

**MINUTES for COUNCIL MEETING
of McMaster University Retirees Association -
Wednesday October 10, 2007, 2:00PM at Student Centre Room 220**

Present: Helen Barton (chair), Jeff Chuchman, Beth Csordas, Geoff Evans, Brian Ives, Roman March, John McCutcheon, Joan Morris, Kathy Overholt, Joan Parker, Pam Penny, Rod Phillips, Anne Sinclair and Marianne Van der Wel

1. Welcome & Regrets

Regrets: Cliff Andrews, Helen Dietsche, Margaret Jenkins, Veronica Morrison

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

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

- John McCutcheon **motioned** that the Sep. 12/07 minutes be approved as circulated.
- Geoff Evans **seconded** the motion.
- Motion **carried** unanimously.

3. Business Arising

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

- current status: four donors to date with \$2400 in pledges and \$1275 cash in hand; there is some overlap between the two figures
- mailing has gone out: The letter which was reviewed at the Sep. 12/07 council meeting was mailed October 2/07.
- luncheon Oct 11/07 at the President's House with Roger Trull, V.P. University Advancement - Starts at NOON. We can park there free but car pooling still a good idea. Brian Ives and Veronica Morrison will bring cameras to take "official" photos.
- phoning on Oct. 25; those involved will be sent info by email/phone

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

- Invitations were sent to the executive first and then later to the rest of Council
- This reception for new retirees is hosted by the University President. The event came about after a request many years ago by MURA to hold this reception. The President's Office files indicate that only the "MURA executive" is to be invited. For this year, as for the past few years, after some discussions the entire council is invited. Helen Barton will put the clarification of

this invitation list for future years on an agenda for a meeting with the University President as soon as possible.

c) Report on UTS home networking session

- Marianne attended the lecture on "Home Wireless Networks" given by UTS (University Technology Services) on October 3. It was interesting and informative but on the technical side. Marianne will investigate further by installing a "wireless broadband router" in her home and then write an article for MURAnews of a more general nature to include "who would benefit from a wireless home network and who would not" as well as security concerns.

d) United Way letter

- Pam Penny reported the United Way letter had been finalized and will be mailed out mid October 2007

e) Liaison with Athletics & Recreation re fitness and rehab programs

- Joan Parker has set up a meeting with Debbie Marinof-Shupe (Manager of Recreation Services) and MURA's Marianne Van der Wel, Helen Barton and Margaret Jenkins for October 30 at 3:30PM. We have not yet heard if Kim Palango (physio services) will attend.

f) Followup on Membership items

- survivors of active employees: Our constitution in section 3.03 states that survivor spouses of active employees who receive a McMaster pension are associate members of MURA.

- information about retirees who don't sign privacy release: Currently there are 4 retirees who have not signed the "privacy release". As a result, MURA does not know who these people are. Jeff Chuchman is still trying to clarify whether the interpretation of the privacy legislation needs to be this strict. While this is being looked into, Jeff is keeping track of these retirees. Brian suggested modifying the welcome letter given to new retirees to state the importance of signing/returning the "privacy release".

Jeff Chuchman is reviewing the 70 (or so) steps taken to retire a McMaster employee. Once this is documented, he will work with us to see if the retirement notification to MURA can be improved.

- address updates: Pam has given Jeff a list of retirees whose contact information needs updating.

g) Update on recent HR happenings (Jeff Chuchman)

- Newly hired hourly SEIU employees (Operations & Maintenance, except cleaners), are going to self administered group RRSP, starting October 2007. Current hourly employees in this group will stay with the current defined benefit pension plan.. The group RRSP plan will be administered by Sun Life. Each new employee will build his own portfolio, with Sun Life providing advice and choice of plans depending on risk comfort levels.

The advantage of a group, self administered plan as opposed to a strictly self administered plan is that there are employer contributions, an immediate tax advantage and lower costs.

- There are currently no formal discussions happening about other employee groups or affiliate employees being able to belong to a group RRSP.

