates: Jeff's office was able to update about ½ of the list that Pam Penny sent them. There were about a half a dozen returns from the last Newsletter. The total 'returned addresses' is 34; ½ of these are 'survivors'. Out of 1821 names, that's not too bad! Jeff's office uses CIBC Melon, Payroll and Sun Life to find missing addresses.

- Helen Barton has revised the retiree welcome letter to recognize MURA's sources of funding as well as emphasize the need to sign and return the privacy release form.

- Joan Morris has been asked to take the lead on making recommendations for amending our constitution's membership definition.

#### **4. Correspondence**

- the new Chancellor Dr. L. R. (Red) Wilson and his wife Brenda sent a letter accepting our invitation to the Xmas lunch.

-Marilyn Hawkrigg sent us a beautifully hand written letter accepting our invitation to the Xmas lunch on behalf of her husband Mel and herself as well as thanking us for the honour of 'honorary' membership.

#### **5. President's Report**

**a) Funding for next 3-year period**: We need an agreement (at least in principle) by March 2008 to give us enough time to come up with alternative

funding plans before the AGM in May in case the funding agreements are NOT extended.

Kathy Overholt and Helen Barton have contacted Matt Root and Rosemary Viola from CAW555 to request a meeting to discuss the funding. We are hoping that not only will CAW555 extend our current funding arrangement but will also help us arrange funding from other unions that represent McMaster's hourly workers.

After a successful meeting (we hope!) with CAW555, we will approach MUFA (Faculty Association) and the University's President's Office which contributes on behalf of the management group.

When we meet with these groups, we will present a budget that is much the same as the current one. Unless a new sponsoring agency is found, the per person funding request should be very close to the current agreement.

#### **b) Cost Cutting/MURAnews Opt-Out:**

Sample Opt-Out cards and a draft MURAnews article (blue paper) were circulated. This is to encourage MURA members to start reading MURAnews on the web and stop getting it through the postal mail (thus saving postage and printing expense.)

- The cost of printing the card is approximately \$250;return postage is 73 cents but only for the cards that are actually returned.
- There are currently about 400 retirees with e-mail addresses who also get MURAnews through the post. If only 110 people "opt out", we break even in one year and save money thereafter.

We then debated the pros and cons of an "Opt-in" card (people will continue to get MURAnews mailed to them through the post only if they tell us explicitly) and "Opt-out" card as discussed above. The debate centred around the following points:

- Brian Ives is concerned that people who treat MURAnews as junk mail will not see the "Opt-out" request and continue to receive it through the post. The "Opt-In" approach would give us firm statistics as to who is reading MURAnews which is helpful when approaching the groups that currently fund us.
- Others felt the "Opt-In" approach was too drastic as a first step and that we could lose or upset people. "Opt-in" could be considered later on after we try the "Op-out" approach.
- Several councillors expressed their dislike for reading from a screen but prefer paper in hand. Helen Barton said that paper copies of MURAnews can be brought to the council meeting following each MURAnews publication. Several councillors "Opted-out" using the sample Opt-out card.

A major concern raised was that people may not want to send the private contact information (name, address, e-mail, phone number) requested on the sample card through the post for all to see. We will explore alternate means such as having a return envelope or a fold over form.

**MOTION:**

- Joan Parker **motioned** that we proceed with the "Opt-Out" approach. She and Helen Barton will investigate options to provide privacy of data. If the costs are more than \$350 (\$100 above the \$250 quoted for the cards) to accommodate the privacy concerns, they will come back to council for approval. Otherwise will proceed.
- Margaret Jenkins **seconded** the motion
- **Carried** by a vote of 9 in favour and two against.

**c) MURAnews:**

- **Content planning:** Content for newsletters should be planned well in advance of deadlines to ensure interesting content, help spread the workload and avoid last minute rushes. Committee Chairs and Liaisons, and Retiree Support Services will be contacted by the MURAnews committee well in advance of each MURAnews deadline for articles they may wish to submit.
- **Articles On Specific Retirees:** Articles or profiles on retiree accomplishments, milestones, exceptional activities are suitable for MURAnews, but **not** "biographies", in accordance with MURAnews policy.
- **Recruit "Assignment" Reporters:** We would like volunteers to work on MURAnews. They might work on stories on retirees or other assigned topics, do interviews or possibly re-write or edit unsolicited articles. It was suggested that Helen Otrosina might be interested. Helen Barton will write about this President's Corner of the January MURAnews.

**d) Pension and Benefits Committee:** Geoff Evans will take over the duties of chair until Roman March returns.

**e) Volunteer Network:** A meeting has been set with Peter George, University President, for December 11, 2007, to discuss setting up a volunteer bureau/network which could go well beyond the scope of just MURA and McMaster retirees. Ellen Ryan, who has a lot of experience in this area, is helping.

**f) Security Services:** This group has decertified from the Steelworkers Union and is now part of CAW555.

**6. Treasurer's Report** - Since Beth was away, there was no new report.

MURA's auditor, Bob West, may be away during audit time hence we need to find a person willing to be his backup. Eleanor Gow or Jessie Dunlop will be approached. Bob West will give guidance.