- The new payroll system will not be implemented for salaried employees before November 2007. When it has been implemented we will be able to get retiree retirement date data.

4. Correspondence

- report from Les Robb on Sept. 13 Pension Trust Committee meeting sent to Helen Barton and Roman March (and forwarded to Geoff Evans) contained information from the actuaries regarding recent court cases across the country, and also information about the expected pension increase for January 2007 that was the basis for the Fall MURAnews article.

- Brian read excerpts from a letter received in September from Stuart Winn thanking us for his honorary membership.

- Helen Barton and Joan Parker (as Helen's guest) have accepted an invitation to the Installation/Convocation in November 2007.

- Helen has accepted an invitation to the retired faculty/librarians luncheon on October 30, 2007.

- Helen Barton received a copy of the MUFA newsletter

- Helen Barton sent a welcome letter inviting our new chancellor, Dr. L.R. (Red) Wilson, to our Xmas luncheon. She also sent a congratulatory letter (honorary membership) to our former co-chancellors, Marilyn and Mel Hawkrigg, also inviting them to our Xmas luncheon. Helen will obtain a list of other people to invite to the Xmas luncheon and will send them invitations as well.

- A correspondence from the Canadian Pension Council, via Jeff Chuchman, was forwarded to Roman March and Geoff Evans (Pension & Benefit Committee Co-chairs).

- Brian is still waiting to get a photo from Helen Otrosina to go with the news item about Kay Richardson, who was the first secretary of the Faculty of Medicine. She had a debilitating auto accident shortly after her retirement, and recently turned 90. Helen Barton offered to help get the photo from Helen O.

5. President's Report

a) Volunteer Database:

Helen Barton contacted the Hamilton Volunteer Bureau to gather information about their data base and what would be involved if McMaster joined that group as an agency. Elise (Hayton) deBruin, a Mac retiree, who runs the Art Gallery of Hamilton volunteer program also

has some very useful ideas. Whether we develop our own 'Volunteer Bureau' or work through a group such as the "Hamilton Volunteer Bureau", we need the "blessing" of the University's administration. We also need to know any restrictions that apply due to campus unions. A data base could provide information on both volunteer and casual work opportunities for McMaster retirees, and might be suitable for alumni volunteers as well. Our university president, Peter George, has shown some interest in such a project in the past.

b) Parking: Geoff Evans and Helen Barton met with parking October 9 at their invitation to discuss parking regulations. Parking Permits issued to McMaster Retirees are NOT transferable. In the past a folder was given to retirees annually clearly stating this, but the folder hasn't been given out in the last few years. Since that time, Parking has noticed an increase in people other than the retiree using the retiree parking permit. The current regulations do not clearly specify this non-transferability; Parking is in the process of having the regulation changed to make this clarification via the President's Advisory Committee on parking. Once this is done, we agreed to use MURAnews to help communicate this to retirees.

The current retiree parking arrangement, which applies to all retirees, was negotiated in 1992 by the Joint Committee (MUFA and the University). Retiree permits should also not be used if the retiree is working on campus.

A new automated parking system will be implemented in stages, starting January - May 2008. After this system is implemented we will be able to get information about how retirees use their parking permits.

6. Treasurer's Report

Beth had no new report. Joan Morris clarified that the increase in food cost for the 2007 AGM was primarily because more food was ordered but also that the cost of the food had gone up some. We spent \$1385 on food and \$150 on set up.

7. Information Reports from Committees (as required)

a) **Cards** (Helen Dietsche): - Helen Barton reported on 4 deaths since MURAnews was published. These are M. Milden, Custodial Services; O. Mirehouse, Surgery; A. Smith, Kinesiology; and R. Lofthouse, Surgery

b) **Constitution & By-Laws** (Joan Morris): - Joan Morris asked about the need to (re)define membership. We need to clarify who is a MURA member (ie who is a "retiree" of McMaster). Are we getting information on people we shouldn't? Are we not including people we should? This is becoming more critical in the light of recent changes, such as new hires of the Affiliates no longer being eligible to join the University pension plan.

c) **Membership** (Pam Penny): - We have 16 new retirees in September. MURa membership now totals 1803. (See attached report for membership breakdown numbers.)

d) **MURA News** (Joan Parker): - The stuffing session of the MURAnews that was sent out on Oct. 3/07 went very well. Thanks to all who helped!