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

a) **Cards (Helen Dietsche):** - Sympathy cards were sent on behalf of Enid Malcolmsen (Clinical Epidemiology & Bio-statistics) and William Duncan (Physical Plant)

b) **Constitution & By-Laws (Joan Morris):** - no report since Joan Morris was away; membership re-definition is outstanding

c) **Membership** (Pam Penny): - This month we have exactly 1800 members. We haven't had any updates from Human Resources since October 1, 2007. (See attached report for membership breakdown numbers.)

d) **MURA News** (Joan Parker): The next MURAnews deadline is January 9, 2008!

e) **Nominating**: (Brian Ives) - Brian would like the nominating committee to be appointed at the December Council meeting. The Constitution states that two of the four members of the committee must not be members of Council; Brian reported his interpretation of this is that all four members could be from outside Council. Please send suggestions for the nominating committee to Brian. Also forward names of those who may be interested in serving on Council to Brian. It was noted that Mildred McLaren developed a list last year of people who may be willing to serve on the Council; this list should be used for ideas.

f) **Pension & Benefits** (Geoffrey Evans/Roman March): There is an updated, web version of the Pension & Benefits report on [www.macra.ca](http://www.macra.ca) replacing last month's version. Some pieces of this report may be appropriate for the Winter (Jan. 2008) MURAnews.

g) **Special Events** (Margaret Jenkins): - 37 people attended the October 30 dinner with Ellen Ryan as the guest speaker. The Chamber of Commerce was not as efficient with serving the meal as last year nor was the room as inviting.

Margaret will investigate if the spring event with Dr. Gary Warner could be held on campus, possibly by moving the date to May.

h) **Trips** (Joan Parker): - Since Anne Sinclair was away, there was no report.

i) **Xmas Lunch** (John McCutcheon): - Will be Thursday Dec. 6 at the new site: East Side Mario's in the Dundas University Plaza.

- Anne Sinclair has donated \$100 for prizes from the trips account.
- Pam used the \$100 plus \$5 to acquire five gift certificates (\$20 for Holland Park, \$20 for Chapters, \$20 for Fortinos, \$20 for Denninger's and \$25 for the Ancaster Old Mill) plus two donated \$25 certificates from Walmart and EastSide Marios. Jeff Chuchman, Human Resources, is donating two gifts, the President's Office is donating the chocolates plus Pam has a gift basket from Sam's Club. She also bought mints and candy canes.
- John has the sound system (same as last year) booked.
- Pam will come as Mrs. Claus. Santa will be away this year.
- Marianne will bring Santa Hats for council members who wish to wear one, as well as name tags.
- Helen B. has received R.S.V.Ps from the new Chancellor, Lynton (Red) Wilson, and his wife Brenda; Mel and Marilyn Hawkrigg; the MUFA president, Peter Sutherland; and Peter George, University President. The others invited have not yet let Helen know.
- Brian Ives will say the grace (provided by Margaret) if Rev. Allison Barrett (Peter George's wife) cannot attend.

- normally only Peter George (University President) speaks. Last year, the chancellor Mel Hawkrigg spoke as Peter George couldn't attend. Peter George will simply introduce the new chancellor.
- Honorary presentation: Most agreed that a single certificate for Mel and Marilyn Hawkrigg would be nicest since they shared the duties of the Chancellor's position and spoke of themselves as Co-Chancellors.
- It was decided to have 3 round tables for the head table instead of one big one.
- Pam Penny discussed the list of assignments and arrival times with the council present. The result is posted at:  
<http://mura.mcmaster.ca/justcouncil/Xmas07.Duties.pdf>

j) **Web-Site** (Brian Ives): - Brian still needs the photo of Kay Richardson. Helen Barton will contact Helen Otrosina to get this.

## 8. Information Reports from Liaisons (*as required*)

a) **University Board of Governors** (Brian Ives): - Brian went to his first Board of Governor's meeting recently. He found it interesting with a lot of material to read through. Much of the time was spent discussing the Operating Budget and fixing the "structural deficit". One item that Brian would like to investigate is the source for the statement that each retiree costs the university \$6500 per year to cover benefits.

b) **College & University Retirees Association of Canada (CURAC)**: No report

c) **MUFA**: No report

d) **CAW (MUSA)** (Kathy Overholt): - We've requested a meeting with Matt Root and Rosemary Viola to discuss funding of MURA.

e) **Hourly Staff Liaison** (Rod Phillips): - 3 to 4 hourly workers came to the new retirees reception in October; Rod enjoyed catching up with them.

## 9. Other Business

Since it is getting dark early these days, John McCutcheon suggested starting the meeting a half hour earlier at 1:30PM instead of 2:00PM. This would mean we do not have the room a half hour before the meeting to chat. The group agreed.

## 10. Next Meeting

Wednesday December 12, 2007 at **1:30PM** in Student Centre, Room 220

## 11. Adjournment

Joan Parker motioned we adjourn at 4:20PM

Carried