Brian mentioned he had trouble with the links on the web site version. Marianne and others did not. Another computer mystery!

e) **Nominating:** (Brian Ives) - Brian asked if any councillor was nearing the end of his/her second term this year. There were none.

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

Roman reported on behalf of the Committee:

- the rate of return of salaried pension investments for McMaster compared to the rate of return of other universities across Canada in 2005 was respectable but a little lower than half of the 53 other comparator institutions. McMaster's return was 10% below the mean of the other universities (10% vs. 11%). This difference could equal the inflation erosion in our pensions during this period.

- see the report posted on our public web site at:
http://mura.mcmaster.ca/Pages/pen_ben_cttee_reports.htm

- Discussions about the indexing formula have been deferred due to the current economic conditions in society and at the University; have not talked to MUFA about any proposed change yet. If it were to be changed there would need to be changes to the catch up formula as well. The current catch up formula works in favour of the salaried pensioners this year.

- See a detailed listing of benefits for Faculty in the April/May 2007 newsletter on the MUFA web site: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/mufa/>

- the committee has studied the performance of some of the specific investments such as that of acid-backed commercial paper and the possible repercussions in Canada of poor market performance in the USA.

- would like clarification of the role of the representative on the Pension Trust Committee (Les Robb) and in future ask him for more specific information and/or invite him specifically to future meetings (P&B committee or council) when warranted.

- will develop terms of reference for future PTC representatives.

Geoff Evans reported having ongoing discussions with Carl Moore on the ongoing dispute about the pension surplus payout for Clinical Faculty retiring before 2000.

g) **Special Events** (Margaret Jenkins): - Margaret e-mailed a reminder (from Wales) to: muramembs-1@mcmaster.ca for the Tuesday October 30th dinner with Ellen Ryan as the speaker.

h) **Trips** (Joan Parker): - Anne Sinclair reported that the trip to "My One & Only" went very well. The Xmas trip is sold out. The spring events are 1/2 to 2/3 full.

i) **Xmas Lunch** (John McCutcheon):- Will be Thursday Dec. 6 at the new site: East Side Mario's in the Dundas University Plaza!; East Side Mario's has an extensive menu including vegetarian, has lower prices and more parking. This was announced in the Fall issue of MURAnews;

- Pam is busy buying gifts/prizes and John has the sound system (same as last year) booked.

- Peter George has his invitation marked in his calendar and Helen Barton will follow up as well as send invitations to A. Bourns (honorary president), and presidents of CAW, MUFA, and the unions representing the hourly workers as well as the gerontology award recipients.

j) **Web-Site** (Brian Ives): - Keep sending those news items/photos to Brian as he is changing the front page of the site every 10 days or so. He just put up a photo of himself with recent retirees from Engineering. Hit statistics are still an issue. How many people are actually reading the web site? Brian is still keen on getting feedback on this.

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

a) **University Board of Governors** (Brian Ives): - Brian has not received a schedule of BOG meetings. Helen Barton will follow up.

b) **College & University Retirees Association of Canada (CURAC)**: We received a receipt for our membership dues.

c) **MUFA**: - Geoff Evans has contacted Phyllis, the MUFA secretary, and introduced himself. He also contacted Lorraine Allan, who would like to participate in the liaison with MUFA, but he hasn't had anything to share with Lorraine yet.

d) **CAW (MUSA)** (Kathy Overholt): - no report

e) **Hourly Staff Liaison** (Rod Phillips): - no report

9. Other Business

- none

10. Next Meeting

Wednesday November 14 , 2007 at 2:00PM in Student Centre, Room 220

11. Adjournment

John McCutcheon **motioned** we adjourn at 4:00PM

Carried